

# YARD & GARDEN REPORT

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## Holiday Gifts for Gardeners

The holidays are here. It's time for shopping!

Do you have a friend who is a gardener? Of course you do! Here are some gift ideas for your favorite gardeners (and yourself).

Plants are always a good gift. This includes **Norfolk Island pine**, the miniature Christmas trees sold in stores. Norfolk Island pine is easy to grow and a wonderful gift, especially if you add a few ornaments to personalize it.

Speaking of ornaments, does your Christmas tree have a **pickle ornament**? On Christmas morning, the first child who finds the pickle in the tree receives the first present or a special gift.

An **amaryllis bulb** is foolproof and fun. Your friend will be amazed as they watch the flower stalks soar to the sky. A good friend deserves a big bulb. These can be purchased at garden centers or ordered online from specialty stores. Big amaryllis bulbs will have more flowers, bloom longer, and be more likely to bloom in future years.

Give your friend a tool they will use, and use often. A top quality **trowel, pruners** or **pocket knife** will be appreciated for years.

**Tubtrugs** are popular containers for carrying tools and your harvest. A **garden cart** will carry even more stuff to and from the garden.

Our best tools are our hands. Protect them with a quality pair of



Fig. 1. Share a gift with your favorite gardener. Happy Holidays!

**garden gloves** or perhaps some **hand scrubbing lotions**.

Seed catalogs for 2017 are available now. Go online and request a free catalog. Popular choices include Baker Creek, Burpee, Gurney's, Johnny's, Jung, Pinetree, Seed Savers and Territorial, to name a few. Tuck a **gift certificate inside the catalog** and give it as a gift!

Gardeners who start their own seeds would like a **heating mat**.

All gardeners need to water their garden at times. A **watering wand, soaker hose** or an **expandable water hose** would be appreciated.

A **backpack sprayer** is great for large yards or backyard orchards.

**Apple maggot traps** will help them grow fruit without pesticides.

**Thermometers, soil thermometers** and **rain gauges** provide valuable information to a gardener. Some thermometers have remote sensors to help them know how cold it got in their garden last night.

Every gardener can use a **mason bee house**. These native bees are very efficient at pollinating fruit and vegetable crops.

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# New Romaine Lettuce is a Winner!

*"I've never planted romaine lettuce before and now I'm hooked."*

- Burleigh County gardener

Romaine lettuce has become one of the most popular vegetables in our North Dakota Home Garden Variety Trials. It's more popular than our leaf lettuce, butterhead lettuce and iceberg lettuce trials—combined. Gardeners in these trials have discovered romaine lettuce is easy to grow and delicious.

This summer, 34 families compared the new romaine variety 'Fusion' with 'Green Forest', a standout performer in ND for years.

'Fusion' is a cross between leaf and romaine lettuce. Gardeners discovered it had the best qualities of both: the wavy leaves of leaf lettuce and the crisp texture of romaine.

'Fusion' tolerated the summer heat and resisted going to seed. Some gardeners harvested all summer. They enjoyed its mild flavor and its ability to regrow after each harvest. They commented:

*"I liked its glossy green color and ruffled edges. Milder and superior taste."*

- Rolette County gardener

*"Full, sturdy plants. Delicious, mild flavor. Heads were quite large and did go to seed until late. I was still picking in August and sharing with neighbors."*

- Mountrail County gardener

Twenty-six of the 34 (76%) gardeners preferred 'Fusion' over 'Green Forest' and 32 (94%) gardeners recommended 'Fusion' for North Dakota. That's a winner! Look for 'Fusion' in your 2017 catalogs.

Would you like to join our research team? Everyone is welcome! Go to [www.ag.ndsu.edu/homegardenvarietytrials/](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/homegardenvarietytrials/).



Fig. 2. 'Fusion' was a big winner in our 2016 North Dakota Home Garden Variety Trials. It has the wavy leaves of a leaf lettuce and the crisp texture of a romaine.

## Edamame for North Dakota

Do you want a healthy snack? Try edamame. What's edamame?

Edamame are soybeans harvested when young, before the seeds inside the pods harden. The pods are boiled or steamed before served.

When living in Taiwan, I learned edamame is a snack as popular as potato chips or peanuts in the USA. A bowl of edamame would always appear whenever a group of people gathered together. We would shell the pods and pop the sweet seeds into our mouths. Edamame was especially popular with beer.

The key to great edamame is to eat it when it is fresh. Farmers in Taiwan would harvest the crop in the middle of the night (when the sugar content was highest) and then freeze it immediately to export to Japan.

Fresh edamame is a delight, but the Asian varieties struggle to



ripen before frost in North Dakota. The variety 'Envy' matures early and has performed best in research trials, but its yields are low and its flavor is only satisfactory.

This year we compared 'Envy' with 'Tohya'. The performance of 'Tohya' was remarkable. It was earlier and more productive. The pods were bigger and the seeds were more delicious. I invite you to try 'Tohya' next year. You can prepare it like lima beans for dinner, or eat it as a snack any time!

# Mountainash Hybrids for Fruit and Beauty

Mountainash, a popular tree in North Dakota, is best known for its orange clusters of berries in fall. Those fruits are for the birds, right?

Not necessarily. Did you know mountainash is related to apple and pear? They are all in the rose family. In Eastern Europe, special varieties of mountainash are grown for fruits used in making preserves, pastries, juices and wine.

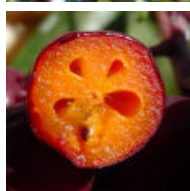
The famous Russian breeder Ivan Michurin crossed mountainash with other species to develop quality fruit trees with ornamental value. 'Ivan's Belle' is a cross between mountainash and hawthorn (Figs. 4–7). Its fruits are wine red in color and the size of a small cherry.

'Ivan's Beauty' is a cross between mountainash and aronia. Its pink-tinted blossoms produce purple fruits, each the size of a marble.

Studies at the University of Wisconsin have determined Ivan's trees to be hardy to Zone 3 (suited for all of North Dakota). The trees transplanted easily and started blooming the year after being planted. The trees grew only 8–10 feet tall, making them easy to manage.

The researchers praised the beauty of the flowers, fruits and their deep green foliage. The trees did not experience any major pest problems. The trees appeared to resist fire blight, a major problem among fruit trees in the rose family.

The fruits were too bitter for eating fresh but would be excellent for processing. A leading nursery reports that crops can be expected within two to three years and eventually reach up to 30 pounds per tree. Highest yields are attained when more than one variety of mountainash is planted.



Figs. 4–7. Mountainash has been crossed with hawthorn ('Ivan's Belle' is shown) and aronia to create dwarf fruit trees. These trees are attractive, easy to maintain, and bear nutritious fruit. A cross-section of the fruit is shown.

If your focus is strictly on fruit production, the University of Wisconsin researchers recommend the aronia shrub as a better option, especially for mechanized production.

Studies from North Dakota State University agree that aronia shows tremendous potential for fruit growers in our state. Acres of aronia have been planted here in recent years.

Nevertheless, these mountainash hybrids may be an attractive, low-maintenance tree for a home landscape. The trees are easy to grow and will bear buckets full of nutritious fruits.

Ivan's trees can be ordered from One Green World, Raintree Nursery, Northwoods Nursery and other online nurseries.



# Holiday Gifts

(continued from page 1)

**Butterfly feeders** will attract the delicate creatures to their yard.

If your friend enjoys feeding birds, they may enjoy a **hanging feeder** or **suet feeder** to add to their collection. More types of feeders will lead to more types of birds at their station. Or perhaps give your bird lover a **heater** for their bird bath.

A **gnome** or other **gardening statue** may be a risky gift, but such gifts can bring the biggest smiles! A series of **stepping stones** in the garden may be a nice accent.

We all need to eat more vegetables and fruits. A **juicing machine** can help them get the servings they need for a healthy diet.

A **food dehydrator** can convert garden produce into nutritious and delicious snacks.

A **mushroom growing kit** is a fun project.

A personalized **sampler of North Dakota honey, jellies or wines** is a special gift they will enjoy.

Enjoy shopping and have a happy holiday season!

## Credits

Sources:

One Green World. <https://onegreenworld.com>. Accessed November 2016.

University of Wisconsin. Uncommon fruit: Observations from Carandale Farm. <http://uncommonfruit.cias.wisc.edu>. Accessed November 2016.

Photos were made available under Creative Commons licenses specified by the photographers: 1. Tristan Martin, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mukumbura/3107074367/>; 2,3. Johnny's Selected Seeds, <http://www.johnnyseeds.com>, 1-877-564-6697; 4-7. Sodo Expertai, <http://sodoexpertai.lt/musu-sodo-expertai/granatnaja-granatinis-sermuksnis-arba-gudsermuksnis-lot-crataegosorbus-miczurinii-pojark/>.

# Weather Almanac for Nov. 6–21, 2016

Site	TEMPERATURE				RAINFALL <sup>1</sup>			
	Nov. 6–21				Nov. 6–21		Apr.–Oct. 2016	
	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	38	26	71	5	M <sup>1</sup>	0.49	17.59	16.72
Bowman	41	31	74	9	M	0.31	13.60	14.80
Carrington	40	28	70	8	M	0.51	16.24	19.25
Crosby	39	26	69	7	M	0.29	16.37	14.32
Dickinson	42	30	74	13	M	0.34	13.50	15.99
Fargo	42	30	73	17	M	0.56	19.07	21.12
Grafton	40	27	70	17	M	0.57	27.93	20.19
Grand Forks	42	27	72	18	M	0.55	23.97	19.65
Hazen	40	30	76	4	M	0.43	16.61	16.19
Hillsboro	40	29	71	15	M	0.51	20.02	20.42
Jamestown	40	29	70	12	M	0.41	24.20	18.70
Langdon	38	24	66	11	M	0.41	24.91	18.48
Mandan	41	30	75	9	M	0.40	17.52	17.13
Minot	41	28	71	11	M	0.57	16.54	17.19
Mott	39	31	76	7	M	0.34	14.30	15.68
Rugby	40	26	74	8	M	0.58	17.15	18.46
Wahpeton	40	31	71	10	M	0.38	20.56	21.36
Watford City	41	29	70	13	M	0.33	13.87	13.87
Williston	41	31	65	14	M	0.31	13.65	13.59
Wishek	39	29	66	8	M	0.38	21.38	19.86

## DAYLENGTH (November 21, McClusky)<sup>3</sup>

Sunrise: 7:57 AM | Daylength: 9h 2m

Sunset: 4:59 PM | Change since Nov. 5: -46m

## LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS<sup>4</sup>

6–10 Day (Nov. 27–Dec. 1): Temp: Above Normal; Precip.: Below Normal

8–14 Day (Nov. 29–Dec. 5): Temp: Normal; Precip.: Normal

<sup>1</sup> Measured from April through October. M= Missing. Gauges cannot measure snowfall.

<sup>2,3,4</sup> Sources: North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, [www.sunrisesunset.com](http://www.sunrisesunset.com), and National Weather Service, respectively.

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