

**Family Newsletter**

May 2016



Plant your seedlings close to the trellis or support system. Be sure to bury it over the lowest set of leaves. They will grow new roots to help steady the plant. Fill your bucket up to within an inch of the top, to allow you room to water it. When watering, make sure to just water the soil, not the leaves. They only need one to two inches of water per week. If your stick your finger in the soil and the top 2 inches are dry, that is a good indicator that it’s time to water. Don’t overwater, or the tomatoes may come out tasting too watery.

Some common problems include:

Tall, spindly plants that don’t produce fruit—too little sunlight.

Plants are yellow from the bottom and lack good color—too much water, too little nutrients

Plants wilt, even though there is water—poor drainage

Brown leaf edges—fertilizer is too concentrated

Plants grow too slowly, look sick or are purple—temperatures are too cool

Leaves have holes—insect damage

Leaves are spotted, dead, powdery or rusty—a sign of plant disease

**Have you ever thought of growing tomatoes in buckets? Small gardens might be just right for you.**

All of the information provided has been adapted from <http://eaglewoodgourmetfood.com/growing-tomatoes-in-buckets>

Determine a sunny area in your yard that gets 6-8 hours of sunlight per day. For cherry tomatoes you can use a 2 gallon container, but larger plants should use a 5 gallon container. Although you can use bushel baskets, wooden boxes, fiberglass buckets or drums, the best containers to use are plastic or wooden. You may also need a trellis or dowel to support your plants.

You need to make sure your container has drain holes in it, so you may have to drill 4 to 5 holes of about ¼ inch about a half inch from the bottom. Line the bottom with some gravel or rock, so the container will continue to drain.

In picking out what kind of tomatoes to grow, you can go to a nursery or store and buy pre-started ones, or you can start your own. Make sure to get hearty ones to survive our northern climate! When thinking about the soil to use, you want to include a good amount of organic matter. Tomatoes in buckets need a mixture of phosphorus, magnesium and calcium. You might also want to include aged manure, peat moss or your own compost mix. You may want to include organic fertilizer to your soil. Some people add straw or dried grass clippings to hold moisture in the soil. Another good mixture is 1 part potting soil, 1 part perlite, 1 part sphagnum peat moss and 1 part homemade compost.

**Paying for College**

**After your student has chosen what college or university to attend, you’ll want to be sure that they can pay for it. Below is some general information from NMU’s Financial Aid website. All this information (and more) can be found at** [www.nmu.edu/financialaid/faq](http://www.nmu.edu/financialaid/faq) **Don’t be afraid to ask them questions about your financial aid. You need to understand what money is available to you or how much you may need to borrow.**

**What percentage of students receive financial assistance either in the form of scholarships, loans or grants?**

Eighty-five percent (85 percent) of NMU students receive financial assistance from an array of resources including grants and scholarships, part-time on-campus employment and student loans.

**What is the difference between scholarships, grants, and loans?**

Scholarships and grants are what most students think of as "free money." Student loans are funds that must be repaid, generally after the student graduates or leaves school.

**Is it better to take out a Direct PLUS loan or a loan from my credit union?**

Many options for alternative financing exist, and families should explore all options before deciding which one fits their needs and budget. Some additional alternative student loan products along with a guide on things to consider when looking at alternative loans can be found at the Alternative Loans Options page.

**I have been offered Federal student loans. How do I learn more, understand the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans, accept or decline these awards, sign the Master Promissory Note (MPN) and complete Entrance Counseling, and learn more about what my payments will look like after I graduate?**

## Federal student loans are borrowed from the Federal Government to help pay for college.

## **Direct Loan Awarding**

As a part of your financial aid, you may have been offered a William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan. If you accept this loan offer, you will be borrowing money from the U.S. Department of Education and agreeing to repay it under the terms and conditions of the loan. Loan information will also be sent to the National Student Loan Database System (NSLDS) and may be accessed by future schools, loan guarantee agencies, and lenders.  Students can view their previously borrowed loans by accessing [NSLDS.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov/nslds_SA/).  Your Federal PIN will be required to access the site.

***First-time Direct Loan borrowers must complete entrance counseling and promissory note requirements***.

**Direct Subsidized Loans** do not accrue interest while a student is enrolled at least half-time.  Financial need must be demonstrated in order to qualify for a subsidized loan.  For the 2015-2016 school year, a subsidized loan is a fixed 4.29% interest rate.

**Direct Unsubsidized Loans** do build interest, even while a student is enrolled and during grace periods. You can elect to pay the interest costs as they are billed or you can defer payment of the interest and it will be added to the loan principle.  The interest rate for the unsubsidized loan is a fixed 4.29% for undergraduates and 5.84% for graduate students.  Financial need is not required to obtain an unsubsidized loan.

**What loans can my son/daughter take out in his/her name? We want all loans in the student's name. Is that possible?**

The initial award letter tells the student what federal loans are available. Students should exhaust all federal student loan options before pursuing private student loans. Additional, supplemental loans can be obtained from state and other sources for both the student and the parents. Alternative student loans typically require co-signers.

**Lose yourself in books!**

Although I’m not sure what books your students will read in their senior year language arts class, or what books you were supposed to read. But, you might want to revisit some of them now as an adult. You have some life perspective to put into your reading now, and might actually enjoy them since there are no tests or quizzes, no required number of pages to read by the next day, and no one asking you for your opinion. Maybe you’ll want to pick up a copy now and truly enjoy it. Here are some suggestions from publishersweekly.com

Below are 10 high school classics where I found that useful thing I missed the first time around.

***The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald -** Fast cars, huge houses, a raised martini glass and a love that cannot be. No wonder F. Scott Fitzgerald’s third novel gets credit for both naming and embodying the most glamorous era of the 20th century. I had forgotten that Nick Carroway tells the story of Gatsby and Daisy in flashblack, a eulogy to a romance and an era that are gone. The novel’s unforgettable closing passages are as much about acceptance as longing, as much about the pain of age than forbidden desire and American dreams.



***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain -** Another contender for the great American novel that, sneakily, is as much about maturity as youth. The time of Huck and Jim is nearly a half-century before the 1884 publication of their story. It took Mark Twain 8 long years to write this sequel to *Tom Sawyer* (1876) during which time he also completed a memoir about his 20s as a young riverboat pilot. But if Twain meant Huck Finn to be a song of nostalgia about the innocence of childhood and an earlier America, he used that all up in *Tom Sawyer*. The America of Huck Finn is violent, cruel, and unforgiving, as much about blood feuds and human bondage as adventures with best friends. If *Tom Sawyer* is about an American Boyhood, Huck Finn is about a country that has grown up and how we are better for it.

***The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton -** Edith Wharton was 57 and living in Europe when she wrote *Age of Innocence*. The world of this novel, her childhood New York in the 1870s, was an ocean away and several decades gone. However, despite *Innocence* being the story of a love affair thwarted by the rigidity of tradition, Edith Wharton doesn’t criticize the traditions that raised her. Instead she reserves a withering stare for her protagonist Newland Archer and his inability to accept his own choices. A smothering culture is the barrier to love, Wharton says, but circumstances beyond our control. And how, despite that, we can still show initiative in our own lives.



***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee -** How did I miss that Scout Finch is telling us this story in flashback, as an adult woman? It’s right there in the final scene with Boo Radley when Scout says “I never saw him again.” Harper Lee was about 30 when she wrote this novel, and originally named it *Atticus*. Maybe she saw herself around the adult Scout’s age. Maybe *Mockingbird* is a tribute to her own father who was also a noted civil rights lawyer. And perhaps the reclusive Harper Lee saw herself more as much the reclusive Boo Radley than in Scout? Perhaps *Mockingbird* is more a literary invention than autobiography?



***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury -** The phrase “Fahrenheit 451” is now a stand-in for all manner of government-backed repression. But look closer, oh angry youths: There is no “Big Brother” in Bradbury’s tale. The crimes against books are committed by the foot soldiers. Guy Montag grows to hate both what he’s doing to books and his job itself. As an adult, it stuck me that *Farhrenheit* carries with it a quiet yet as-relevant message: A job that makes you hate yourself is its own kind of burning.



***The Stranger* by Albert Camus -** *The Stranger* is dark, scary and argued existence is a pointless labrynith with no exit. I loved it as a teenager and was sure the man who wrote it was the brooding, mysterious older brother I never had. Wrong. Albert Camus was a high school jock, handsome as a matinee idol and by all accounts, a happy, contented person. Perhaps the answer to his masterpiece’s chaos and mystery is a kind of level head, a respect for calm and rationality that his narrator couldn’t hack and that Camus displayed in so much of the political journalism that defined the second half of his literary career.



***The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka -** What teenager does not respond to the out-of-placedness of Gregor Samsa waking up with in the body of cockroach? But Gregor Samsa doesn’t have to go to school or work as a cockroach. In his mid 20s, his salesmen’s wages provide for both his parents and sister. His parents need to take in boarders to compensate after Gregor’s transformation. His fate is determines as much by him being a economic nuisance to them as a giant bug. Family is the entire area in which Kafka’s great tale happens, asking us “Isn’t it just as weird to wake up a member of a group you didn’t sign up for as it is a cockroach?"



**The Poems of Emily Dickinson -** “Who are you? I’m nobody. Who are you?” These are the great words of Emily Dickinson and the mantra of generations of high schoolers who didn’t run for student council. But Dickinson as shrinking-violet-in-chief ignores history on purpose. Read her poems again (and some pretty good recent biographies) and you’ll witness an artist of great ferocity. Dickinson wrote with fire (a poem a day in her best years), knew the work of her poetic heroes cold, and sought out mentors and constructive criticism. Even if she never intended to publish, her discipline was on par with a professional athlete. The one image we have of Dickinson as a frail 17 year old is a half-truth.



***The Crying of Lot 49* by Thomas Pynchon -** Often called a young person’s entry point into the cracked mirror world of Thomas Pynchon, I found *Lot 49* so bizarre that teenage me took it personally. No author would ever confuse me this much on purpose and get my free time if I could help it. Pynchon is actually a much nicer guy than that. *Lot 49* is nutty. But Pynchon doesn’t mystify us out of sadism. Structured as a roadtrip that never reaches its destination, the novel and its author seem to be saying. “Life is loony but it's better to experience it in all its lunacy than get off the road. Wanna ride with me?”



***Animal Farm* by George Orwell -** Whose fault is it that *Animal Farm* goes so wrong so quickly? The Pigs, of course. Isn’t that Orwell’s message? Beware of tyrants dressed as liberators? But a tyrant needs followers and it’s the other animals who are convinced that a revolution means everything is different. It’s “Year One” thinking, the same thing we all do when we begin any sentence with “Everything will be better when...” There’s no finishing that sentence with truth. Instead Orwell reminds us we are all the same flawed creatures yesterday as today. *Animal Farm* is a lesson in how we all are tragically human.



**Pay Attention to how much pizza you eat**

It’s fine to have pizza now and again, just maybe not as a staple in your daily diet.

One study showed that on the days kids eat pizza, they likely take in more calorie, fat, and sodium than on other days. Although the investigation looked specifically at children, the same may be true for adults, too.

The study found:

* On the days children ate pizza, they consumed 84 more calories, 3 grams more saturated fat, and 134 milligrams more sodium than average.
* Teens took in an extra 230 calories, 5 grams saturated fat, and 484 milligrams sodium on pizza days.

**SAVE THE DATE**

One featured guest speaker for the UNITED Conference scheduled for September 25-28, 2016 is DJ “Eagle Bear” Vanas. UNITED stands for uniting neighbors in the experience of diversity.



Motivational speaker, storyteller, leadership expert, author and warrior DJ Vanas is an enrolled member of the Odawa Nation. He is tentatively scheduled to be the Monday evening speaker. Your students will have an opportunity to hear him speaker earlier in the day and have lunch with him. The evening presentation is free and open to the public. Vanas came from a very impoverished background, but went on to become a very highly decorated officer in the US Air Force. He has learned leadership skills, earned a bachelor’s degree in Management and an M.S. in Systems Management. Not only is he an entrepreneur, but he is also a published author and professional speaker. He has been a speaker at NMU before and has spoken at the GEAR UP national conference. Please come and see him if your schedule allows.

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