



January 24, 2024

TO: All Coös County 4-H Members & Leaders
From: Chris Whiting, 4-H Program Manager
Subject: 2024 Coös 4-H Garden Program

Coös County has a strong 4-H 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 2024 will include:

- *Tom Gill Memorial Seedlings Program, **Orders Due March 1st**
- * Seed **Orders Due March 1st**
- *Pollinator Garden **orders due March 1st**
- *Giant Sunflower Seeds, **orders Due March 1st**
- *Sunflower planting project (variety from dwarf to giant), **orders Due March 1st**
- *Grow a BIG Pumpkin, Seed **Orders Due March 1st**
- *Plant-A-Row (pledge to Plant - Grow- Donate)
- *Plant Pick Up Day, May 31st (10am-4pm) and June 1st (10am-12pm)
- *Salsa making workshop is August 10th
- *Garden Mentor check-ins via email and in person, as needed
- *Garden and Record Book Evaluations, August 20th, All Day
- *Produce and Record Book Judging at Lancaster Fair



IMPORTANT: 4H members must complete the sign-up for the 2024 Garden Program on their 4Honline account. Current 4-H Members with a profile go to www.v2.4honline.com login and select the child's name under Register a Member in an Event then select 2024 Coos 4-H Garden Program, complete the form. Late signups cannot be accepted for Tom Gill Program, Pollinator Garden, specific Seeds, Giant Sunflowers, Sunflower Variety or Pumpkins. Various leftover seeds will be available first-come-first serve at each of the Garden Workshops and Plant pick up day.

There will be pre-orders for seeds this year for Giant Sunflower, Sunflower Variety and Pumpkin (not necessarily giant but should be large), Pollinator and specific vegetable, flower and herb varieties

>PLEASE NOTE 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.

Rules for participating in Tom Gill Plant Project:

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**. Even if the garden does not do well, the record book should reflect that and be up to date. First year participants will receive Tomatoes, Peppers and Marigolds. Second year participants will receive Tomatoes, Peppers, Celery and Marigolds. Third year participants will receive Tomatoes, Peppers, Celery, Broccoli and Petunias. Participants beyond the three years will receive Tomatoes, Peppers, Celery, Broccoli and a surprise plant (varies each year). Up to six plants of each variety will be provided to each participant at no charge. The funding for the plants is provided by the Berlin Kiwanis and Coös County 4-H Advisory Council, therefore, Thank You notes should be sent to these organizations. All 4-H members (age 8 or older) who have not participated previously are eligible for the first year competition. Below are current lists of those eligible for years 2, 3 and Advanced. 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 2024 (Tomatoes, Peppers, Celery, Marigold)

→ Henry Glover, Oliver Hawkins, Mady Lessard, Rebecca Page

Eligible for Tom Gill 3rd year in 2024 (Tomatoes, Peppers, Celery, Broccoli, Petunias)

→ Sophie Davis, Olivia Doty, Anna Remillard,

Eligible for Tom Gill Advanced in 2024 (Tomatoes, Peppers, Celery, Broccoli, Surprise)

→ Jayse Law, Caleb Ross



2. Garden Seeds- Please only choose what you intend to plant and keep records on!

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

This year specific seeds will be pre-ordered by March 1st. The choices include vegetables, herbs, flowers. All participants pre-ordering seeds promise to only order/take what they intend to plant and keep records on. Cloverbuds may choose up to 5 packets of seeds and ages 8-18 may choose 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, donate 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 ages 8-18 in the Garden Program for the purpose of encouraging good garden practices
- To encourage creativity in the use of garden produce beyond food purposes (for example: Nasturtium is an edible flower, Lemongrass has medicinal and culinary uses).

*All 4-H members are eligible for **Pumpkin seeds (potential to grow 100+ pound pumpkin) and Giant Sunflower seeds** in addition to above seeds or plants. Giant Sunflower Contest is open to ages 5-18 for **TALLEST PLANT** (height will be measured on August 20 during Garden Evaluations). Participants are expected to keep growth records and encouraged to exhibit their giant Sunflower in the Lancaster Fair 4-H. (Remember you can also enter the giant FLOWER HEAD in Lancaster Fair Giant Sunflower contests)*

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

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

3. Want to Grow a Pollinator Garden?

A [pollinator](#) garden is designed to contain plants to provide food and shelter to animals (bees, birds, butterflies, moths, wasps, bats, and small mammals) that pollinate plants that support the local ecosystem and food web.



4. Sunflower Planting Project

Youth ages 5-18 participating will get a variety of Sunflower seeds, plant the seeds and keep records of the project.

5. “Plant A Row”

One of the challenges Granite Staters are facing is food insecurity. Whether you are looking to supplement your own household, or would like to donate produce, we can all plant an extra row or container!

Plant A Row is a hands-on neighbor-helping-neighbor initiative. Participating households pledge to grow an extra row or an extra container of fresh and local produce to donate to a local food pantry, a neighbor in need or to supplement their own need for fresh greens. It really is as easy as Plant - Grow- Donate.



6. Pick-up Day

Tom Gill Plants and **final** Garden Seed (first-come-first-serve for those that did NOT pre-order) Pick-up date will be Friday May 31 **from 10am-4pm or Saturday June 1, 10am-12pm** at the UNH Cooperative Extension office, Coös County, Route 3, Lancaster.

7. Salsa Making Project

Learn to plant and grow a salsa garden! 4-H members and their families can learn all about the various types of tomatoes, peppers and onions and grow their very own at home. Each participant will receive seeds and instructions to help grow salsa ingredients throughout the summer. 4-H participants can sign up for the project with the end-of-summer goal to take those tomatoes, peppers and onions and **make salsa on August 10**. This is a great project where young gardeners can journal about the plants' progress and learn about horticulture in a fun and friendly way.

8. 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 evaluated on Garden Evaluation Day August 20th. Books and produce are encouraged to be entered in the Lancaster Fair. 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 and you will be recognized for completing the project. Garden visits will be on **Tuesday, August 20th**

9. 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. Remember, the final garden mentor visit will be for evaluating your garden on August 20. 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.