

MASTER GARDENERS TO HOST PLANT SALE AT APRIL 27TH FIBER FEST
By Frederick County Master Gardeners

Looking for spring flowers and vegetables? Come to the Frederick County Master Gardeners' annual plant sale on Saturday, April 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Frederick Fairgrounds, part of the *Frederick News-Post* Fiberfest.

Master Gardeners will showcase more than 150 varieties of plants, both old favorites and new varieties, including annuals, perennials, vegetables, and herbs—all well suited to Frederick growing conditions.

Annuals

At our sale, you will find annuals that thrive in various light and soil conditions; resist rabbits and deer; and provide nutrients for butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. For example:



Gomphrena (*Gomphrena globosa*), the lollipop plant. Gomphrena's rose-colored "Pinata" has an unusual rounded shape and adds contrast to other flower blooms. A sun lover, both drought-tolerant and heat-resistant, it grows 12 to 24 feet tall.

- Iresine (*Iresine*; yes, the Latin and common names are the same), or bloodleaf plant. Add colorful foliage plants, such as Iresine with its glossy red leaves, to your flowerbeds. It grows well in both sun and shade, or as a houseplant, reaching 18 to 30 inches.
- Torenia (*Torenia* species), the wishbone plant. This wonderfully prolific, long-blooming, bushy vine does well in shade. Torenias will provide blue, trumpet-shaped flowers that bloom summer through fall.

Perennials

Perennials return to the garden every year. We'll have at least 50 species at this year's sale. Some must-haves:

- Penstemon, or beardtongue species, forms spikes of bell-shaped flowers in late spring; the white variety is often about three feet tall; lavender about 18 inches. It loves the sun and, once established, will tolerate both dry conditions and occasional flooding.
- Mountain mint (various species), a must for the pollinator garden, attracts a wide variety of pollinating insects. The foliage, which reaches about three feet at maturity, appears to have been dusted with powdered sugar and has a minty fragrance.



Goldenrod

- Phlox is remarkably versatile, with varieties that bloom in spring or summer, are short or tall, can prefer either sun or partial shade, and come in white, blue, purple, and pink.
- In addition, look for our ferns, sedges, and ornamental grasses.

Herbs

Herbs, typically used for culinary, medicinal, aromatic, and sometimes spiritual purposes, are as easily grown in containers as in garden plots. In our region, many herbs are annuals, surviving only one season, although some, such as bay, lavender, rosemary, sage, and thyme, can survive our winters if sheltered or brought inside.

This year we'll have more than 50 varieties of herbs, both traditional favorites, as well as new and exciting varieties. Some of the all-time favorites to be featured at the plant sale include:

- Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Lavender (*Lanvandula*)
- Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)
- Rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*)
- Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
- Thyme (*Thymus*)



Vegetables

In addition to a large assortment of both spring and summer crop seedlings in various sizes, we



will feature a variety of heirloom tomatoes. Heirloom plants are defined as “older, open-pollinated cultivars grown for their unique eating quality, color, and shape, and genetic preservation,” according to the University of Maryland extension service Home and Garden web site.

We will also have a relatively new grape tomato variety—Valentine Tomato. This variety provides high yields, sweet fruit, and is an early producer. Our seedlings will be available in various sizes, including six-packs, four-inch pots, and one-gallon pots.

Other vegetables will include:

- Spring crops—Lettuce, kale, cabbage, spinach. April is a great time to plant all of these seedlings outside, as they are cool weather crops.
- Vines—Zucchini, cucumber, squash. Zucchini came from Mesoamerica, while cucumber was first cultivated in India. Squash is one of the original North American foods, eaten raw, roasted, steamed, baked, and in soups or stews.
- Summer crops—Tomatoes, peppers, melons. Although Mayan in origin, tomatoes can now be found in recipes around the world. Chili peppers are also a New World crop, originating in South America. And melons, first cultivated in Southwest Asia, are now enjoyed everywhere.

Flea Market

One of our most popular booths is our garden-themed flea market. Look for gently used tools or add whimsy to your garden with a unique array of pots, sculpture and other decorative items, including bees and butterflies, and jewelry lady bugs.



Check our website or Facebook for upcoming free seminars, Master Gardener certification classes, as well as other announcements. For more information about the Frederick County Extension Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, gardening information and advice visit: <http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening> or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, 301-600-1596. Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/mastergardenersfrederickcountymaryland> .
UME Home & Garden Information Center,
<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environmentnatural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center> .

University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.