



~~March 5, 2020~~ Updated March 23, 2020

TO: All Coös County 4-H Members & Leaders

From: Chris Whiting, 4-H Program Manager

Subject: 2020 Coös 4-H Garden Program

Coös County has a strong 4H gardening tradition. It is a great way for members to learn and grow during the summer months as well as provide fresh vegetables for their family and maybe even have enough to donate or sell! The Lancaster Fair provides a great way for members to exhibit the "fruits" of their labor also. The major parts of the Coös County 4H gardening program in 2020 will include:

- *4-H Garden Workshops, April 18 & May 16 (tentative)
- *Garden Seeds, final disbursement May 16
- *Giant Sunflower Contest, orders Due April 1
- * Pumpkin seed orders due April 1
- * Sunflower planting project (variety from dwarf to giant), orders Due April 1
- *Tom Gill Memorial Seedlings Program, Orders Due April 18
- *Soil Testing, Samples Due May 16
- *Plant Pick Up Day & Garden Party, May 16 from 10-12
- *Garden Mentor check-ins via email and in person
- *Garden Judging, August 18 (tentative)

IMPORTANT: 4H members must complete the sign-up for the 2020 Garden Program on their 4Honline account. Current 4-H Members with a profile go to www.4honline.com login and select the child's name under Register a Member in an Event then select 2020 Coos 4-H Garden Program, complete the form. Late signups cannot be accepted for Tom Gill Program. Various seeds will be available first-come-first serve at each of the Garden Workshops and Plant pick up day. ***There will be no pre-orders for seeds this year except for Giant Sunflower and pumpkin(not necessarily giant but should be large)*** >PLEASE NOT CHANGES IN ORDER DEADLINES<

1. Tom Gill Memorial Seedlings

Way back in 1945 Tom Gill Sr., a florist of Berlin, NH and member of the Berlin Kiwanis

club provided 4-H members in Coös County with many vegetable plants over a period of about fifteen years. The original purpose of the program was to experiment with different plant varieties to see how they survived in the North Country. In exchange for the free plants, the 4-H **members were obligated to give feedback** regarding their successes and failures. In August 1971, Tom passed away; but the Kiwanis Club of Berlin has continued to carry on the program as a memorial.

These are the original objectives for the contest which traditionally have been on a three year cycle.

- To provide 4-H Club members with new varieties of plants.
- To encourage Club members to keep growth and production records so that the information may be used by other gardeners.
- To provide competition among Club members in the garden program for the purpose of encouraging good garden practices.

Again this year!

1. Coös County 4H'ers will be permitted to participate in the **Tom Gill program for more than the traditional three** consecutive years as long as the youth is an enrolled 4-H member or part of a recognized 4-H Group and **commits to keeping good records of the project**. If the previous year was not completed (no record book, garden judging, etc.) youth will not be eligible to participate in the Tom Gill program. Up to six plants of each variety will be provided from Northern Garden to each participant at no charge by the Berlin Kiwanis and Coös County 4-H Advisory Council. All 4-H members (age 8 or older) who have not participated before are eligible for the first year competition. Below are current lists of those eligible for years 2 & 3. Please let us know if our records are not accurate. Awards will be given for best individual variety and best overall garden. **Up to date records must be kept and presented for judging to be eligible for awards.**

Eligible for Tom Gill 2nd year in 2020

Ciera Challinor
Aliyah Drew
Andrew Harden
Samantha Kuhn

Paige Robinson
Aiden Smith
Jackson Smith

Eligible for Tom Gill 3rd year in 2020

Karli Chauvette

2. Garden Seeds

Through generous donations by the Coös County 4H Advisory Council, free seed packages are offered to ALL 4H members and Cloverbuds. Even if you have previously completed the Tom Gill seedling Program, **you are eligible to participate in the other 4-H Garden Program offerings and events.** ~~Seeds will be available~~

~~in the 4-H office from March 16-May 16 and during the Garden Workshops.~~ Final day to choose seeds will be May 16 during Plant Pick-up Day and Garden Party from 10-12 (tentative).

This year we are not taking "orders" for seeds. The Coös County 4-H Advisory council was given a very good deal on leftover 2018 and some 2019 seeds. There are over 250 packets of a variety of seeds. The variety includes vegetables, herbs, flowers, melons, and pumpkins. They will be disbursed on a first come, first serve basis. Cloverbuds will be given ~~able to choose~~ 3 packets of seeds, Beginners (1-2 years) up to 5 packets, Intermediates (3-4 years)-up to 7 packets, and Advanced (5+ years) –up to 10 packets.

Objectives:

To provide 4-H members with a variety of seeds with which they can plant, grow, and then harvest and utilize or exhibit the resulting produce.

- To educate 4-H youth in the vast array of topics in the Garden Program.
- To encourage 4-H members to keep growth and production records so that the information may be used to make future gardening decisions and be used by other gardeners.
- To encourage 4-H members to experiment with different gardening techniques and plants.
- To provide competition among 4-H members in the Garden Program for the purpose of encouraging good garden practices
- To encourage creativity in the use of garden produce beyond food purposes.
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All 4-H members are eligible for Giant Sunflower seeds in addition to above seeds or plants. Participants are expected to keep growth records and encouraged to exhibit their giant Sunflower in the Lancaster Fair 4-H. Contest open to ages 8-18 for TALLEST PLANT. (Remember you can also enter the giant FLOWER HEAD in Lancaster Fair Giant Sunflower contest)

NOTE: In order to achieve the yearly Garden Completion Award and/or other Awards, participants in the Tom Gill or seed program are expected to keep accurate records on their gardens.

Please only choose what you intend to plant and keep records on!

3. Soil Testing

We will once again offer this valuable service to interested 4-H member, one per family, who have not had their soil tested in the past three years. If you have had your soil tested in the last three years, it is not necessary to retest unless you are experiencing problems. The Coös County 4-H Advisory Council absorbs the costs associated with this program so there is no charge to 4-H members. Demonstrations on how to get a proper soil sample will be given during the March Garden Workshop or upon request.

4. Sunflower Planting Project

Youth ages 5-18 participating will get 6 varieties of Sunflower seeds, attend a **virtual** planting and labeling day (day TBD), plant the sprouted seedlings and keep records of the project.

5. Pick-up Day

Tom Gill Plants and *final* Garden Seed (first-come-first-serve) Pick-up date will be **Saturday, May 16 from 10am-12pm** at the UNH Cooperative Extension office, Coös County, Route 3, Lancaster. A mixed variety of seed packets will be available to those who would like to participate in the 2020 Garden Project.

6. Garden Judging & Garden Visits

It is expected that all 4-H members participating in any portion of the Garden Program will have their record books kept up to date and their garden and/or record book judged. If for whatever reason the garden itself is not being judged, the record book will show the garden mentor/judge what you learned through this project each month. Gardens will be judged on **Tuesday, August 18**. Please call us to confirm the location of your garden.

A garden mentor will be available to consult with through the growing season. This will allow you to ask any questions you may have and trouble-shoot problems. Most of this communication will be via email. Remember, the final visit garden mentor visit will be for judging your garden on August 18 please leave your record book out beside your garden in a zip lock plastic bag if you are not able to be there. Of course, you will also want to show the same produce or products made from the produce at the Lancaster Fair. A complete list of rules for the Tom Gill Memorial Garden Program will be furnished to each 4-H member.



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