

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. I finally got my seeds in the mail. You guys, I'm so excited. I am ready to start planting seeds in the basement and doing the dirt under the fingernails and kicking off this gardening season. And I was kinda thinking about it the other day. It's a little bit funny because pretty much every year come August or September, I'm over it like I'm so done with gardening and I'm always like, do I really want to do this again next year? And sure enough come January or February, I forget that feeling and I'm ready to go with fresh energy all over again. I guess it's kinda like having a baby, right? If you've had your, if you're a mom with more than one kid, you can probably relate to this. You have the baby, you're like, I'm never doing that again. Holy moly. What just happened to me?

Speaker 1 ([00:54](#)):

And then you do it again and it's like you forget every time. So I guess we could say that gardening is kinda like having a baby. But anyway, that's off topic. That was a rabbit trail. If you're curious exactly what varieties of vegetables and yes, even flowers, because I am doing some flowers this year, that I'm planting, keep on listening. I'll give you the whole rundown on what's going in my garden in 2020. I'm your host Jill Winger, and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel uninspired by modern life. I'll help you learn how to leave the rat race and create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills. So there's an episode, well, I think it will probably be published not too much before this one. It's in the queue, but it's all about why we use heirloom seeds and where I get my heirloom seeds.

Speaker 1 ([01:50](#)):

I'm not going to go into all the details of that, but you can go over to that episode to listen. So all of that, if you're curious why I go with heirlooms and kind of my whole routine for that. But I will tell you that I do use Baker Creek heirloom seeds. That's been my standby for many, many years. And I'm also become acquainted with True Leaf Market. Last year I got my cover crop seeds from them. They have a great selection of non-GMO heirloom organic seeds as well. So either one of those companies I'd highly recommend and there's lots of others, but I mostly use Baker Creek. So pretty much all the varieties that you're going to hear me talk about today can be found at Baker Creek and some of them can be found elsewhere too. But just FYI. So I will give you my list of varieties.

Speaker 1 ([02:41](#)):

But the number one tip I just want to put out there before we roll into the list is I highly recommend if you are planning your garden as you listen to this episode is this is a silly tip, but it's legit. Grow what you eat and maybe add in a few fun things, but mostly grow what you and your family will eat. Because as I looked through my seed box, you know, taking inventory and like, ah, that was kind of a fail. That one wasn't super popular. Like some of the things I found myself growing in the early years. I grew out of obligation because I'm like, everybody eats radishes so we should eat radishes too. And I'd grow an entire bed of radishes and we all kind of hate radishes. So I have let go of gardening obligations and I just now grow what we really like to eat and Hey, surprise, surprise, it works out better for everyone.

Speaker 1 ([03:33](#)):

So just go through grow. What is going to save you money, like what you're buying at the store the most in the summer. How can you grow that at home to cut down the grocery bill, fill up the pantry or the freezer for the winter. And I think that will help gardening be the most enjoyable, especially if it's your

first few years. So I've kind of over the seasons, over the years, narrowed down my list of things that I know we really love that do really well here in Wyoming, which has a growing season of like two weeks. Not really, but it feels like it is very, very short with late snow storms and very early frosts. So I've kinda had to learn what does and doesn't work here. And you will do the same if you're brand new to gardening, you will learn the varieties that you love the most, the ones that are like, eh, and the ones that just won't work in your climate.

Speaker 1 ([04:25](#)):

So it's a process. But here is my list officially what we're planting in the Prairie homestead garden in 2020. All right, so corn, I feel like we should start with corn, for no apparent reason, but I haven't grown corn every year, number one because it takes up a lot of space and a lot of nutrients. Number two, because the stinken raccoons always come and steal it like one day before it's ready to harvest and it makes me furious. And then they have the audacity with their little raccoon fingers to shuck the corn and leave it. Sorry, did you hear that? I don't know if you can. My husband's volunteer fire radio is sitting in the window here at the office where I'm podcasting and they're talking on it. So my apologies if you've heard that weird background noise. Hold on. We're going to shut off the radio here or hopefully I don't push the wrong button.

Speaker 1 ([05:21](#)):

There's this button on it. If you push it, it like sends out a distress call and the whole fire department will show up at your house. And I have like this horrendous fear. Somehow I'm going to accidentally bump it and push the distress button, but I think we're good. All right. Where was I? Raccoon. I was ranting about raccoons. So they take their little raccoon fingers and they shuck the corn, eat it and leave it. Just leave it on the ground and you walk out there with your basket to harvest the corn the next day and you just see Eaten ears and it's rude. So I threw a tantrum honestly and I said I'm not growing any more corn. And then I decided try it again cause I'm a glutton for punishment. So last year that was a long story. Sorry. Last year we grew corn again. The raccoons didn't come, I think because they were eating our chickens instead and living in our shop and pooping on everything.

Speaker 1 ([06:10](#)):

But they didn't go to the corn for whatever reason. So we got some corn. We grew glass gem corn, which is beautiful. It's like these rainbow kernels and I've noticed that with a lot of multiclinal colored corn, it's not sweet corn. It's more like a corn you would dry and make flour out of. But the glass gem corn is one that can be used for decoration and for just eating. So that was super fun. The kids loved it cause you pull a pull or whatever, shuck the corn and it's like a surprise what colors are going to get inside. We also did dorinny sweet corn last year, which I'm not sure what happened. We had a really weird growing season, where it was super cool late into the summer and it was really wet. So our corn kind of was, the stunted thing happened and we got ears on very, very short corn stocks.

Speaker 1 ([07:09](#)):

But when we went to eat them, they looked good. They were kind of gummy and not very sweet. So I am not a corn expert. And if any of you listening, I suspect that was probably my fault cause it's always my fault. Let's face it as to why it didn't turn out right. I don't know if it didn't have enough nutrients in the soil or if it was the wrong amount of water. But if you know of a reason why corn gets gummy and not very tasty, you know, in the kernels, let me know. I'd love to hear what causes that. Okay, so we did glass gem corn, dorinny sweet, we're also going to be trying Stowell's evergreen sweet corn this year.

Um, we'll see how that goes. All right. Tomatoes. Tomatoes are hot. Hot garden topic. I think it's like the most popular garden. I guess it's not a vegetable.

Speaker 1 ([07:56](#)):

It's a fruit. The most popular garden fruit. We grow, I'd say a plant, at least three of my raised beds. They're 3 by 10, I think in tomatoes every year. Like I save a big chunk of growing space for tomatoes. Now here's where I differ from a lot of homesteaders. I primarily grow San Marzano and Amish paste tomatoes. Those are both varieties that are bred designed, hybridized. Whichever, I guess they're not hybridized. They aren't cause they're heirlooms, but they were cultivated over the years for sauce. So they have less water. They're smaller, they're more compact and more meaty. They're fantastic. They grow super well in Wyoming. Never had a problem with them. Very prolific. And I will plant both varieties. Here's my deep dark confession. I am not a big tomato eater as far as like raw tomatoes, which I know is bizarre. But I just am not and I've tried to make myself become a tomato eater because I feel like all the good homesteaders talk about eating tomatoes out of their garden with salt.

Speaker 1 ([09:06](#)):

And it's just like, not my thing. Like sometimes I'll put it tomato on a sandwich, but I don't crave it. I don't know what's wrong with me, but for that reason I don't grow big slicing tomatoes in mass any more because we just don't eat them. Like I grow a plant or two of cherry tomatoes for the kids. That's usually some sort of heirloom variety and then some sort of heirloom slicer. And I actually don't have the names of those for you cause they usually change. I think one was called gold medal. It was like an orange one that we did last year because the kids will like them on occasion and with a little salt or on a sandwich or in salad. But honestly the paste tomatoes can work for that as well. So I grow mostly those, they work wonderfully for the sauces and all of those things we can later in the fall.

Speaker 1 ([09:55](#)):

And that's kind of our groove with the whole tomato thing. Now, spinach is something that I love fresh out of the garden. I am kind of obsessed with it. And so a variety I found that worked good for us last year is called Bloomsdale longstanding Spinach. It did well. It was pretty tough. We did try one year a variety called Galilee, which is little, a triangular leaves and it was said in the seed catalog. It was not prone to bolt, so it would handle the hot temperature better. And that was not true. It actually bolted worse in earlier than any other variety of spinach I've ever grown. I don't know why, but I don't recommend that one. Bloomsdale longstanding, it has fantastic flavor. We're also trying New Zealand spinach this year. I don't know why it just seemed good in the catalog, so I bought it.

Speaker 1 ([10:53](#)):

So both of those, and if you've never had spinach out of the garden, you have not lived your life because store-bought spinach tastes like nothing and real homegrown spinach is so meaty and spinachy, and it's like night and day. So highly recommend growing the spinach. Unless you absolutely hate it, then don't grow it. But it's one of my favorites. As far as other greens go, I do like a little bit of arugula. I've had a bad habit of over planting the arugula, like half a bed. It grows really well. And then realizing my kids don't like it. They think it tastes like skunk, which I suppose I could kind of see that, but I still, I don't know, I like it. I just really crave argula salads. So I only planted a little bit for me and Christian. And then I'll also do a rainbow chard, which is so fantastic because it lasts well into the colder months and you can kind of plant it in cycles as well as kale.

Speaker 1 ([11:50](#)):

Sometimes we'll just grab whatever organic kale, I can find at the local seed garden store. But we've also tried blue curled kale from Baker Creek and Scarlet kale, which kind of as purple-y is fun to have the different colors. This year I also grabbed a variety called Nero di Toscana, which I think is some sort of like, it looks like the dinosaur kale or the elephant kale. It's a little bit more compact and kinda has that, it looks like elephant skin. And I had gotten some at the store last year and the kids loved it. I'm not sure if they loved it cause it was called dinosaur kale or if they liked the taste, but they ate it like crazy. So I thought we'd try growing it. And now they probably won't like it, but you know, that's how it goes. Alright, peppers. As far as peppers go, I'm not a big hot pepper girl, so I like poblanos.

Speaker 1 ([12:44](#)):

They're my favorite pepper and they grow amazingly well here. Not to mention I can't get them locally very easily. So that's a slam dunk because I can get something I normally can't buy and it's easy to grow. So we'll plant, um, I'd say between 10 and 12 pepper plants and you get a lot of peppers per plant and then I can can them or freeze them or use them fresh in salsa. They're kind of a mild, uh, it depends on the year. Most of the time they're mild. Every once in a while there'll be a little spicier but not unbearable. Like the kids can still handle it. So I love the poblanos. I don't do the hot hot peppers. It's just not something I cook with. And I honestly, I'll do a couple, bell peppers, I think we had a bell pepper variety last year called bull nose and it was okay, but I found that they don't grow as well in Wyoming.

Speaker 1 ([13:36](#)):

They're pretty small and I just don't think there's enough time, even though we do start them indoors, we start the poblanos indoors and the bell peppers, the bells just don't do as great and we don't eat a ton of them. So I usually save my pepper space for my good old poblanos and collagen. Now when it comes to lettuce, I have learned the hard way over the years that we don't like leaf lettuce, which is like the kind of just grows like a leaf at a time and you cut it off and use it like that. It just doesn't hold up as well to washing. It doesn't hold up as well to storage and we don't like the texture as much. So I tried growing it over and over. I don't know why. Like there was no good reason and we just wouldn't eat it.

Speaker 1 ([14:18](#)):

So what I do now is I've reduced our lettuce space because we prefer the spinach and the greens, but I will grow a little bit of more of a head lettuce. So last year we tried may queen lettuce, which was great and it grew more in like the head or the bunch. And this year I got a variety called tennis ball, which are little tiny heads. They look really crisp and firm. So I'm excited to try that. Like I said, we don't do a ton of it cause we prefer like the spinach and things, but you have to have some lettuce and it, it gets mature so quickly. It's kinda hard not to cause there'll be one of the first things that you can harvest from your garden. Now cabbage, I am so impressed with cabbage here. We never grew cabbage in my childhood garden growing up, so I had no idea, but it really does well with our short growing season.

Speaker 1 ([15:11](#)):

So what we do, we'll start that one indoors for sure. Set them out after the last frost and they grow really, really well. The only issue that you can have with cabbage are cabbage moths. So I have mixed up a spray in years past that works pretty well. And you can find that on the blog. It's called organic pest control spray. Or we can leave a link to that in the show notes. Or you can cover your cabbage or any of your, your plants like your broccolis and your Brussels sprouts, like bugs, like those plants a lot. So you can cover it with a special type of very loose fabric that's designed to protect it from the little worms,

right? And that can go a long way to protecting your cabbage as well. We have grown Brunswick or early Jersey, Wakefield, cabbage in the past, and great results, beautiful heads.

Speaker 1 ([16:06](#)):

I'm really, really happy with them. Now this year I had my cabbage seedlings set on the bottom of my grow shelf and our dog Dozer, the mastiff, for some reason came through and mowed all of the green cabbage starts down to the nubs like there was nothing left. I have no idea why he did that. So all I had left this year was some purple cabbage I had started. It was kind of weird because the purple cabbage tasted great. I just didn't enjoy using it as much in cooking, which I think is totally weird. And doesn't make sense and is probably so frivolous. But the color, the purple color, like when we cook it in stir fries and things, it kind of turned this unappetizing dull, grayish purple and the kids were not as keen on it. It didn't look as nice. I don't know.

Speaker 1 ([17:04](#)):

I think in years moving forward I'll probably just stick with the green cabbage. Only for aesthetics, which I know is so shallow. But if you have the choice, why not? So green cabbage? It is. Um, beans, beans are a definite staple in our garden. I always grow Bush beans cause I don't have a lot of little, I don't know, I guess I'm not going to say I don't have a lot. I'm too lazy to build being trellises. Let's put it like that. So Bush beans are a better fit for me. Uh, we've done golden wax beans, which are yellow. There have done really well in years past. My kids love the dragon tongue bean. It's kind of a modeled multicolored bean, um, after their favorite. As far just a regular old green bean, we grew a variety called Ken, I think it's called Cantare, C a. N. T. a. R. E. that's done well.

New Speaker ([17:58](#)):

And this year I got a variety from Baker Creek called, I am totally going to butcher this, but just bear with me, Borlotto Di Vigevano Nano, yeah. And it is kind of a Scarlet modeled color bean mostly just got it cause the kids saw in the catalog and were begging for it, but it's supposed to be a good bean, good taste of flavor. So we'll see how it goes. But I like to freeze the beans or can the beans, we eat a lot fresh in the summertime. They grow really well here. Thankfully. Now beets, beets are one of those things that I felt like I needed to grow in great quantity in years past because I felt like I should. And I just found also that my kids don't like them. And here's the deal. I'm actually kind of a stickler with kids and food.

Speaker 1 ([18:46](#)):

We don't do picky eating at our house. Like you eat what's on your plate and if you don't eat what's on your plate, then you eat it next time. Like I, I'm, I'm pretty much a stickler, but there's every so often a food that comes along that like my kids have to eat it as a part of a meal, a few bites at least, but they just aren't digging it. And beets are one of those things I've tried and I've tried and I still make them eat a slice or two with their meal, but they just don't love it. And my son says they taste like dirt. I know some adults, like it's kind of a beets are kind of a a thing, a 50, 50 thing. You either love them or you hate them. So I don't force my children to eat tons of beets.

Speaker 1 ([19:26](#)):

Christian and I like them on occasion. Not every day. So I'm just kind of been growing a couple rows, short rows of beets in years past. Nothing crazy. And I love golden beets. They're fantastic. Or Chiogga beats, which are they're like candy canes, they're red and white striped. They're so pretty. Those are our two favorite varieties. Cucumbers are definitely a standby. I always go with a pickling variety because I

prefer pickles more than anything else. So we'll do like Chicago pickling cucumbers or Boston pickling cucumbers and inevitably I will leave them out in the garden too long and get some baseball bat ones. So we still can use those as slicers or in salads and they work great. But it's really, really hard. Don't knock it until you've tried it. It's extremely difficult. So you remember to pick pickling cucumbers before they're huge. I don't know why.

Speaker 1 ([20:22](#)):

It's just very, very hard. So there you go. Um, let's see. We, we've done broccoli. I've had issue with broccoli getting really buggy and getting really better. Uh, so what we're trying this year is this variety I found in Baker Creek. It's like a Chinese broccoli and it's called yodfah Y O. D. F. a. H. Never tried it before, but said it's kind of more of like, I think like a mix between maybe asparagus and broccoli, cause you can eat all of the stems. It tastes really good and it grows quickly. So we tried that. They have some broccoli vibe without actually having to do the broccoli and rapini. I wanted to try that as well. So we'll see. Fingers crossed how that turns out for us. Carrots do really well here. As long as I dig my bed deep enough, which is kind of the rule of carrots anyway, but sometimes I've tried to cut corners on that and that's a bad idea.

Speaker 1 ([21:19](#)):

So dig your, your bed deep, have nice loose soil and carrots. They're slow to germinate, but they've grown really well for us in Wyoming. I'll experiment with different varieties each year. Um, the atomic purple is always a favorite with the kids cause you know, purple carrots. What's cooler than that? This year I got just your standard, an orange variety called st Valerie. Um, we've done the yellow ones, the golden ones, the red ones, they're fun, right? I don't really feel like you can go wrong with the carrots and they're really fun for the kids to be able to pick out of the garden and eat for snacks.

Speaker 1 ([21:57](#)):

Now when it comes to pumpkins and squash, I don't plant as many varieties as I honestly would like to because we have issues with the cross pollination. Even though we have a long narrow garden plot, like it's, some of that can be still too close. So what I'll do usually do is plant pumpkin's on one end and something else on the other end that works out okay. But if I try to get anything to close, you know, you get the weird things, you can't tell what it is and they don't always taste a great. So I usually keep it to two varieties of squash. And if anyone has tips on how to fix that so I can plant more squashes in my garden, I'm all for it, just let me know. But for pumpkin I like winter luxury pie pumpkin's, they're amazing. Super sweet, super dense and creamy. I love them. And are squash this year, which kind of rotates. I'm going to try butternuts. I've had moderate luck with butternut in the past. We're going to give it a try and see what happens. Just because we use a lot of butternut in cooking in the fall. So I want to grow something that we're going to use. We also like spaghetti and acorn, so I usually will just pick one to go with a pumpkin each year and rotate them around.

Speaker 1 ([23:13](#)):

So some of the things that we're not growing this year, , our radishes, like I mentioned, just not a good fit. No one, no one really likes them and it's a waste of garden space and peas and I always go back and forth on the peas. Um, but I dunno, it gets hot quickly here and peas don't really like it to be hot and sugar snaps. Like maybe we'll grow a handful for the kids to snack on, but it's not something we as a family just eat by the ton and you know, the, the peas that you shell, it takes a lot of them to get enough peas to make a meal. Uh, so it always feels like peas. I don't know. We like them, but they're not worth

the space used, I guess. So. Totally a weird personal preference, but we're not big on the peas, mostly on the beans.

Speaker 1 ([24:00](#)):

That's kind of our, the one we'll choose. I guess if you had to choose. Now I mentioned flowers. In years past I've been maybe a little bit anti-flower cause I felt like they used up space. But I've changed my tune thanks to some of you who have sent me a wonderful email saying, Jill, you need to reconsider your flower ban. And they're great for the bees and they're pretty, and there's something to be said about making your garden a place you find beautiful, a place that is pleasant to be in. So what I've done, I don't have like an entire flower garden, but I've found some varieties of flowers that a lot of these are perennials and they grow really easily cause it's hard for me in my practical nature to go spend a lot of money on, uh, the annual flowers at the store when they just last a couple months.

Speaker 1 ([24:50](#)):

So what I've been trying to do instead is add more native-ish flowers that want to live in Wyoming that will perpetuate themselves without a lot of work for me, kind of reseed themselves and it's been working good. So I'm been adding a little bit every year. So thus far I've done cosmos, couple of different colors, a calendula as we started off with regular orange calendula, which you can use a different herbal remedies. And then last year we did a strawberry blonde calendula, which was gorgeous. Absolutely loved it. Um, French Marygolts, which was supposed to be good for pest control, yarrow, I think yarrow is so pretty. And we found a mix. It's called the Colorado mix. It's multicolored and it's tough. Like it is a West flower. It's designed to live here, so it does bell. Um, I also found that my chamomile did really good and I also tried some Alpine poppy seeds.

Speaker 1 ([25:45](#)):

I got those. We'll see. Haven't tried those yet, but I know other poppies do well here. So I have high hopes. Um, as far as the yarrow and the chamomile, I did start those guys indoors. But with the calendula and the Marygolts and the cosmos, I have just direct seeded those seeds in the flower bed or in the garden beds. Um, I dunno, end of may when I plant everything else and they go really fast, it's really impressive. And by late summer they're beautiful and they'll drop their seeds and kind of recede themselves. And so what I like to do is I'll plant the beds with the vegetables and then along some of the borders of the beds, if there's a little bit of room and it's not a bed like the cucumbers, which take over the world, um, it has a little bit of buffer there.

Speaker 1 ([26:32](#)):

I just sprinkle the flower seeds right in there with the vegetables because some of them do indeed act as pest control. And I think it's kind of pretty to have everything mixed together. And then of course I'll take some seeds and plant it, the borders of the garden. And it's a process where we're definitely not done with that. It's not perfect, but I just add a little bit more each year, saved seeds so I don't have to keep buying them. And it's been fun to very, very slowly get into the world of flowers. That's not my natural inclination, but I'm learning very slowly.

Speaker 1 ([27:03](#)):

And I think without it, I'm looking at my list here. Oh two things we're trying this year for the first time I just couldn't resist in the seed catalog are artichokes, which I need to start from seed very soon. I've never tried those here. It may be a disaster. We will see. And then, um, a variety of garden strawberry,

which supposedly you can plant the seed, like started indoors this year, put it out in the garden and you can harvest it within the first year. We'll see if that's the truth or not. I will let you know, but I'm excited at the thought of having some strawberry. It looks like they're a little lower maintenance than your typical strawberries. They don't send out as many runners, which can be a little bit problematic and you don't have to like dig them up and move them all the time. So we'll see. I don't know, just an experiment but just to keep things interesting. That was a long episode. So I hope that was helpful and not confusing. I'm happy to answer any questions you have about anything that I'm doing or if you have any advice. I'm always open because gardening is kind of a moving target for me. I'm always trying to figure out better methods and uh, just improve because we live in a tough state to grow a garden, but we still get it done usually one way or the other.

Speaker 1 ([28:21](#)):

And one of the things that always comes up when I talk about gardening are our raised beds. People see pictures, they want to know how he did it, where we got the materials. So I put everything together for you all about the raised beds and a little free ebook and you can grab it like totally no costs complimentary over at theprairiehomestead.com/raisedbedguide. Just put in your best email, click enter, and it'll come right to your inbox and that's it for today, my friend. Thank you so much for listening. If you have a minute, I would appreciate it so much. If you could pop over to iTunes or your favorite podcast player and leave a quick review. I read every single one and those help more people find the podcast and bring homesteading into their lives. That's it for today, but we'll catch up on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.