

'THE SAGE'--MARCH 2009

Klein's Floral & Greenhouses On-Line Newsletter

This Month's Highlights: [Our Annual 50% Off Houseplant Sale Has Begun!!](#)

Is the Klein's Delivery Team As Good As They Say?

Trends: The Recession and the Gardening Industry

Tips For What To Do When Your Seed Packets Arrive

The Best Darn Beet Recipes Around

New: 12 Months of Fresh Flowers from Klein's

Notes from My Garden Journal-- from February 2009

Sustainability and Klein's Role for a Greener World

March Is the Time To Begin Seeds Indoors

Two New Ecofriendly Pots Available at Klein's

Plant of the Month: Chinese Evergreen

March in the Garden

Gardening Events Around Town

Delivery Information

Related Resources and Websites

Plants Harmful to Kids and Pets

NEW FROM KLEIN'S: THE MAD GARDENER

"Madison's Firsthand Source for Expert Gardening Advice"

Ask any of your gardening questions by e-mailing them to us at madgardener@kleinsfloral.com. Klein's in-house **Mad Gardener** will e-mail you with an answer as promptly as we can. We'll be posting a link to this e-mail address on our home page and also in all subsequent newsletters. Your question might then appear in the "**You Asked**" feature of our monthly newsletter. If your question is the one selected for our monthly newsletter, you'll receive a small gift from us at Klein's. The **Mad Gardener** hopes to hear from you soon!

Sorry, we can only answer those questions pertaining to gardening in Southern Wisconsin and we reserve the right to leave correspondence unanswered at our discretion. Please allow 2-3 days for a response.

A QUICK NOTE:

We would like to thank all of you for making the Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy a great success for us at Klein's this past February. Your feedback and support were above and beyond. Attendees commented often that they appreciated the burst of spring we brought to the expo with our spring blooming plants and fresh herbs. Plant sales surpassed our expectations given the current economy. We also welcome all of you who newly subscribed to our monthly newsletter at the show. Subscriptions doubled at that one event and the attention our Mad Gardener has received has been overwhelming. The Garden Expo is Klein's biggest gardening event of the year. We enjoy talking with all of you and sharing our love of gardening with you. Thanks again! The Staff at Klein's

MARCH STORE HOURS:

Monday thru Friday : 8:00-6:00

Saturday:

9:00-5:00

Sunday: 10:00-4:00

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Because we're currently busy planting up those thousands of annuals, perennials, vegetables, herbs and shrubs for spring . . .

We need more room in our greenhouses!

While supplies last, Klein's is conducting our annual houseplant blow out--

50% OFF HOUSEPLANTS 6" AND LARGER!

(This sale excludes peace lilies and blooming plants and cannot be used with other discounts. Please call Klein's at 608/244-5661 for details.)

March 8--Daylight-Saving Time Begins.

March 10--Full Moon

March 17--St. Patrick's Day. From shamrocks to green carnations--we have it!

March 20--First Day of Spring!!!! It's still too early to plant, but you'll notice spring bulbs peeking through the cold soil, trees buds bulging and maybe even that first robin. Keep in mind that Madison's average last frost date is May 10 so there's usually still lots of cold and snow to come.

'THE FLOWER SHOPPE':

We had a fantastic Valentine's Day here at Klein's Floral! And despite the bad economy, our Valentine's deliveries were actually up 40% over the last time Valentine's Day occurred on a Saturday back in 2004. Saturday Valentine's Days are odd in that the Friday before is usually our busiest delivery day. In 2009 however, we found Saturday to be equally busy. We need to give credit not only to our talented design crew and the great weather we experienced, but also to our exceptional and experienced team of delivery drivers. We honestly and openly feel we currently have the best group of floral delivery people in the city of Madison. With over 50 years of combined experience in floral delivery, our 6 Valentine's drivers made it easy for our designers to expedite orders in a timely fashion. At Klein's, we use only in-house floral drivers instead of the inexperienced temps that some of our competition hires for just that one day. Combining GPS technology with traditional map reading, our drivers know the Madison area like the backs of their hands. Our drivers were at their first stops by 8:00 and didn't stop until they handed their last bouquet to their ecstatic recipient at day's end. The Klein's team is fast, polite and efficient. The success of our delivery team can be easily measured by the feedback we received. According to the retail manager, our delivery team received zero negative feedback regarding missed or late deliveries, a feat that would be hard to match among area flower shops. So the next time you're searching for the most reliable flower delivery in Madison, consider Klein's for a job well done! For more details about Klein's delivery service, click on "**Delivery Information**" on our home page.

And new from Klein's for you or for the flower lover in your life:

Klein's "12 Month Blooming Plant or Fresh Flower Club"

Send or receive a whole year of seasonal blooming plants or fresh flower arrangements and save!!

There's no easier way to give gorgeous blooming plants or fresh flower arrangements, month after month. Each month a seasonal blooming plant or fresh arrangement will arrive on yours or a loved one's doorstep. You choose the start date and we'll make your special delivery the very same day each month.

For just \$300, we'll send a year's worth of seasonal blooming plants--perhaps a bulb garden or azalea in the spring, one of our famous large geraniums or a tropical hibiscus in the summer, a chrysanthemum or Thanksgiving cactus in the fall or one of our homegrown poinsettias or cyclamen for the holidays and winter months. Selection of the blooming plant will be based on availability.

And for just \$350, receive one of Klein's lovely fresh floral arrangements. All arrangements will be seasonal and will contain only the freshest flowers. All arrangements are **Designer's Choice**, but are sure to satisfy the most discerning lover of fresh flowers.

Prices include delivery within our delivery area. For delivery details click on "**Delivery Information**" on the left side of our home page. If your chosen delivery date happens to fall on a Sunday or holiday, we will deliver it on the next available delivery day. All regular delivery conditions apply.

Order your **12 Months of Flowers** by calling Klein's at **608/244-5661** or **888/244-5661** or by stopping in. We request that payment be made in full before the first delivery and the prices do not include sales tax.

DID YOU KNOW. . .

. . .that during economic downturns that sales at most garden centers actually increase? Yes, during hard times, research has shown that, rather than traveling or making large purchases, homeowners spend far more time at home and in their gardens. This is especially true with vegetable gardening where the financial return can be easily seen on the supermarket receipt. One recent television news story reported that some seed sales are up nearly 100% over last year! The numbers truly add up. A simple \$1.75 packet of carrot seed can yield more than the average household consumes in a couple months (and with very little space in the garden). Just 6 pepper plants can produce enough frozen green peppers to last an entire winter and nothing could be easier than storing homemade fresh pasta or pizza sauce. With a family of four and at nearly \$4.00 per jar, the savings can be astronomical and fun for the family in the process. One zucchini plant oftentimes yields more fruit than the gardener can keep up with and nothing is tastier than a homegrown lettuce or spinach salad after the long winter we've been experiencing. No room for a large garden? Most of our most popular vegetables do equally well in containers and are beautiful to boot.

March is the time to purchase your vegetable seeds while the selection is still good. And some (peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, etc.) need to be started during March. If you're not set up for starting seeds indoors or feel intimidated by the process, Klein's carries an excellent selection of your favorite vegetables ready to plant directly into your garden. We have one of the largest selections of tomatoes (especially heirlooms) and peppers (especially hot peppers) in the area and a fantastic assortment of the most popular garden vegetables and herbs--all available by early May. 2009 may be the year to give vegetable gardening a try.

Read on:

By Bruce Horovitz, USA TODAY

Hard economic times are acting like instant fertilizer on an industry that had been growing slowly: home vegetable gardening.

Amid the Washington talk of "shovel-ready" recession projects, it appears few projects are more shovel-ready than backyard gardens. Veggie seed sales are up double-digits at the nation's biggest seed sellers this year. What's more, the number of homes growing vegetables will jump more than 40% this year compared with just two years ago, projects the National Gardening Association, a nonprofit organization for gardening education.

"As the economy goes down, food gardening goes up," says Bruce Butterfield, the group's research director. "We haven't seen this kind of spike in 30 years."

At W. Atlee Burpee, the world's largest seed company, seed sales will jump 25% this year, Chairman George Ball estimates. "It's weird to have everyone else you talk to experiencing plunging markets. We're on a roll."

•**Park Seed.** Vegetable seed sales are up 20% this year vs. 2008, says Walter Yates, who oversees the company's e-commerce.

Says Yates, "Every time this country goes through a recession, there is a surge of folks who want to get back to basics."

•**Renee's Garden.** Business manager Sarah Renfro says veggie seed sales were up about 10% last year and look to grow up to 20%.

"After years of declining veggie seed sales, the whole cycle has completely reversed," says Renee Shepherd, president.

•**Harris Seeds.** Home garden vegetable seed sales are up 80% from one year ago, says Dick Chamberlin, president. "A jump like this has never happened."

•**Ferry-Morse Seed.** After 2008 sales grew 5%, the company stocked up on 50% more vegetable seeds to sell in 2009, says John Hamrick, vice president of sales and marketing.

NOTES FROM MY GARDEN JOURNAL--Tips and Observations from My Own Garden by Rick Halbach.

ENTRY: FEBRUARY 3, 2009

The last of the seeds I've ordered from the mail order companies have arrived. As they arrive I do a few organizational things in preparation for spring planting. First off, I read the planting instructions or if inadequate, I do a little research on-line or in my gardening books. This is especially important if it's a plant that is new to me. I learn as much as I can and search for tips that will improve my chances of success. Plants I'm trying for the first time this year from seed include: 'Leavenworth' Eryngo, Chocolate Daisy (*Berlandiera lyrata*), Tecoma 'Mayan Gold', *Ptilotus exaltus* 'Joey', Monarda 'Bergamo' and *Ruellia* (wild petunia). Next, I make sure the seed name has been entered onto my seed starting calendar. Using May 15 as my starting point, I count the weeks backwards to determine the sow date from the packet instructions. For example, the weekend of March 15 is 8 weeks from our average last frost date. Based on the packet instructions, that is when I'll be sowing my peppers, melampodium, datura, pincushion flower, celosia, angelonia and a few others. I not only enter the plants on the calendar, but I also write the sow date on the seed packet and rubber band them together with seeds that will be sown on the same weekend. This time of the year I set aside a little time each weekend for seed sowing and transplanting. I use an old Tupperware to store all seeds in my basement grow room. Stored in airtight and cool, dark conditions, unplanted seed should remain viable for many years.

ENTRY: FEBRUARY 15, 2009

The feeder visited by the most varieties of birds is far and away the feeder filled with shelled peanuts. It's literally nonstop action at that feeder with fearless squirrels supplying much of the action in their attempts to reach the peanuts. They've learned that if they dive bomb the feeder from the tree branch above, they might shake a few nuts to the ground. It's usually in vain for the kamikaze squirrel who made the leap because other squirrels are waiting under the feeder for the few nuts to fall. Birds that most often visit that feeder include white and red breasted nuthatches and chickadees. The feeder is designed for many types of birds to feed. It consists of a large bowl with a dome/squirrel baffle over the top. The bowl is most often visited by the larger or less agile visitors, i.e. blue jays, cardinals and the occasional finch. The underside of the bowl consists of individual feeding ports for the nuthatches, chickadees and woodpeckers--namely downy, hairy and red-bellied.

ENTRY: FEBRUARY 28, 2009

This is one of my biggest indoor gardening weekends of the entire year. I use March 1 as a key date for many of my indoor gardening tasks. First and foremost, this is my first big seed starting weekend in my basement grow room. I've already started some seeds, but it's during March that seed starting swings into high gear. Plants that need to be started about now include petunias, dianthus, snapdragons, browallia, cuphea, portulaca and a few other minor players. After the seeds germinate on my propagation heating mat I move them to the top shelf of my grow rack until they are ready to be transplanted into cell packs or pots. I use an old shower curtain draped over the rack to retain any heat given off by the light fixtures. In this basement environment I try to use all heat that might otherwise be wasted. Once my seedlings have developed their second set of true leaves, I carefully transplant them into cell packs and pots (size determined by plant vigor and how the plants are used in the garden). It's best to transplant seedlings as soon as they can be handled. The smaller the seedling, the less shock from transplanting. I choose to transplant my seedlings rather than planting them directly in their final pots and cell packs so I can choose only healthiest and most vigorous plants, ensuring greater success in the garden.

The second major task of the weekend is to prune, trim and clean up all the geranium, coleus, salvia and assorted cuttings I've been overwintering. This will be their final pinching before they go into the garden in May. Any later than this and I lose a few weeks of valuable bloom time in our short summers. I also trim and shape my potted geraniums and other plants that will be spending the summer outdoors. Hibiscus is the exception. I pruned them in the fall rather than in the spring--again as not to lose bloom time.

Thirdly, I move all remaining dormant bulbs and plants from the cool root cellar to the warmer parts of the basement. I do this to give them a good start before I put them outside. My collection includes cannas, brugmansias, pineapple lilies, callas, pansy orchids (Achimenes), dahlias, begonias and a few odds and ends. By the time they move outside in May, they're already growing actively and sometimes nearly ready to bloom.

KLEIN'S RECIPES OF THE MONTH--These are a selection of relatively simple recipes chosen by our staff. New recipes appear monthly. Enjoy!!

With the new gardening season just a few weeks away, it's hard to imagine that some of us are still enjoying vegetables from last season's bounty. Beets are among the easiest vegetables for long term storage. They, along with carrots, potatoes and many root vegetables, can be stored for many, many months as long as they're kept cool and dark.

Beets are oftentimes the last vegetable in the refrigerator bin from last season's garden. In the garden, beets are sown directly and on the early side, usually sometime in mid to late April. Plants need to be adequately thinned for greatest success. Each knobby seed capsule actually holds a few

seeds. This means that plants usually come up a little more densely than you had intended. Harvest occurs anytime from late spring through fall depending on the size desired. Golf ball sized, early summer harvests yield the sweetest beets for fresh summer salads. Look for white or pink varieties to avoid “bleeding”. Raw beets can be grated or shredded into fresh green salads. To cook beets, do not peel. Simply remove the tops and boil or roast in foil. The tops are delicious raw in mixed salads or cooked in sautés or wilts like spinach or chard (a close relative).

SPINACH & BEET SALAD--Rave reviews on this recipe even from people who say they don't like beets. A very easy recipe from a July 2000 Capital Times article.

3 large beets, trimmed
salt & pepper to taste
2 TBS. balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
4 TBS. extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup chopped green onions
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
4 cups spinach

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine beets, salt and pepper in a roasting pan. Cover with foil and bake 1 hour or more till tender. Let cool, peel off skins and cut into 1/4” wide strips. In a bowl, whisk together the vinegar and mustard. While whisking, slowly add the olive oil. In a large bowl combine the beets, half of the vinaigrette, some salt, pepper, the onions and half of the mint. Toss to coat and let stand 30 minutes. Add the spinach and the rest of the vinaigrette and mint. Toss and serve.

SAVORY BEET SOUP--This hot beet soup appeared in Cooking Light magazine in October of 2004. Cold beet soup, borscht, is also a very popular way to use up beets and makes for a cool summer side dish.

1 tsp. olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
4 cups chicken broth
2 cups water
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3 medium beets, peeled and halved
1 medium potato, peeled and halved crosswise
1 bay leaf
1 tsp. lemon juice
sour cream

Heat oil in a Dutch oven or soup pot over medium-high. Add the onion and cook until tender. Add the broth, water, salt, pepper, beets, potato and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes or until the beets and potato are tender. Remove the bay leaf. Puree the soup in food processor, blender or with a hand held blender until smooth. Rewarm if necessary until heated through. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice. Combine 1/2 cup of the soup with 2 1/2 TBS. sour cream with a whisk. Serve the soup and swirl in the sour cream mix with the tip of a knife. Makes 8 servings.

GERMAN BEET SALAD--This is a family favorite from the “old country”. Enjoy!

1 lb. beets, peeling on and greens removed
1 TBS. prepared horseradish
1 medium onion
5 TBS. vegetable oil

3-5 TBS. vinegar
1/2 tsp. caraway seed, lightly crushed
salt and pepper to taste
pinch of sugar or to taste
1/2 tsp. mustard seed, lightly crushed
chopped parsley

Boil the beets in plenty of water for 40-60 minutes, depending on the size of the beets, until tender. Once tender, plunge into cold water and let cool. Trim the roots and tops and slip the beets from their skins. Dice or slice the beets as desired. Chop or slice the onion. In a bowl, combine the beets, onion and horseradish. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar (to taste), caraway, salt, pepper, sugar and mustard seed. Pour over the beet mixture, toss lightly and allow to stand at least 1 hour before serving, or overnight. Garnish with parsley. Keeps at least a week in the refrigerator and freezes well. Serves 4.

BEET SALAD WITH RASPBERRY VINAIGRETTE--Yet another beet recipe from the 2004 Cooking Light magazine issue.

2 1/2 lbs. beets
1/2 cup chopped red onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
2 TBS. raspberry vinegar
1 TBS. honey
2 1/2 tsp. olive oil
1/4 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper

Preheat the oven to 425°. Place the whole beets on a foil lined baking sheet and bake 45 minutes or until tender. Allow to cool. Trim off the roots and the tops and slip from their skins. Chop the beets coarsely. Combine the beets, onion and celery in a large bowl. Combine the vinegar and the rest of the ingredients and pour over the beets. Toss to coat. Serve either chilled or at room temperature. Serves 6.

NEW PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT--Each month we will spotlight some new product that we already carry or one that we've taken note of and plan to carry in the near future. Likewise, if you would like to see Klein's to carry a product that we don't currently, please let us know. Our goal is to be responsive to the marketplace and to our loyal clientele. If a product fits into our profile, we will make every effort to get it into our store. In addition, we may be able to special order an item for you, whether plant or hard good, given enough time. **This month's new products are two exciting and ecofriendly pots:**

CowPots™ from the Liquid Fence Company
'The pots you plant!'

The best pots for starting your plants!

An exciting high-performing alternative to plastic and peat pots. CowPots™, manure-fiber based seed starter pots, are made by American farmers for plant lovers everywhere. These earth-friendly "pots you plant" are made with biodegradable, 100% renewable composted cow manure.

The CowPot manufacturing process removes all weeds, pathogens and odor. All that's left is the natural fiber and goodness of manure: the perfectly plantable pot! Visit the CowPots website at cowpots.com for more detailed information.

Why are CowPots better?

--CowPots give seedlings a better beginning.

Tender, young roots easily penetrate the sides and bottoms of CowPots, growing freely... Healthier roots mean lifelong stronger plants.

--CowPots are great for seedlings!

CowPots stay intact for up to 12 weeks – plenty of time to give seedlings a good, strong start.

--Planted CowPots break down fast in the ground.

Composted manure naturally biodegrades quickly, so at 3 to 4 weeks, decomposition is well underway.

--CowPots give back to the planet!

Besides enriching your garden soil with the goodness of manure, CowPots are earth-friendly in even BIGGER ways...

By collecting and using manure to create a truly “green” product, Cowpots help farmers preserve clean, open spaces

Not only that, the ingenious dairy-farmers who invented CowPots also extract green-energy from the manufacturing process, using it to reduce their own farm’s carbon footprint.

The manure in Cowpots is a renewable resource, unlike peat which is mined from bog ecosystems or plastic which is derived from finite fossil sources.

CowPots are brought to you by The Liquid Fence Company

“Natural Solutions to Garden Problems”

And . . .

New Horizons Flower Pots from EcoFlowerPots

“These flower pots are made from 100 percent recycled materials. All types of plastics – from shredded tires to plastic drinking cups from fast-food restaurants – are used to make the unbreakable, multicolored, weatherproof, and nontoxic pots. Pots come in a variety of popular sizes from 4 to 14 inches with matching saucers. Every pot has a weep hole at the bottom that is easy to punch out with a screw driver.”

Visit ecoflowerpots.com for more information and to get a peek at these exciting new containers.

Both of the above pots are currently in stock at Klein’s. Please call us at 608/244-5661 for for details.

NATURAL NEWS--

Sustainability= Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

If you had the chance to visit with us at the Wisconsin Public Television’s Garden Expo then you are fully aware of Klein’s commitment to sustainability and doing our part in creating a greener world.

Up front, some of what we’re doing at Klein’s is obvious, including growing most of our plants in biodegradable pots made from recycled paper (visit our Newsletter Archive and click on the Feb. 08 Newsletter for more details). But there’s a lot going on behind the scenes that you may not be aware of . . .

--that Klein's uses **homemade compost** in our soil recipes. Each fall the city of Madison drops off truckloads of leaves in order to create our own rich compost. Visit our January 07 Newsletter for complete details about how we compost at Klein's.

--that Klein's is switching from unsustainable and environmentally damaging peat based mixes to those made of **coir fiber**--a renewable byproduct of the coconut processing industry. Visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGgUmlfQT60 for a short video on how coir pots are made.

--that Klein's has begun using **biodegradable rice hulls** in our soil mixes instead of perlite. Perlite does not break down in either your garden or the landfill.

--that Klein's has joined the **Dane Buy Local** initiative. Dane Buy Local is a group of over 200 local businesses and organizations whose goal is to educate consumers on the importance of supporting local business and its impact on the community. Please visit danebuylocal.com for a directory of members.

--that Klein's has reduced our reliance on environmentally unfriendly growth regulators on our plants in favor of **proper spacing, regular pinching and growing plants cool**.

--that Klein's is drastically reducing our dependency on conventional chemicals by leaning toward **biological fungicides and insecticides** and **organically based fertilizers**.

--that Klein's supports **Community Supported Agriculture** (CSAs) via this monthly newsletter and by purchasing many of our seasonal cut flowers from a local farmer. Visit www.macsac.org for a list of members in the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition or join them at the **CSA Open House, Saturday, March 28 (1:00-4:00) at Olbrich Botanical Gardens**.

--that Klein's has replaced nearly all of our greenhouse roofs with more energy efficient materials; allowing for greater heat retention during the day and less heat loss at night.

--that Klein's employs a stable and diverse work force who themselves pump dollars into the local economy. To learn more about the people working at Klein's, click on "**Our Staff**" on the left side of our home page.

--and that Klein's continues to grow most of our plant product on site--much of it from seed (including one of the largest selections of **heirloom tomatoes** in the area), thereby reducing packing material and fuel needed to ship finished product. Check out our amazing selection by clicking on "**Spring Plants**" on the left side of our home page and then click on "**Vegetables**".

Visit Klein's this spring and see the difference!

MARCH'S PLANT OF THE MONTH:

Chinese Evergreen (Aglaonema commutatum)

Not an evergreen at all in the common sense, the Chinese evergreen continues to be one of America's most popular and durable indoor plants. Grown for its patterned foliage and indestructible demeanor, Chinese evergreens have graced homes for generations. It is one of only a few houseplants that is able to survive in lower light conditions--although indirect sunlight from an east, west or south window is preferred. Prone to just a few pests, the Chinese evergreen's greatest

downfall is its susceptibility to browning leaf tips during our low humidity winters and the dry indoor climate and its intolerance for cool temperatures.

Chinese evergreens are native to Southeast Asia, but only manmade cultivars are available in circulation. Because Chinese evergreens are considered tough-as-nails, they are often seen in the harshest of indoor settings such as offices and shopping malls. Some of the more striking cultivars have very striking patterned foliage--usually silver or gray set against a deep green. Plants are long-lived and are a good choice for the "brown thumb". The flowers are insignificant, but appear regularly as spathes not so dissimilar from the peace lily or calla, though far less showy.

The Chinese evergreen prefers a rich soil and likes to stay constantly moist but never soggy. Plants will continue to fill out a pot as they age and most varieties grow no taller than 2-2 1/2'. Pot bound plants are easily propagated by division or tip cuttings rooted in soil or water.

Now is the time to pick up the easy-to-grow Chinese evergreen at Klein's!

Because we're currently busy planting up those thousands of annuals, perennials, vegetables, herbs and shrubs for spring . . .

We need more room in our greenhouses!

While supplies last, Klein's is conducting our annual houseplant blow out--

50% OFF HOUSEPLANTS 6" AND LARGER!

(This sale excludes peace lilies and blooming plants and cannot be used with other discounts. Please call Klein's at 608/244-5661 for details.)

YOU ASKED THE MAD GARDENER. . .

Jane asks, "Hello! I am trying to start my tomatoes, beans, and onions indoors under grow lights in my basement. I'm using seeds that I've had for many years now, but it's been over a week and nothing has come up yet. I'm wondering how long seeds will last? And how should I store them to try and make them last longer?"

Hi Jane,

It's a little early to start tomatoes (2/24/09), so you still have time to get them going again (using fresh seed if necessary). You can also wait a few weeks on the onions. Beans are best planted directly in the garden in May. The key to get seeds to germinate indoors is using a seed starting heating mat available at Klein's and all garden centers. They usually run from \$25-\$40 for a 10" x 20" mat, but the investment is worth it. The majority of the vegetable and annual seeds we start indoors for our gardens require a constant 65°-75° temperature for germination. A humidity dome (or a plastic bag) to keep the starting medium moist is also important until germination occurs. All the seeds you started should have been up in just a few days. It's also important to read the seed packets. Many seeds have specific requirements. Once the seeds germinate, they can be removed from the mat.

I start a lot of my own annuals and vegetables in my own basement under grow lights and although it's best to use fresh seed for optimum germination, you can keep seed for years as long as it's kept cool and dry. I use an old Tupperware and keep the seed in the basement in my

growing area. If you feel you haven't stored your seed correctly, it's probably best to start fresh this year. We have an excellent seed assortment available at Klein's.

Thanks for your question!!

The Mad Gardener

AROUND TOWN:

NOTE: If you of know of any community or neighborhood events or garden tours you would like posted on our web site in our monthly newsletters, please contact Rick at (608) 244-5661. Please include all details, i.e. dates, locations, prices, brief description, etc. Our readership is ever-growing so this is a great opportunity for free advertising. Events must be garden related and must take place in the immediate Madison vicinity.

Dane County Winter Farmer's Market

Saturdays, January 3 thru April 11, 8:00-noon
Madison Senior Center
330 W. Mifflin

For details visit www.madfarmmkt.org

Olbrich's Garden's

Bolz Conservatory Exhibit-Yesterday's Plants, Today's Energy

September 3 through March 22, 2009
Daily from 10:00-4:00, Sundays 10:00-5:00
In the Bolz Conservatory

Come learn about the prehistoric plants that formed the coal we use for today's energy. Coal-forming ferns and mosses have lived on Earth for the past 290 million years - since before the dinosaurs! Learn what it took to make these plants into coal, and discover why we need alternative energy sources since today's ferns and mosses won't provide coal energy for tomorrow. Admission is \$1 for the general public. Admission is always free for Olbrich Botanical Society members and children 5 and under, and is free for the general public on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave., Madison
608/246-4550 or www.olbrich.org for details

The Wisconsin Gardener

"Places to Visit"

Sunday, March 1, 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 21, 10:30 a.m.
on Wisconsin Public Television
Check local listings for the station nearest you.

Host Shelley Ryan travels from the far north to southern Wisconsin in a program that focuses on Places to Visit. In Winter, Wisconsin discover a beautiful but hardy zone 3 garden at the Winter Greenhouse. The Childrens Garden at Green Bay Botanical Garden proves that gardening is not just for grown-ups. West of the Lake Garden in Manitowoc is a wonderful legacy to the community. The program ends at the West Madison Agriculture Research Station in Madison where hundreds of new varieties of flowers, vegetables, herbs and fruit are trialed before they're released to the public.

For more information, visit www.wpt.org/garden

The Wisconsin Gardener "The Magic of Gardening"

Sunday, March 1, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 28, 10:30 a.m.

on Wisconsin Public Television

Check local listings for the station nearest you.

Discover "The Magic of Gardening" on the next edition of The Wisconsin Gardener when Producer and Host Shelley Ryan visits enchantingly fanciful gardens throughout the state. In Reedsburg, Chris Coure of Coulee Country Landscape shows Ryan how a backyard pond can recapture the magic of childhood. These chemical-free water features provide a perfect habitat for water plants, fish and frogs but also make a great swimming hole for kids. Ryan learns about the delightful and versatile new trend of miniature gardening from Glenn Spevacek, a Green Industry marketing consultant, in Green Bay. Miniature gardening is as adaptable for large gardens as it is for smaller areas ? patios, decks and even tabletops. Cheryl Keeffe, a Master Gardener in Onalaska, has combined her knowledge of gardening and doll making to appoint an extraordinarily imaginative garden complete with fairies and a headless queen. Jan Wos of Mayflower Greenhouse in Green Bay takes gardening to a new artistic level and shows viewers how to create their own living masterpiece.

For more information, visit www.wpt.org/garden

Rain Gardens

Thursday, March 5 & March 12, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Landscape your yard with wildflowers planted to help absorb storm water and recharge ground water. Topics include design, plant choice, placement and implementation of native rain gardens. This two-part class meets March 5 and 12. Registration required. Contact the Arboretum for a registration form or register and pay online at www.uwarboretum.org

University of WI Arboretum

1207 Seminole Hwy.

Madison, WI 53711

608/263-7888 or uwarboretum.org/events

Olbrich Garden's Spring Show A Simpler Time: Garden Beauty and Bounty

March 7 thru March 22

Daily from 10:00-4:00

In the Olbrich Atrium

Enjoy the beauty of blooming flowers and the bounty of an edible garden while savoring the colors, fragrances, and textures of spring in Olbrich's Spring Flower Show. Garden landscapes can double as edible landscapes when fruits and vegetables are incorporated into the space. This year's indoor spring show will show the home gardener how to combine flower and vegetable plantings for a truly bountiful, beautiful garden. A \$2 donation is suggested. Proceeds benefit Olbrich Gardens.

The show will feature a return to a simpler time - a look back across the decades to vegetable gardens layered with flowers, food produced alongside beauty, and the simple job of working with hand tools to create bounty. Step back in time and up to the front stoop of an old farmhouse. Clothes hang on a clothesline, a windmill waits for a gentle spring breeze, and vintage tools and farm equipment stand ready by a small garden. An antique tractor is surrounded by hundreds of blooming plants and vegetables, many grown in Olbrich's own greenhouses.

Visit Olbrich's Spring Flower Show to see how Olbrich's horticulture staff incorporates food into their indoor garden landscape. The colorful foliage of Swiss chard, an Olbrich favorite for container gardens, adds a pop of color and a bit of texture to any garden, and can also be cooked as a side dish or added to soups or stews. Lettuce, kale, and cabbage are also easy vegetables that can be added to any garden to add a touch of flare and a source of food.

Select flowers from the show will be available for purchase on Tuesday, March 24 at 10 a.m. until supplies last.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave., Madison
608/246-4550 or www.olbrich.org for details

Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Coalition Open House

March 28, 1:00-4:00
At Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Enjoy this free, family friendly event to celebrate Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)! Browse information from CSA farms serving southern Wisconsin, meet the farmers, and learn about fresh local foods through demonstrations, workshops, and slide shows. Enter a raffle for a gift certificate toward a CSA membership from your CSA of choice. CSA farms provide weekly distributions of sustainably grown fruits, vegetables, meats, flowers, and dairy products to households who join the farm for the season. Sponsored by Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC). For more information call 608-226-0300 or visit www.macsac.org.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave., Madison
608/246-4550 or www.olbrich.org for details

MARCH IN THE GARDEN--A checklist of things to do this month.

- Pinch back over wintered geraniums one last time. Root cuttings if needed.
- Check perennials for heaving during warm spells. Remulch as needed.
- Check for early spring bloomers like crocus, winter aconite & hellebores.
- Begin uncovering roses by month's end.
- Continue bringing out your cooled forced bulbs for indoor enjoyment.
- Inspect stored summer bulbs like dahlias, cannas and glads for rotting.
- Check for and treat for pests on plants brought in from the garden.

- ___ Keep birdfeeders full. Clean periodically with soap and water.
- ___ Keep birdbaths full and clean for the return of the first robins & other arrivals.
- ___ Repair and clean out birdhouses. Early arrivals will be here soon!
- ___ Inventory last year's leftover seeds before ordering or buying new ones.
- ___ Seed starting is in full swing: petunias, tomatoes, peppers and cole crops.
- ___ Sterilize seed starting equipment and pots with a 1:16 bleach solution.
- ___ Shop for summer bulbs like gladiolas, lilies and dahlias.
- ___ Remove mulch & rodent protection (chicken wire) from tulip and crocus beds
- ___ Use the winter days to plan next summer's garden.
- ___ March is the month to prune most fruit trees and apply dormant oil.
- ___ Prune late summer and fall blooming shrubs.
- ___ Do not prune spring blooming shrubs like lilacs, forsythia or viburnum.
- ___ Begin bringing in branches for forcing: pussy willow, forsythia, quince, etc.
- ___ As the days lengthen and new growth occurs, increase fertilizing houseplants
- ___ Check your garden for any plant damage from weather or rodents.
- ___ Ready the lawn mower---just a few weeks to go.
- ___ Visit Klein's---the showrooms are filling up with spring annuals. Pansies, violas, calendula, cole crops & onion sets become available by month's end.

Some of our very favorite seed and plant sources include:

For seeds:

- Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds @ RareSeeds.com or 417/924-8887
- Burpee @ burpee.com or 800/888-1447
- Harris Seeds @ harrisseed.com or 800/514-4441
- Johnny's Select Seeds @ johnnyseed.com or 207/861-3901
- Jung's Seeds @ jungseed.com or 800/247-5864
- Park's Seeds @ parkseed.com or 800/845-3369
- Seeds of Change @ seedsofchange.com or 888/762-7333
- Select Seeds @ selectseeds.com or 800/684-0395
- Territorial Seeds @ territorialseed.com or 888/657-3131
- Thompson & Morgan @ thompson-morgan.com or 800/274-7333

For bulbs:

- Colorblends @ colorblends.com or 888/847-8637
- John Scheeper's @ johnscheepers.com or 860/567-0838
- McClure & Zimmerman @ mzbulb.com or 800/883-6998

For plants:

- Heronswood Nursery @ heronswood.com or 360/297-4172
- High Country Gardens @ highcountrygardens.com or 800/925-9387
- Logee's Greenhouses @ logees.com or 888/330-8038
- Plant Delights Nursery @ plantdelights.com or 912/772-4794
- Roots and Rhizomes @ rootsrhizomes.com or 800/374-5035
- Wayside Gardens @ waysidegardens.com or 800/213-0379
- White Flower Farm @ whiteflowerfarm.com or 800/503-9624

Note: To receive every possible seed, plant or garden supply catalog imaginable, check out **Cyndi's Catalog of Garden Catalogs @ gardenlist.com**. Most catalogs are free and make for great winter reading!

BEHIND THE SCENES AT KLEIN'S--This is a sneak peek of what is going on each month behind the scenes in our greenhouses. Many people are unaware that our facility operates year round or that we have 10 more greenhouses on the property in addition to the 6 open for retail. At any given moment we already have a jump on the upcoming season--be it poinsettias in July, geraniums in December or fall mums in May.

IN MARCH:

---Transplanting is in full swing on the transplanting line in our back greenhouses.

Employees work 8-10 hour shifts planting thousands of plugs and tiny seedlings into the cell packs you purchase in the spring. Once planted, the flats move by conveyor and then monorail into the various greenhouses, all kept at different temperatures depending on the plant.

---The greenhouses and showrooms are filling fast with thousands of hanging and potted plants. We're constantly moving product around, trying to make the best use of our limited space.

---By the end of the month we're moving product outside into cold frames and hoop houses. We move product that is very cold tolerant, such as pansies, dianthus, dusty miller, alyssum and even petunias. The cold keeps them compact and pest free and hardens them off for the transition outside. We also need the room in our ever-filling greenhouses.

---Perennial plugs arrive and are stepped up into 3 1/2" and quart sizes. Our perennials are also grown quite cold so they invest their energy into rooting out, rather than growing. Plants remain compact. Any remaining perennials from last season are placed into cold frames.

---Geraniums are pinched and shaped for the last time by the first week of the month. Any later pinching will delay blooming too much for spring sales.

---Retail items are arriving nonstop for unpacking and pricing, everything from garden ornaments and pottery to pesticides and fertilizers.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE--SHARON BROCKEL

Sharon Brockel's first association with Klein's occurred nearly 20 years ago when a current Klein's employee, who was ready for a career change, toyed with the idea of working at a greenhouse after seeing an ad in that morning's newspaper. It was a warm summer day as the two were relaxing in the friend's backyard. Insistently Sharon said, "I'm driving you over to Klein's right now to get you an application." Fast forward twenty years and not only is that employee still with Klein's, but Sharon herself was lured into Klein's intoxicating web.

Sharon Brockel was born in Milwaukee, moved to Antigo, but spent most of her growing up years in Sheboygan, before moving to Madison for college in the mid-1980's. It was Sharon's grandparents who lived in Antigo and she says it was her grandparents who inspired her and taught her much of what she knows about gardening today. She says for them that gardening wasn't the relaxing experience it is for many of us today, but simply a way of life and a means for survival. She says her grandparents multi-acre farm supplied nearly all of the vegetables consumed by the extended family for a whole year. What started simply as a large garden, evolved over time into acres of nearly every vegetable imaginable with some fruits and herbs thrown into the mix. She says they grew potatoes, beans, corn, tomatoes, peppers, strawberries, raspberries, you name it, in Antigo's famous and very fertile silt loam soil (the official State Soil of Wisconsin). Sharon says she lived with her grandparents during the summers, helping in the extensive gardens. Her parents would drive up from Sheboygan some weekends to help with the harvest, the preparation and to haul veggies back to their Sheboygan home "bit by bit" for the winter months. She says they "put up all the vegetables" for an entire year by canning them, storing them in the cool root cellar or by freezing them in the farm's walk-in freezer. It was a whole family endeavor. Sharon says the experiences on the farm and in her own vegetable gardens have opened her up to the joys of eating homegrown produce and has taught her what truly good food is.

Sharon's love for learning continues. It was after buying her first home on Madison's east side that her true passion for gardening kicked in. Over the years, Sharon has wholeheartedly pursued many aspects of the gardening world. Sharon not only enjoys gardening with vegetables, herbs and flowers in the broader sense, but focuses in on many of the specifics. For example, Sharon has become somewhat of an expert on butterfly gardening. She has done extensive research on our native butterflies and how to lure them to our gardens by incorporating their host plants into the landscape. Sharon truly enjoys sharing this knowledge with the Klein's shopper and will direct them to butterfly favorites like swamp milkweed, meadow blazing star and bronze fennel. Sharon says she not only enjoys talking about insects in the garden, but sharing her vast knowledge on topics as broad as composting and soil improvement to container gardening and growing tropicals. Throughout their lives, Sharon's two children, Vaughn and Quinn, have also been encouraged to share in the gardening experience and have even helped out their mom at Klein's now and again when time is short.

Around Klein's, Sharon is known as the herb lady. She not only orders the herbs for Klein's, but maintains that department during the planting season and then sets up and maintains our extensive herb selection at the Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo each February. Sharon has been a member of the Madison Herb Society and has been involved with the Herb Fair at Olbrich Gardens. She says she enjoys learning about all aspects of herb usage--culinary, healing, fabric dying, etc. By day, Sharon works in the medical library at Meriter Hospital, moonlighting at Klein's in the evenings and on weekends during the spring planting season. She says she revels in the chase for knowledge. The librarian, the teacher, the student and the naturalist become one in their quest for gardening information--be it butterfly gardening, composting, seed starting or container gardening. Continuing her thirst for knowledge, Sharon is planning to become a Master Gardener in the near future.

PERMANENT FEATURES-- **KLEIN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

Have our monthly newsletter e-mailed to you automatically by signing up on the right side of our home page. We'll offer monthly tips, greenhouse news and tidbits, specials and recipes. ...everything you need to know from your favorite Madison greenhouse. And tell your friends. It's easy to do.

THE MAD GARDENER--"Madison's Firsthand Source for Expert Gardening Advice"

Ask us your gardening questions by e-mailing us at madgardener@kleinsfloral.com. Klein's in-house **Mad Gardener** will e-mail you with an answer as promptly as we can. The link is posted on our home page and in all newsletters.

We can only answer those questions pertaining to gardening in Southern Wisconsin and we reserve the right to leave correspondence unanswered at our discretion. Please allow 2-3 days for a response.

SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNT

We offer a 10% Off Senior Citizen Discount every Tuesday to those 62 and above. This discount is not in addition to other discounts or sales. Please mention that you are a senior before we ring up your purchases. Does not apply to wire out orders or services, i.e. delivery, potting, etc.

BUCKY BOOK COUPON

Klein's is again showing our proud support of community UW athletics and academics with advertising and coupons in the 2009 edition of the Bucky Book. Visit www.buckybook.com for more information and to order your copy.

DELIVERY INFO

Klein's Floral and Greenhouses delivers daily, except Sundays, throughout all of Madison and much of Dane County including: Cottage Grove, DeForest, Fitchburg, Maple Bluff, Marshall, McFarland, Middleton, Monona, Oregon, Shorewood Hills, Sun Prairie, Verona, Waunakee and Windsor. Current delivery rate on 1-4 items is \$6.95 for Madison, Maple Bluff, Monona and Shorewood Hills, slightly more to the surrounding communities and for more than 4 items. We not only deliver our fabulous fresh flowers, but also houseplants, bedding plants and sundries. A minimum order of \$25.00 is required for delivery. Delivery to the Madison hospitals is \$4.95. Deliveries to the four Madison hospitals are made during the early afternoon. There is no delivery charge to funeral homes in the city of Madison, although regular rates apply for morning funeral deliveries to Madison's west side. Regular rates also apply for funeral deliveries in the surrounding communities.

Morning delivery is guaranteed to the following Madison zip codes, but only if requested: 53703, 53704, 53714, 53716, 53718 and Cottage Grove, DeForest, Maple Bluff, Marshall, McFarland, Monona, Sun Prairie, Waunakee and Windsor. We begin our delivery day at 8:00 a.m. and end at approximately 4:00 p.m. Except during holidays, the following west-side zip codes and communities can be delivered only during the afternoon: 53705, 53706, 53711, 53713, 53717, 53719, 53726, Fitchburg, Middleton, Oregon, Shorewood Hills and Verona. During holidays (Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, etc.) we are able to make morning deliveries to all of the above areas. We are not able to take closely timed deliveries on any holiday due to the sheer volume of such requests. It's best to give us a range of time and we'll try our absolute hardest. Orders for same day delivery must be placed by 12:30 p.m. or by 2:30 p.m. for Madison zip codes 53704 and 53714. We do not deliver to Cambridge, Columbus, Deerfield or Stoughton.

DEPARTMENT HEADS: Please refer all questions, concerns or feedback in the following departments to their appropriate supervisor.

Phone: 608/244-5661 or 888/244-5661

Floral Department Manager Kathy Lehman

kathy@kleinsfloral.com

Head Grower & Horticulturist Jamie VandenWymelenberg

jamie@kleinsfloral.com

Assistant Grower

Craig Johnson

craig@kleinsfloral.com

Retail Manager

Jennifer Wadyka

jennifer@kleinsfloral.com

House Accounts & Billing Barbara Foulk

Delivery Supervisor

Rick Halbach

Owner Sue (Klein) Johnson

sue@kleinsfloral.com

RELATED RESOURCES AND WEB SITES

University of Wisconsin Extension

1 Fen Oak Ct. #138

Madison, WI 53718
608/224-3700
www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/
www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort

Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic
Dept. of Plant Pathology
1630 Linden Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
www.plantpath.wisc.edu/

Insect Diagnostic Lab
240 Russell Labs
1630 Linden Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
www.entomology.wisc.edu/

State Soil Testing Lab
5711 Mineral Point Rd.
Madison, WI 53705
608/262-4364
www.soils.wisc.edu

American Horticultural Society
www.ahs.org

Garden Catalogs (an extensive list with links)
www.gardenlist.com
also www.mailordergardening.com

Invasive Species
www.invasive.org

Friends of Troy Gardens
Rm. 171, Bldg. 14
3601 Memorial Dr.
Madison, WI 53704
608/240-0409
www.troygardens.org

Community Gardens Division (Madison area)
Community Action Coalition
1717 N. Stoughton Rd.
Madison, WI 53704
608/246-4730
www.cacscw.org/gardens/

Madison Area Master Gardeners (MAMGA)
www.madison.com/communities/mamga/

Wisconsin Master Gardeners Program
Department of Horticulture

1575 Linden Drive
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Madison, WI 53706
608/265-4504
www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/

The Wisconsin Gardener
www.wpt.org/garden/
Has a list of garden clubs and societies

Allen Centennial Gardens
620 Babcock Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
608/262-8406
www.horticulture.wisc.edu/allencentennialgardens/Index.html

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
608/246-4550
www.olbrich.org

Rotary Gardens
1455 Palmer Dr.
Janesville, WI 53545
608/752-3885
www.rotarygardens.org

University of WI Arboretum
1207 Seminole Hwy.
Madison, WI 53711
608/263-7888
www.uwarboretum.org

University of Wisconsin-West Madison
Agricultural Research Center
8502 Mineral Point Rd.
Verona, WI 53593
608/262-2257
www.cals.wisc.edu/westmad/

PLANTS POISONOUS TO CHILDREN:

Children may find the bright colors and different textures of plants irresistible, but some plants can be poisonous if touched or eaten. If you're in doubt about whether or not a plant is poisonous, don't keep it in your home. The risk is not worth it. The following list is not comprehensive, so be sure to seek out safety information on the plants in your home to be safe.

- Bird of paradise
- Bull nettle
- Castor bean
- Chinaberry tree
- Crocus

- Daffodil
- Deadly nightshade
- Dieffenbachia (dumb cane)
- Foxglove
- Glory lily
- Hemlock
- Holly berry
- Indian tobacco
- Iris
- Jimsonweed
- Lantana
- Larkspur
- Lily of the valley
- Marijuana
- Mescal bean
- Mexicanes
- Mistletoe
- Morning glory
- Mountain laurel
- Night-blooming jasmine
- Nutmeg
- Oleander
- Philodendron
- Poison ivy
- Poison sumac
- Pokeweed
- Poppy
- Potato
- Privet
- Rhododendron
- Rhubarb
- Water hemlock
- Wisteria

PLANTS POISONOUS TO PETS:

Below is a list of some of the common plants which may produce a toxic reaction in animals. This list is intended only as a guide to plants which are generally identified as having the capability for producing a toxic reaction. Source: The National Humane Society website @ www.hsus.org/

- Aconite
- Apple
- Arrowgrasses
- Autumn Crocus
- Azaleas
- Baneberry
- Bird-of-Paradise
- Black locust
- Bloodroot
- Box
- Buckeye
- Buttercup
- Caladium
- Carolina jessamine

- Castor bean
- Chinaberry tree
- Chockcherries
- Christmas berry
- Christmas Rose
- Common privet
- Corn cockle
- Cowbane
- Cow cockle
- Cowsliprb
- Daffodil
- Daphne
- Day lily
- Delphinium (Larkspur)
- Dumbcane
- Dutchman's breeches
- Easter lily
- Elderberry
- Elephant's ear
- English Ivy
- European Bittersweet
- Field peppergrass
- Foxglove
- Holly
- Horsechestnut
- Horse nettle
- Hyacinth
- Iris
- Jack-in-the-pulpit
- Jerusalem Cherry
- Jimsonweed
- Lantana
- Larkspur
- Laurels
- Lily of the valley
- Lupines
- Mayapple
- Milk vetch
- Mistletoe
- Monkshood
- Morning glory
- Mustards
- Narcissus
- Nicotiana
- Nightshade
- Oaks
- Oleander
- Philodendrons
- Pokeweed
- Poinsettia
- Poison hemlock
- Potato

- Rhododendron
- Rhubarb
- Rosary pea
- Sago palm
- Skunk cabbage
- Smartweeds
- Snow-on-the-mountain
- Sorghum
- Star of Bethlehem
- Wild black cherry
- Wild radish
- Wisteria
- Yellow jessamine
- Yew