

# hello SUMMER

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Summer 2023

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## Welcome Greg Smith Jr.!

Hello, it's great to be in North Dakota! I am a native of the great state of Mississippi. I am so thankful for my beautiful wife Chimez of 7 years and my amazing daughter Zuri Grace. Growing up on farm (cow/calf operation) gave me the desire to be a part of one of the greatest careers on earth and which I believe is feeding the world. Naturally logging is my trade by birth. I am a graduate of the Alcorn State University located in Lorman, Mississippi. Enjoyment for me is farming, talking about agriculture, exploring the outdoors, educating/encouraging others and being a servant. I started with USDA in 2015 with FSA in Boone, IA. Currently, I am entering on my 4th year with NRCS. It is truly an honor to be a part of North Dakota USDA.



*We were placed on earth to fulfil a purpose, and that purpose is what gives meaning to our lives, you were sent to the world to make an impact and make a difference -*  
**Myles Munroe**

Please feel free to contact me at any time by stopping in or calling the office!

## Can you find the hidden object?!

Congratulations to our winner Marlys Boll! Thanks to everyone who participated. Once again, if you can find the little hidden plant pictured to the right, you will receive a Gift Card to a local business! It not be the same color, but is the same shape and could be upside down. Once you have found the plant, please mail-in, email or message us on Facebook where you found it! Happy searching!



Hidden object to find  
Picture above is the  
example



## Southwest Chicken Wrap

### Love:

6-7 Crispy Chicken Tender—made according to package directions  
 6 flour tortillas  
 6 romaine lettuce leaves  
 2 medium tomatoes—cut into slices  
 1 pkg. frozen corn—thawed  
 1 tbsp oil  
 1 can black beans—drained and rinsed  
 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

### Southwest Dressing:

1 1/2 cups mayonnaise  
 1/2 cup salsa  
 1/2 cup milk  
 3 tbsp taco seasoning  
 1 tbsp cumin

Preheat oven according to package directions and bake chicken strips. In a small mixing bowl add mayonnaise, milk, salsa, taco seasoning and cumin. Mix well and set aside. Add oil and thawed corn into a small skillet and cook until the corn is brown in color. Remove from heat and set aside. Remove chicken from oven and cut into small strips. Start assembling your chicken wraps by adding a couple tablespoons of the southwest dressing to the lower half of the tortilla. Add romaine lettuce, sliced tomatoes, black beans, corn and chicken strips. Drizzle more southwest dressing on top. Roll up tortilla tightly, cut in half and serve with extra southwest sauce.

## Mixed Berry Lasagna

### Crust:

2 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs  
 12 tbsp butter, melted

### Cream Cheese Mixture:

2—8 oz. packages cream cheese, softened  
 1 cup powdered sugar  
 4 cups whipping cream  
 2 tsp vanilla extract  
 6 tbsp sugar

### Mixed Fruit Filling:

1—21 oz. can strawberry pie filling  
 1—21 oz. can blueberry pie filling

In a bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and melted butter. Blend with a fork until crumbs are moistened. Set aside 3 tbsp of crumbs for topping. Press crumb mixture into the bottom of a 9x13 cake pan, sprayed. With an electric mixer, cream together cream cheese, powdered sugar and 1 tsp vanilla until smooth. In a separate bowl, whip the whipping cream, sugar and 1 tsp vanilla until stiff peaks form. By hand, mix together whipped cream and cream cheese mixture until combined. Spread 1/3 of the cream cheese mixture evenly over crust. Drop strawberry pie filling by large spoonful's on top of the cream cheese mixture, spread evenly. With another 1/3 cream cheese layer, spread evenly on top of strawberry layer. Drop blueberry pie filling by large spoonful's on top of the cream cheese mixture, spread evenly. With remaining 1/3 cream cheese, spread evenly on top of blueberry layer. Sprinkle 3 tbsp of crumbs on top. Cover and refrigerate overnight before serving.

## Pina Colada

### Love:

1 cup frozen pineapple chunks  
 1/3 cup coconut cream  
 1/2 cup pineapple juice

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into a glass, garnish with a pineapple wedge and serve immediately.

# We're Hiring!

Looking for a great place to work AND get to be outside while doing it?!

The Grant County SCD is currently looking to hire a full time District Technician/Watershed Coordinator. Immediate start date WITH benefits. Wage will be based on experience.

For an application or questions, please call the office and ask for Jaymie at 701-633-3381 ext. 3 or email at [grantscd@outlook.com](mailto:grantscd@outlook.com).

## Upcoming Events

**July 18—Board of Supervisors Meeting**

**August 15—Board of Supervisors Meeting**

**August 17-20—Grant County Fair**

**September 4—Labor Day—Office CLOSED**

**September 19—Board of Supervisors Meeting**

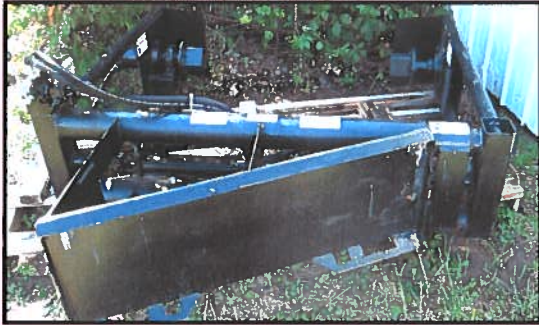
**October 17—Board of Supervisors Meeting**

**November 8—Grant County Ag Day**

**November 21—Board of Supervisors Meeting**



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## Grass needs rest too, just like you!

The prairies of the central United States were developed and evolved with large groups of grazing animals (buffalo & elk) roaming across the landscape. These herds were very dense and in great numbers due to predators (wolves & coyotes) following the herds, preying on the old or the weak. The grazing habits of these herd animals were to graze very intensely, eating and trampling vegetation, with lots of manure and urine being left behind. To stay ahead of the predators and seek a new area to graze, these herds moved steadily across the prairie. Sometimes not returning to an area they grazed for many months or years later. This type of high grazing impact, with rest/recovery in between grazing events, and the occasional wildfire, the prairies of western North Dakota developed into a diverse mixed grass prairie. That was healthy and sustainable under that grazing system.



What has changed? The massive herds of buffalo and elk that freely roamed the prairies are gone. We managed small herds of cattle fenced into small pastures. They may stay in one or two pastures for several months, re-biting already grazed plants. Leaving areas of overgrazed and undergrazed vegetation in the same pasture. Secondly, wildfires are suppressed. Wildfires control the undergrazed vegetation and encroachment of woody species. In the natural system with dense herds, rest was built into the system. After a grass plant is grazed it must recover prior to the next bite, or it will get weak and die. If the plant is properly grazed, with at least 50% of the plant being left, it will regrow faster through photosynthesis. If the plant is grazed below 50%, it must use energy from its roots to regrow. Once the plant has regrown, it must still provide energy to redevelop roots it lost to regrow the plant. If the plant is regrazed prior to the roots redeveloping, it will get weak and die off.



45 to 65 days rest is required if the plants are grazed properly. If the plant is overgrazed, it will take much longer to regrow and redevelop roots that are lost. During good growing conditions, 7 to 10 days after a plant is grazed, it has regrown enough to be grazed again, however, this is way too soon, and plants start to die back when it is grazed a second time. You should still follow 45-60 days rest even if it looks grazeable after a week. Several pastures are needed to be able to not stay in a pasture too long and provide enough rest before grazing the pasture again.



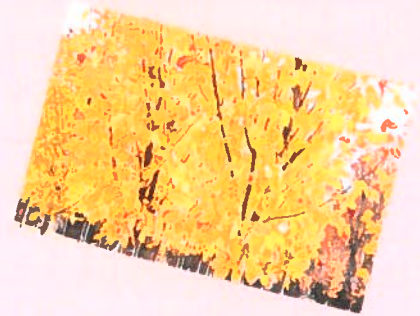
## Tree of the Quarter

### American Elm

In 1947 the American Elm became North Dakota's official state tree. Native to eastern and central

North America, the Elm tree typically reaches 80-120 feet tall or more. They are extremely cold hardy to 45 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, and tolerant of soil conditions and light shade. Come fall, their leaves will turn yellow. When planting an elm, keep in mind that judicious pruning is required for the first 10-15 years in order to produce proper branch structure. Elm trees are also prone to sometimes getting the Dutch Elm

Disease. Which is a fatal fungal disease spread by airborne bark beetles that attacks the water-conducting tissue of the tree, resulting in wilting, defoliation and death.



## Flower of the Quarter

### Purple Coneflower

The purple coneflower will grow statewide, except in the northeast. It prefers the rocky prairie hillside and weakly developed soils. They are purple to white-ish in color and will grow 12-24 inches. They bloom in mid-June until mid-August. They are also known as Black Sampson.

They are the most important plant to the Plains Indians as a herbal medicine for snake bites, stings, toothaches, coughs, sore mouth and gums, neck pain, mumps, measles, arthritis, smallpox, boils and more.



## Weed of the Quarter

### Plains Prickly Pear

Perennial forming low, spreading, fleshy plants, commonly in clumps but can be erect to 3 feet or more in height, reproducing from stems or seeds. Stems are flat and jointed, spines 4/5 to 1 1/5 inches long, pale or brownish with

around 9 per group. Leaves are small and scale-like on young branches, dropping early. Flowers are large; calyx tube does not extend beyond ovary; petals numerous, 1 1/2 to 2 inches long, slightly united; stamens numerous in several rows. The fruit is a pear-shaped berry either juicy or dry, often spiny. Seeds are numerous, 2/10 to 3/10 inch long, white and flattened. They are native and

commonly found on dry, sandy soils. They can be troublesome on overgrazed pastures and rangelands.





# Oh, drat! The fungus gnat!

By Laura Kourajian

As a Master Gardener, there's a good possibility you've been asked by a neighbor or a friend about little flies hovering around their houseplants. And even if you haven't, you're more likely to get that question at some point. It's the pesky fungus gnat (Fig. 1) which, like its name implies, feeds on fungi and decaying plant matter. That makes

houseplants a mighty nice habitat for them.

Alex Knudson, an entomological diagnostician in the Dept. of Plant Pathology at NDSU, said while there are multiple families of fungus gnats, the ones we find in ND come from two families—

Mycetophilidae and

Sciaridae—and around here, the dark-winged fungus gnats from the Sciaridae family are most common. Fungus gnats live most of their lives in decaying plant matter or the soil underneath leaves and rocks where there's higher moisture content and a food source of fungi and decaying plant matter. Their life cycle is short, about a month or less. "If you can interrupt the life cycle, you can eliminate them or reduce the population to the point where it's no longer noticeable," he said. The fungus gnat larvae spend the majority of their time in the top 1-2 inches of potting media or soil, taking 1-3 weeks to grow until they pupate. They'll stay in the pupal stage for just under a week before emerging from the soil surface as adults, according to Knudson. They'll emerge, fly around looking for a mate and then the females will look for habitat to lay their eggs, repeating the cycle. Letting the top 1-2 inches of potting medium dry out before watering will dry out the area where the fungus gnats live, making it harder for adults

to emerge and less attractive for adult females to lay eggs. Watering plants from the bottom, allowing the plant to siphon water as it needs it, can help, but if the plant is growing in old potting soil that has broken down, the plant may have decaying roots that create a food source for fungus gnats. Periodic repotting using fresh, sanitized potting media will make watering from

the bottom more effective, he said. The big, well-known brands of potting media are usually pretty safe, Knudson noted, as those companies work to ensure the medium is sanitized. Compost from an area farmer or the local landfill may include organic matter that hasn't fully broken down or been sanitized. It may also include eggs or larvae from fungus gnats, as well as a food source for them to thrive. If you're not

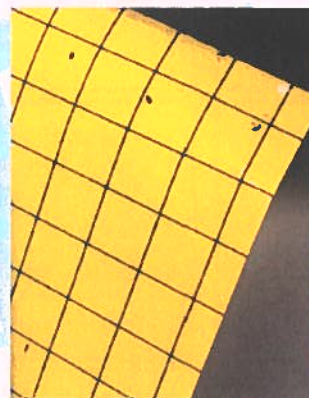
put off by putting dirt in your oven, an easy DIY for sanitizing potting media or soil is to heat your oven to 200 degrees and bake your potting media or soil for a couple of hours, he said. You may read online that spreading cinnamon on the surface of the soil, flushing hydrogen peroxide or vinegar through the soil or using other products

from your kitchen cabinet can get rid of fungus gnats, and while some may work, there's no real scientific evidence to suggest they will and you need to consider how it may affect your plant or beneficial organisms living in the soil, according to Knudson. One natural remedy is *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), a naturally occurring bacteria that live in soil and are non-toxic to people, pets, pollinators and many beneficial organisms. Knudson said Bti is wonderful as a soil drench, but may require

multiple applications. Ditto for spreading diatomaceous earth on the surface of the soil. It will break up the gnats' exoskeleton, causing them to dry out, but its effectiveness will diminish with watering, so may require additional applications. Yellow sticky sheets (Fig. 2), available at garden centers, are effective at trapping adult gnats, which are attracted to the color and stick to the sheet. They are most effective when placed close to the soil surface, trapping emerging adults. Trimming off dead lower leaves and removing dead leaves that gather in the pot reduces the amount of decaying plant matter available as a food source for the gnats. So, where do fungus gnats come from and how do they get into our plants? There are a few different avenues, Knudson said. The most common way is to bring home a new plant that is already harboring eggs or larvae. You may not notice them in the greenhouse or store or when your friend gives you an offspring houseplant, Knudson noted, but once they are in your home, they will find habitat and reproduce in your house plants. They can also find your houseplants if you put them outside on the patio during the warm weather. "Fungus gnats are ubiquitous outside where there's decaying vegetation, and they'll find your houseplants," he said. When you bring them inside in the fall, you may inadvertently bring a family of fungus gnats in with them. Are fungus gnats beneficial? Well, they're not detrimental but they're not beneficial either, Knudson said. Very rarely do they cause injury to plant, most of the time they feed on fungi and decaying plants matter. If you do have a lot of vegetation on the surface of the soil, they will help break down that over time. But most of the time they are just pests.



*Fig. 1 Fungus gnats measure about 1/8th of an inch long and are frequently mistaken for fruit flies. (Photo by Jeffrey Hahn, courtesy University of Minnesota Extension.)*



*Fig. 2 Yellow sticky sheets, available in garden centers, attract and trap adult gnats. They are most effective when placed near the soil surface. (Photo by Laura Kourajian.)*



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