

Lake Minnetonka Garden Club September 21, 2023

**Savoring the Seasons through Seeds at**

Med Cowden's Seed to Fork Farm, 3085 Watertown Road, Orono, MN

Kate Bryant introduced Meg Cowden, Hennepin County Master Gardener and author of *Plant Grow Harvest Repeat*, owner of a 25+ raised bed garden that is ultra-prolific. We toured the garden prior to 1:00 PM.

Meg shared her gardening philosophy: A food garden can be functional as well as beautiful, and it can feed your family for many weeks. Her goal is to grow as much food as possible to last until the following growing season. She harvested 200 pounds of potatoes this year, and 250 pounds of watermelon! She gave away a lot and stores much of it for use during the year. She tries to eat seasonally. Carrots and brassicas are other large crops she grows and stores in her two home 'root cellars' or insulated closets in her home.

She started the garden here in 2016 and installed the raised beds in 2021. She sows a lot of seed indoors and encouraged us to save seed...start with beans, garlic (cloves) and potatoes (these are easy crops to start your own). She direct sowed tomatoes and peppers in a high tunnel this spring and harvested tomatoes in late August! Most flowers and annuals are grown from saved seed. Perennial crops are not, although she did sow the asparagus from seed. Zinnia and calendulas are easy to save from seed, store it in dry containers. She grew black sesame seed this summer which we looked at and some did tasting!

Meg said it's ok to say goodbye to crops that are not working! Feel free to discard plants that you have harvested enough from or that are not productive. Her favorite tomato varieties are Sungold for cherry tomatoes, Whitmore, a brandywine beefsteak tomato, and Plum Perfect for canning. She canned 55 quarts of tomato sauce so far this year!

She planted her prairie in front from seed and has burned in for management. She uses kaolin clay as an organic pest control on the apples. Her deer fence has worked and the buried 6" keeps out rabbits. Raccoons required adding electric fence and the woodchuck required trapping. She has drip irrigation in all the raised beds.

Amazing food and flower garden that inspired us all!

Anne Kaufman distributed a Blooming Exposures reminder for us to submit photos for the 2023 Photo Card sale for the club. **Submit your photos by October 12, 2023** to Nancy Guldberg at [nguldberg@gmail.com](mailto:nguldberg@gmail.com) 952-451-4909. Let Anne 612-209-2100 [kaufman@augsborg.edu](mailto:kaufman@augsborg.edu) or Nancy know if you have questions.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 PM. Minutes submitted by Mary Meyer, recording secretary.