



a quarter's worth

Notes from the National Lecturer

We are six months away from our National Convention in Niagara Falls, NY. I hope everyone is having some fun entertaining themselves with one or more of the contests this year. Remember, the deadline for submissions is September 1, 2023. I have some thoughts about how to get more of your members involved in the contests.

Quilt Block Contest Idea: Cut out a bunch of 2 ½ " squares and bring your sewing machines and mass produce a bunch of blocks to help fill in for quilts to be made with the contest entries! While the contest judges only one block per entry, because the blocks are so small, having four of the same block will be a huge help when they are put together into quilts, table runners or other items. By creating additional blocks that aren't judged, we can offer more blocks of the same design to help complete projects.

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Getting those garden crops to Grow!

By Ann Bercher
National Grange Lecturer

For many of us, the garden planning is complete, the seeds have been purchased have been sprouted or directly planted in the soil. Seedlings are ready to be planted or are already in the garden. Once everything is soundly placed in our gardens, we get to sit back and wait! Well, not exactly.

Our garden plants are affected by three environmental factors: light, temperature and water. While light and temperature are out of our control in our gardens, we can do something about water. Water is necessary for plants to flourish. Lack of water will cause a plant to wilt and ultimately dry up and die. Too much water and the roots will rot, and the plant will wilt because it is oxygen starved and unable to take up moisture. Plants can tolerate drought better than excessive watering.

When should we water our gardens? There are some signs to look for, wilting and soil moisture.

Wilting may not mean you need to water your plants. Wilting means that the plant is unable to supply sufficient moisture to stems and leaves. Sometimes, on hot days, plants will wilt because moisture



is evaporating from their leaves faster than their roots can supply it from the soil. If there is enough soil moisture, the plants will recover overnight, and the stems and leaves will firm up. During prolonged periods of drought, you will need to water your plants more effectively.

If leaves are drooping and there is no rain predicted, you will need to water your plants so the moisture in the soil is 6 inches deep, which requires 2 inches of surface water. In a garden large enough to use a sprinkler, place small containers at various places within the sprinkler's reach and

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Plant a Seed!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

Be sure to get registered to the Rural Minds Webinar on May 10th.

You can do that here: <https://www.ruralminds.org/rural-mental-health-connections-webinar>

Photo Contest Idea: Create a scavenger hunt of sorts. Send your group out to take photos for any of the categories. Have a time limit and have everyone share the photos they took on the hunt when they return. The categories are Farm Machinery, Gardens, Potluck Activity, and Grange Family

Garden Contest: While you may have your garden map and plan all set, and you may have already planted some things, if you have any extra plants or seeds, bring them to your Grange and share them with others that may not have started their garden yet. Maybe some of your members have room for some additions. Several States have included a garden contest at the State Level. I hope to see all those entries at the National level too! It's not too late to start your garden entry for this year! Our last frost date in Minnesota is May 13. I'll start cold crops around Mother's Day and I won't put anything out on my balcony until Memorial Day.

Weather Watcher Challenge: This isn't a contest, but a portion of the challenge is to note the things that are occurring as the weather and seasons change. This is called a phenology note. In April many of us witnessed the aurora borealis! Late in April, the aurora borealis was visible as far south as Alabama. Auroras are caused by activity on the sun. A solar storm emits electrified gas and particles into space. When those particles reach the magnetic fields at the north and south poles (which only takes about three days) they enter the earth's atmosphere, interact with gases there and produce different colored light into the sky. Oxygen gives off green lights more commonly, but also some red light. Nitrogen glows blue and purple. Auroras occur at the South Pole too, called aurora australis. They also occur on other planets.

Now, let's spring into summer!



Q3 DEADLINE

Deadline for submissions for *A Quarter's Worth*, Third Quarter edition is August 1st. Send articles, ideas, tips, shout-outs and other content to National Lecturer Ann Bercher at lecturer@nationalgrange.org or contact her by phone at (612) 501-1231



Learn more about this year's National Grange Convention and register at <http://www.grange.biz/Convention157>

GROWING YOUR GARDEN *cont'd... from page 1*

check the depth of water in the containers at 15-minute intervals. Multiply the depth of the water in the container by four and you will have the application rate per hour. If your plants are in containers, you will need to water them more frequently. Check the soil and water when the soil is dry to one inch below the surface. The best time to water is in the morning when the air temperature is lowest, and the water does not evaporate as quickly.

Mulching will also help retain water in your soil, but it has another benefit; it helps reduce weeds. Here are some suggestions for mulch.

A three to four-inch layer of straw provides good annual weed control and maintains soil moisture. You don't need to remove this at the end of the season. In fact, you can add to it year after year. As the bottom layer decomposes, you may be able to avoid tilling your garden plot each year!

A two-inch layer of grass clippings also provides good weed control and maintains soil moisture. Adding clippings slowly over the season will prevent them from forming a mat. As they decompose they add an extra dose of nitrogen to growing plants. Be sure not to use clippings from lawns which have been treated that season with herbicide or a fertilizer herbicide combination ("weed and feed" types).

Grange Leaders' Survival Kit

By Diana Nordquest
Lecturer, Ohio State Grange

Recognizing our leaders is important. Many Grangers hold multiple positions in their local Granges as well as positions on other levels. Stress, burnout and feeling overwhelmed can happen to even our strongest leaders. The kits can be made using a dollar store container. Attach the saying to the kit. Remember to thank those who serve as our leaders.

Grange Leaders' Survival Kit

- Paper and Pencil – To note down new and useful ideas that they be not lost! From 1st Degree.
- Rubber bands – To remind you to stay flexible!
- Tape – To mend hurt feelings with forgiveness and grace
- Scissors – To separate the good from the bad.
- Stickers – To remind you to smile, smile, smile!
- Paper Clip – To help hold it together.
- Notecards – To share information with others!
- Pens – To write down what should never be erased – LOVE AT ALL TIMES!
- Balloons – To inflate the ego of others!
- Candy – Because you are worth \$100 Grand!



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Companion Planting in your Garden

By Marie Miczák
Hightstown Grange #96 (NJ)

At our April meeting, guest speaker and Program Director Marie A. Miczák gave a fantastic presentation on companion plants and gardening.

At the end of the evening she gave away potted vegetables and herb plants to help start our home gardens.

You can learn more about companion planting here: <https://www.burpee.com/blog/companion-planting-guide-article10888.html>



MVP *(Most Valuable Patron)*

Ethan Edwards – Lecturer/Program Director for Illinois

for his creative contest idea for **Folded Item!** See his contest idea below! This was originally published in the *Illinois Granger* May edition.

Lecturer's Column

Ethan Edwards

As time passes, we come closer and closer to the State Session. I just want to add a reminder to a new contest category. This was suggested by a member Granger and it seemed to hold a lot of promise so I added it to the slate of contests. The contest is for a “folded item.”

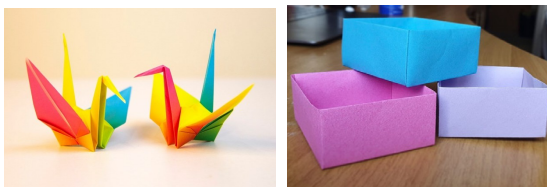
I'm open to this being anything you want it to be, as long as it primarily involves folding of some sort. So obviously this means paper, but also napkins and even books.

There are any number websites from which you might gain some inspiration. You can easily find more on your own by searching around on the web. There are several books in my local library and I'm sure you might find some in yours as well.

Here's a source that could be a launching off point for all sorts of folding paper.

<https://www.gathered.how/papercraft/guide-to-paper-folding/>

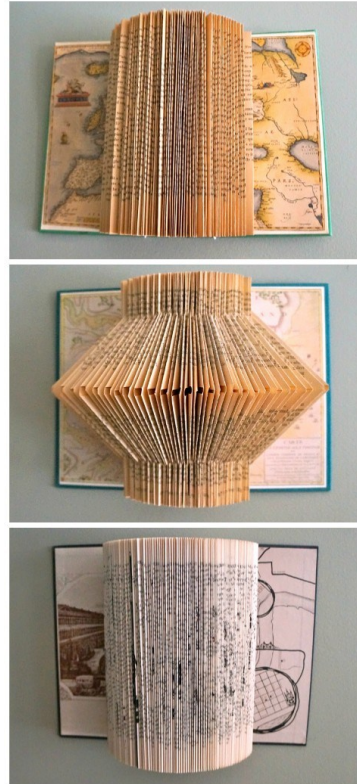
The biggest group is traditional origami—a Japanese art of precise paper folding, usually creating animal shapes. If you don't know how to do this, there are quite a few YouTube videos that provide a great introduction to origami. There are also untold written instructions for lots of shapes.



Don't be afraid to giving origami a try. I was called upon to make some origami cranes a few years ago and with some good instructions and just a little practice it became pretty easy.

But there are also other paper folding objects, many listed on this site, including boats, airplanes, hats, snowflakes, cubes, and even a clock.

There are also really interesting things that can be created by cutting and folding the pages of a book.



Here's another source of information for very creative napkin folding. It includes some videos and also very clear instructions.



These are just a few directions you could take this category. The beauty of this category is that it can be easily undertaken by people of all ages, so consider figuring this out with your children or grandchildren.

With your efforts, this can add something really interesting for our contest show at the State Session in September.