

# The Seedling – April 2020

Volume 45, Issue 4

The Men's Garden Club of Burlington NC

<https://burlingtonmensgarden.club>



**Next Meeting: May 26, 2020 Bring a guest!**  
**Occasions, 286 East Front Street, Burlington NC**  
**APRIL MEETING CANCELLED!!**  
**PRESENTATION TO BE RESCHEDULED**



## *A Message from President Dirk Sprenger*

Dear Members and Friends of the Men's Garden Club,

I hope the frost last Friday night was the last for April. The greens are thriving but the hibiscus is unhappy! My theme today is Asparagus is Essential, and so is your garden club!

Asparagus just keeps coming back and is very valuable in a Victory Garden (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/victorygarden/index.html>). All 13 of America's original states were growing asparagus in 1776 and I dare say most of our grandparents too. Therefore, I planted it last year hoping to have a patch to enjoy for the next 15 years. So far, so good. One stalk is 50 inches tall and looks like a fern. It

was listed by settlers in PA as essential and this got me to thinking about what is essential. What is essential in April 2020?

- Food & gardens
- Education & horticulture
- Students and teachers
- Funding for all of the above

Obviously the list is longer, with TP and whatnot, but my time is short. This article must be done before breakfast. The new world of Feb/March brought **essentials** into laser focus.

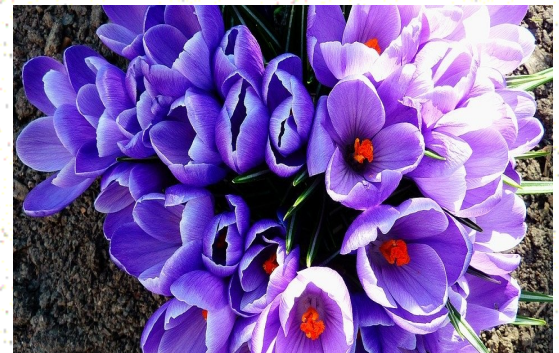
Now especially email and certain apps are essential to keep us connected, to keep students in school and

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<b>Vice President: Eric Levine</b>	<b>Chaplain: Bob Held</b>
<b>Secretary: Harry Porthouse</b>	<b>Seedling Editor: Kurt Moore</b>



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to bring the **Seedling** to your inbox. Each of you is most certainly essential to the club and to your family and friends. I will miss your wit and wisdom this month because our monthly meeting is off. So I say keep in touch and think, as you read this issue of the Seedling, about how we can be better than ever in the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021. Kudos go to Harry for submitting his SF Gardening article for this issue of the Seedling. Thanks for all the club officers for bearing with me as we make decisions for May, and June, etc. Support your local stores by buying seeds and plants. Give away flowers! Look forward to more information soon about how we will navigate fundraising to support our students in Alamance County. Peacehaven and schools are temporarily closed, but like us, they need to keep the lights on, and we are here to do our part.

**Share this Seedling** with some young folks that may not have heard of a Victory Garden and with some old folks who can tell you about Victory Gardens and how to survive difficult days and weeks. Tell them it has zero stories about Covid-19. Lastly, send Kurt Moore some pictures from your lawn and gardens!

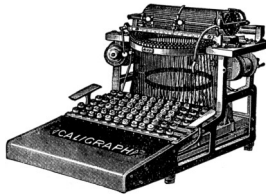
**Joseph P Kennedy** said: *When the going gets tough, the tough get going.*

I will have asparagus photos for you next year,

“

*Dirk Warren Sprenger*

### Editor's corner



### Send me your news for 2020!

This is your newsletter! Please feel free to send me content that you would like to share with your fellow members—upcoming events, gardening tips, resources, pictures, websites and online tools, things learned, recipes using things from your garden, deals and other great bargains, etc. Please send to me via email to me and let me know that it is for the newsletter. Kurt.

### April Birthdays

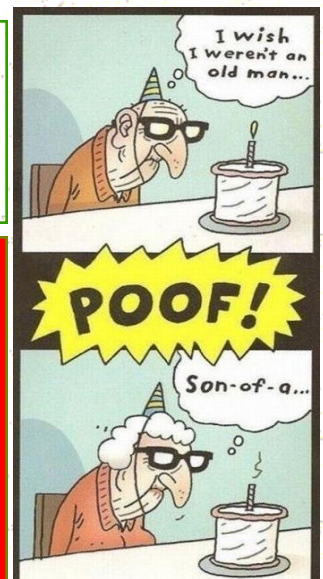
Harry Porthouse — 9th      Ray Schwartz—23rd

Your perk is to head the chow line with our guests!

### April Meeting Cancelled

Due to orders for the Covid-19 virus, the the April 28th garden club meeting is cancelled. The executive board has been communicating by phone and email to develop a contingency fundraising plan. As you may know, the Mebane Dogwood Festival has been cancelled. Our fee has been refunded.

The board will be keeping an eye on things and decide whether to hold a May meeting.



## March Meeting Highlights

On the March 17th, the Executive Committee voted to withdraw from the festival due to coronavirus concerns and uncertainty as to whether it might get cancelled at the last minute, which it did.



As you know, we are not having an April meeting. May is still tentative, but the Executive Committee will determine later whether we still have a May meeting.

## Coronavirus Information

For the latest information on coronavirus in North Carolina, please visit the NC Division of Health and Human Services website at:

[www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina)

## 2020 Plant and Garden Sales—Updated



Due to coronavirus concerns and instructions from the governor's office many events have been cancelled or may be expected to be cancelled, including area gardening events and plant sales. We are now seeing cancellations extending into May. Please visit their websites over the next couple of weeks if they are not indicated as cancelled here.

Most local outlets for supplies, seeds and bedding plants are still open as they qualify as "essential business"

**April 17-18**—Women's Resource Center 21st Annual Herb Festival, 0830-1900 (Friday) & 0830-1500 (Sat), Burlington, **CANCELLED**

**April 24-25** – 22nd Annual Mebane Dogwood Festival **CANCELLED**

**April 26**—Go Green Garden Show, , Sunday 9am—2 pm. Greensboro Farmers Curb Market, 501 Yanceyville St. <https://www.gsofarmersmarket.org/vendorinfo-faq/craft-and-pottery-show-vendors-info/> **ASSUME**

**THIS IS CANCELLED AS THE MARKET IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

**May 2**—NC Botanical Gardens Spring Native Plant Sale **CANCELLED**

**May 8-9** —Guilford Master Gardeners Pass-along Plant Sale, Ag Extension Service, Greensboro, NC. Friday 9 am—3 pm, Saturday 9 am—1 pm. **CANCELLED**

### Alamance Cooperative Extension online

Our local cooperative extension has been putting more programming online as we are all ordered to shelter in. These include virtual events and retrievable program on their YouTube Channel.

<https://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7xw-AUuQN-rahmSJ43vmFg/featured>

### 2020 Programs—updated

With our meeting cancellations, our speaker schedule is constantly changing. But we still need input to round out the 2020 program agenda. Give us your input on suggested topics and speakers. We still need programs for July and August.

**March— CANCELLED—SEE PAGE 2**

**April—**"Gardening and Fertilizers", **CANCELLED**

**May— "Vermiculture", Eric Levine - TENTATIVE**

**June—** "Beekeeping in 2020: the Basics and Challenges", Tony Abbruzzi

**July—** OPEN. Please suggest speakers and topics

**August—**OPEN. Please suggest speakers and topics

**September—**Annual Picnic/Social. Place TBD. Spouses invited.

**October—**Presentations from our donee organizations—PeaceHaven, ACC and Western & Southern FFA programs.

**November—**"Lasagna Gardens", Gail and Kurt Moore

**December—**No Meeting.



Somehow, I don't think this is going to work.

... butt, read this from  
gardeningknowhow.com

[Toilet Paper Substitutes: Plants You Can Use As Toilet Paper \(full article\)](#)

*Well, perhaps you could grow your own toilet paper. That's right! Many plants are useful as a substitute for this hygiene product. Leaves for toilet paper are often more soothing, softer, and as an added bonus, compostable and sustainable.*

*Some other options for toilet paper from the garden are: Common Mallow, Indian Coleus, Pink Wild Pear (tropical hydrangea) Large Leaf Aster, and Blue Spur Flower.*

## Gardening in the News

### Renewed interest in gardening

You may have noticed in the news that the current Covid-19 pandemic has sparked a renewed interest in all forms of gardening. Even our local garden centers have been busy. Here are a few samples with links (in the headlines) to the articles.

#### [Fearing Shortages, People Are Planting More Vegetable Gardens](#)

*"There has been a surge of people interested in growing their own food." says an NPR article.*

*"We're being flooded with vegetable orders," says George Ball, executive chairman of the Burpee Seed Company, based in Warminster, Penn.*

*Ball says he has noticed spikes in seed sales during bad times: the stock market crash of 1987, the dotcom bubble burst of 2000, and he remembers the two oil crises of the 1970s from his childhood. But he says he has not seen a spike this large and widespread.*

#### [Growing restless: Local residents turn to gardening during COVID-19 shutdown](#)

*Whether it's to be more self-sustainable or just because they have more free time on their hands, people are turning to gardening during COVID-19 to relieve their stress and find an outdoor escape.*

*"I think [gardening is] good because it gets people outside, for one," Amy Brandt said. "It's definitely relaxing, which I think everybody kind of needs right now and I think it's good for people to learn how to grow things as well."*

#### [Nurseries, garden centers respond to COVID-19 pandemic \(area news\)](#)

*Steve Rierson of Tom's Planthouse is one of many local growers who are adapting how they do business in light of COVID-19. Rierson has eight 2,000-square-foot greenhouses at Tom's Planthouse, where he has grown his family business for the last 34 years.*

*"I'm gonna try to keep it down to four or five people in each greenhouse," Rierson said. "We've got hand sanitizer, everybody can get a pair of gloves and go in and shop with gloves on."*

## Square Foot Gardening

By Harry Porthouse

From the Members



As we age, a desire to work less or even just plain necessity may compel us to scale back somewhat on our gardening efforts; however, we don't want to give up decent crop yields. The answer is Square Foot Gardening, from a book by the same name authored in 1981 by Mel Bartholomew. Mel was both an engineer and an avid gardener who grew tired of fighting garden pests, constantly watering large beds, and always weeding a big garden.



To ease his workload, he designed a garden consisting of 4-foot-by-4-foot squares, each subdivided into 16 separate foot square plots. Each square was planted with a different crop. In his first season, one 4 x 4 bed would produce at least 32 carrots, 12 bunches of leaf lettuce, 18 bunches of spinach, 16 radishes, 16 scallions, nine Japanese turnips, five pounds of peas, four heads of romaine lettuce, one head of cauliflower and one of broccoli.

As you can see from the results above, there are many reasons to consider using the Square Foot Gardening system. Among them are: it is easy to Plan, sets up quickly, requires no digging, starts with healthy soil, has no soil compaction, provides warmer soil, results in less weeding, is easier to water, provides greater yield, and is easy to maintain.

What equipment and material will you need? Very little, actually: a sunny site for the beds, wood and fasteners for the frames, a weed barrier, ingredients for your optimal soil mix, seeds and seedlings, small garden tools, and a means of watering.

The process for starting Square Foot Gardening is easy. First, determine the size garden you want. Next, make and place the frames (no digging is required). Then, just add the soil mix and plant the squares. Now the hard work is over. Just remove pests and weeds by hand as necessary, harvest the crops, and replant the squares, rotating planting among the squares throughout the growing season.



The primary reference to get you started is: *"All New Square Foot Gardening"*, 3rd Edition, by Mel Bartholomew, 2018, Quarto Publishing Group USA, Inc., Minneapolis, MN.

With the book you also get three useful planting tools. Included are a square foot seeding square template, a quick reference planting guide, and a planting dibble for the seeds.

Let me know if I can help you get started.

Harry

... and last, but not least, a word of encouragement from Ray Schwartz:

