

FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

VOLUME X
ISSUE 1

COMMON GROUND

NRH Community Garden



*Gardeners have to be
optimists or they
would not
still be gardening!*

Upcoming Events

February 15

Monthly Garden Workday
Starting at 8:30 am
Common Ground

This is our first workday of the year, so please attend and help us to prepare the garden for spring! Dianne Spradling will speak on a garden topic during the workday.

March 21

Monthly Garden Workday
Starting at 8:30 am
Common Ground

April 18

Monthly Garden Workday
Starting at 8:30 am
Common Ground



Community Garden Spotlight

Davis White and Boy Scout Troup 179

Common Ground thanks Davis White and Boy Scout Troup 179 for building two movable plots for our garden. These plots will enable crops to be grown in the sunshine, but moved to shade for working in them. This will benefit gardeners who are not able to stay out in the hot sun.

Davis designed and built these plots for his Eagle Scout project. The scouts who worked with Davis are Jack Riddle, Ethan Frayer, Jake Chapel, Tony Medford, Ethan Armstrong, Tyler Armstrong and Alex Compton. Three of those scouts came out to help Davis with final delivery.





VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BEST!

Here are some areas where you can volunteer at NRH Common Ground. We are a community garden, and we need our whole community to work together to make our garden superior!

If you can contribute some of your time for any of these areas, contact Dianne Spradling at nrhcommonground@gmail.com or speak to any of the board members when you see them at the garden.

Short (10 to 15 minutes) talks at our Saturday garden work days. Topics such as:

Vegetables you like to grow and have had the best experience with.

Wildflowers

Organic Fertilizers

Native Plants

Organic Pesticides

Bulbs

Bug identification

Planting seeds

Watering Advice

Transplants How To's

Soil Prep



Creating Garden Flyers. Covering topics such as:

Upcoming events

How to join the garden

What we are all about

Educational information for our many kiosks/information boards



Garden Stewards

Help our Steward Captain to identify any non-compliant plots and contact owners.

You would oversee about 10 plots all in one row.

We need at least two more people to help in this area!



Assist our Newsletter Editor:

Photograph Work Day participants

Photograph Community Clean up days with schools and other groups

Photograph Bees & Butterflies; Plants & Flowers

Write educational articles or book reviews on books in our Little Lending Library.

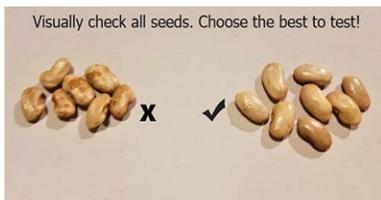
HOW TO TEST SEED VIABILITY IN 3 EASY STEPS

Seeds, like other living things, have a shelf-life! But, just because seeds are out of date, doesn't mean they won't germinate and grow normally. Checking your seeds is much more sustainable than throwing them out and assuming they are useless. If the seed packet date has expired, it's similar to the 'Best Use By' date on food packaging. It doesn't mean the food isn't edible, but the quality may have deteriorated. Likewise, some of the seeds may still grow if planted, but not necessarily every seed in the packet. The longer you wait to sow, the lower the chance of successful seed germination.

Once you're ready to test if your seeds are still alive and have the vitality to grow healthy plants, follow this simple process to check their viability.

You'll need: **Seed packets; paper towels/napkins; water in a spray bottle; recycled plastic bag; marker pen to label the bag; and patience (seriously)!**

STEP 1: PREPARE TO SOW



First, do a visual check and choose 10 of the best-looking seeds. Avoid selecting any that are shrunken, moldy or discolored. Set seeds aside.



Spray a paper towel with water to dampen well. Lay flat on a surface and spread out your seeds on one half, so they are well separated. Fold the other half of the paper towel over the top of the seeds to cover.



STEP 2: STORE SEEDS CORRECTLY

Slide the paper towel into the plastic bag, label it and seal well to create humidity. Seeds need air, so don't squash it all out of the bag! If you have more than one seed variety to test at the same time, gently roll up the paper towels into cylinder shapes and lay flat in a row. Then they can all share the same plastic bag. Remember to label each variety inside. You may want to color code with a slip of paper. Lay the sealed bag flat in a warm or sunny spot. For example, near your cooktop or a TV that gives off warmth or a cabinet near a light.

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HOW TO TEST SEED VIABILITY IN 3 EASY STEPS

STEP 3: CHECK FOR SEED GERMINATION

Keep moist for the number of days required for your seed variety to germinate. Check your seed packet for average days to germination. Mark this on the bag so you know what date to expect they should germinate. Spray extra water if needed and check every couple of days or so to see if any seeds have germinated. If some of the seeds start to germinate, you'll know the rest are worth sowing too! Remember you may need patience for this project!



How to Calculate Seed Viability

Count the number of seeds out of 10 that germinated successfully. Then you can calculate the viability for the remainder. So, if 1 of the 10 sprout, your seed only has 10% viability. It's best to sow as soon as possible! If 9 of the 10 germinate, 90% of the seeds are still very viable. In this case, you can keep in storage if you don't need to sow now. This test will help with your decision-making.

How to Store Seeds Safely

To maintain the quality and life of your seeds, how you store them really matters! If your test results were poor, this may be a wakeup call to improve on your seed storage method. Ideally, store seeds in a sealed air-tight container or glass jar in a dark, dry, cool spot. If you have room, a sealed box in your fridge is ideal. Tablet jars are also handy. Add a silica gel sachet to absorb moisture in each jar or a few grains of dry rice will do the job too.

Temperature and light fluctuations during storage can impact life in the seeds, e.g. if you constantly open a cupboard or fridge door where seeds are stored. Assess how you can improve your seed storage. Relocate your seeds, if necessary, to more favorable consistent conditions.

If you follow these tips, you should be able to test your seed viability and store your seeds for long life and abundant harvests.

“Every seed has the ability to provide you with enormous food value. They're an investment in your future health so they deserve to be treated like royalty!”

— Anne Gibson

2020 Spring Gardening Seminar

We had a great turn-out of over 100 people at our Spring Gardening Seminar held on Saturday, February 1st.



We thank our sponsors who handed out great literature and items. We especially thank Keep NRH Beautiful for providing snacks from Chick-fil-A for the attendees.



2020 Spring Gardening Seminar



Tanner Arwine talked about lawn care, Kevin Rogers compared seeds and Joyce Connelley spoke on organic versus conventional gardening. If you would like to see the Power Point Presentations, go to www.nrhcommunitygarden.com.



Several door prizes were handed out to some really happy guests! We appreciate our sponsors and others who donated the prizes:

Marshall Grain
Russell Feed
Chuys Mexican Restaurant
NRH Farmers Market and
NRH Common Ground.

