

# GROW Home, Garden & Outdoors

## MARY LANDS A GARDEN PLOT

By Steve Tool  
Wallowa County Chieftain

**E**NTERPRISE — Mary Zeise, a North Dakota native and recent transplant from southern Idaho's high desert, loves gardening, and living in an Enterprise apartment didn't discourage her from going out and finding a place to pursue her bliss.

Zeise, who had gotten her gardening feet wet from volunteering at an Idaho commercial greenhouse before getting laid off, went from there to a neighbor who had extra land he wanted utilized. "He expanded one of his gardens for me — tilled it for me right out of the desert. That's how I really learned because I'd never really gardened before; I never had the chance," Zeise said.

Using that lesson after relocating to

the Wallowa Valley to be closer to family and finding herself once again garden-less, Zeise and her daughter, Julia, went

to work looking for a garden plot of their own to tend. After finding a 2012 online post about a community garden in Lostine, mother and daughter made a trip to the garden about three weeks ago and found it in a relatively abandoned state. "It had a fence around it and grass growing tall — it was just dormant," Zeise said.

Zeise and her daughter went into the M. Crow & Co. store to see if they could obtain contact information for the garden. As luck or persistence would have it, a man (who wishes to remain unidentified) in the

store heard the conversation and offered the use of his own backyard for a garden.

The property owner lived in Enterprise, not far from Zeise's apartment, and she went out to examine the area. It met her approval and the land owner told her she was doing him a favor by giving him less lawn to mow. He also told her to create something beautiful. "We shook hands on it," Zeise said.

Zeise's work was just beginning. "I had to find someone to till it. I was in the Book-loft looking at the bulletin board when Carol Bartlow (Wallowa Valley Farmers Market manager) came in," Zeise said. She ended up hiring Bartlow's son to rototill the garden patch.

Squash, beans, peas and short-season and Indian corn are scheduled to make appearances in the garden, as well as sunflowers and echinaceas. "I have lots of seeds left over from the desert that I'm thinking of planting, too," Zeise said.

While speaking of vegetable growing tips, Zeise said, "People can underestimate the season. Plants don't understand the limits we put on them. They'll do things you can't believe. For example, if you put enough straw on spinach, it will generally winter over, at least in Idaho. I'll try it here and see what happens," Zeise said. She added that Bartlow's husband, Steve, did not recommend growing root crops without thoroughly tilling the soil.

As for now, Zeise is waiting for one more rototilling before starting to plant her newfound garden. "This is the one thing I know how to do. I'm not a master gardener or anything like that. I've always learned from the plants," Zeise said.

**"I have lots of seeds left over from the desert that I'm thinking of planting, too."**

Mary Zeise, gardener



Mary Zeise, living proof that anyone who wants to garden bad enough will find a way to get one.

Courtesy Photo/Christina Knecht

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