

Ask Flora—March 2023

Dear Flora,

All of this winter weather has me dreaming about gardening this summer. Can you tell me how many frost-free days of growing we have in Sublette County?

Dreaming—

Sunny Sky

Dear Sunny,

That is a great question—one that all Sublette gardeners would like a better answer to! If you consult the USDA Hardiness Zones, most of Sublette County is considered to be classified as Zone 3 (possibly Zone 4 in some areas). According to local growers, June 15th is generally considered to be the last frost date for the spring & early to mid-August is when we should start watching the forecast for cold temperatures.

Over the past few gardening seasons, Sublette gardens have been fortunate to enjoy 50—60 frost free growing days. Caution--all gardeners here need to know that it is wise to pay careful attention to the weather forecast so that you can cover your frost-sensitive plants when there is any threat of frost.

Dear Flora,

I have been wondering about some options for extending the growing season? Do you have some ideas or resources for me?

Wondering,

Debbie Dirt

Dear Debbie,

As it turns out, you aren't the only one wondering about season extension. The Sage & Garden Snow Gardening Club partnered with Sublette BOCES to host a class in late February to share information on this topic. There were over 90 attendees for the full-day workshop! We learned so much from Arlinda McLaughlin and the many knowledgeable local presenters.

Several options to extend the season were discussed—these options can warm up your plants while also protecting them from wind damage. Simple options, like covering plants with frost blankets or low tunnel hoops are some very cost effective options. Hoop houses (also known as high-tunnels) are another great option. The University of Wyoming Extension website has several free plans for hoop houses— <https://www.uwyo.edu/uwe/programs/whhin/> . The last option discussed at the recent workshop was greenhouses. Some sturdy examples include kits from Planta Greenhouses, FarmTek Growers Supply, Riga Greenhouses, and Montana Sheds (locally built option).

Dear Flora,

What crops are best suited for indoor gardens? Where can I buy seeds adapted for our short growing season? Local transplants for tomatoes, flowers, or other vegetable starts?

Sincerely--Seedy Plante

Dear Seedy,

There are many crop varieties that grow well in hoop houses or greenhouses. Due to our short growing season, it is still recommended to look for cultivars of plants that mature in 50—75 days. Crops like tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, summer squash, beans, and flowers are great options to try. Johnny's Seeds and Territorial Seeds are both good options for short season, quality seeds.

Local transplants can be found in Pinedale at Little Painted Sage Farm (Maggie McAllister), Wind River Gardens, A to Z Hardware, Ridley's, Bomgaars, or Mary Thompson. Lander—Sprouts, Jackson—Porcupine Nursery.

Dear Flora,

There are so many types of tomatoes; I'm having a hard time figuring out which variety to choose. Could you recommend some favorites from local home gardeners in Sublette County?

Tom Roma

Dear Tom,

There are two main types of tomatoes—with lists of some local favorites:

1. **Determinate tomatoes** are compact bushy plants, perfect for growing in a raised bed or container. Favorite determinate varieties are:
 - Gold Nugget - yellow cherry – 56 days – Johnny's Seeds
 - Koralik - red cherry – 60 days – Territorial Seeds
 - Glacier - 2 inch slicer – 55 days – Johnny's Seeds
 - Mountain Merit - 3 inch slicer – 75 days – Territorial Seeds
 - Celebrity - 2 inch slicer – 70 days – Park Seeds
2. **Indeterminate tomatoes** are tall and vining, perfect for growing in raised beds or in ground beds. Favorite indeterminate tomatoes are:
 - Sun Gold - yellow cherry – 57 days – Johnny's Seeds
 - Super Sweet 100 - red cherry – 60 days – Johnny's Seeds
 - Stupice – 2 inch slicer – Territorial Seeds
 - Jetsetter – 3 inch slicer – Totally Tomatoes
 - Early Girl – 2-3 inch slicer – Johnny's Seeds

Dear Flora,

I love to learn about gardening in Sublette County. Are there any upcoming classes or activities being offered by the Sage & Snow Garden Club?

Best,

Everly Curious

Dear Everly,

You are in luck! “Planting for Pollinators” is an upcoming class being offered by Sage & Snow Garden Club at the Pinedale Library on Thursday, April 20th. Arlinda McLaughlin & Julie Kraft will share information on the importance of planting to attract pollinators.

- Pollinator Workshop 6:00—8:00PM
- Seed Exchange 5:30PM (before the workshop)—Bring seeds to share!

The Sage & Snow Garden Club will host our annual garden tour on Saturday, August 5th. We are hoping to feature some local hoop houses/ green houses this year--watch for more information.

For more information on indoor gardens, Sage & Snow Garden Club activities/membership—go to our website @ <https://www.sageandsnowgardenclub.org/> or contact Arlinda McLaughlin @ 307-367-2791.