

West Central MN Sustainable Ag Webinar Series

Questions & Answers | 3/18/25

Small-Scale Fruit + Vegetable + Community Gardens

Jason Bergstrand of Lake Region Takes Root | Fergus Falls, MN | <https://www.lrhc.org/lrtr>

Phillip Stowe of Walking Plants Orchard | Osakis, MN | <https://www.walkingplantsorchard.com>

Q: How do you prune honeyberries?

A: Some of the older varieties require pruning to allow to still walk around the plants for harvesting with you-pick. I will prune them late March this year, all the way back to around 7 inches, and I will do this to every other plant to ensure proper pollination. Then next year, I will prune the rest back.

Q: How soon do you start to harvest the berries?

A: Once they turn blue, it usually takes at least 2 weeks for them to be ready to pick. They ripen from the outside in. Best to cover them with netting before the birds discover them!

Trent Wise of The City of Moorhead: M.B. Johnson Food Forest | Moorhead, MN

<https://www.resilientmoorhead.org/ecosystemhealth>

<https://www.cityofmoorhead.com>

Q: Where did you purchase your plants from?

A: Gilby's Nursery in Aitkin, MN: <https://gilbysorchard.com/>

Q: Are there any plans to incorporate companion plants around the bases of the trees in your food forest?

A: We haven't started doing this yet, but we are interested in it. This is definitely a future project potential for us.

Carol Krabbenhoft of Growing Together Community Garden | Fargo, ND/Moorhead, MN

<https://www.growingtogetherfm.org>

Q: Do you use any insecticides in your community garden?

A: They are not certified organic, but the potato beetles and bean beetles are bad and difficult to manage. They use limited amounts of Spinosad to manage their pests. This is a certified organic chemical.

Q: Do you do any sort of annual soil amending or fertilizing during your growing season at the various gardens?

A: We have not yet needed to do any fertilizing during the growing season due to our fertile soils. We flail mow the gardens down in the fall. We also gather and age compost from the city and use it to amend the garden rows as needed.

Question to All Presenters

Q: Will all of the webinars be available for watching later?

A: Yes! You can access our YouTube Channel at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/@WCMNFood>

Q: Have any of the community based speakers worked with their Master Gardeners? I'm not from their counties but wondering about partnering for a similar project here in my part of MN.

A: Carol (Growing Together Community Garden) does have several Master Gardeners working on her gardens. NDSU Extension is connected through their board committee and her master gardening group as well.

A: Jason (Lake Region Takes Root) has master gardeners volunteer with him sometimes. They utilize these hours towards their certification or some stick around more long-term as they develop specialized interests and focuses.

A: Trent (The City of Moorhead- Food Forest) works with Clay County Master Gardeners to see if any are interested in helping. They also work with the Master Naturalists who help with installing signage and building gates for their berry patches.

Q: Some community gardens are "open", where everyone shares the garden

A: Absolutely! Not all community gardens are created equal, in fact most are unique to their specific location, management, and membership based on their particular community's needs. There is no wrong way to get started building your own.

Q: A great resource for no-till gardening... we call it "Know till"

A: <https://www.notillgrowers.com/>