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## Hello Gardeners!

These past couple weeks have been ideal for a happy garden. Hot days for pulling weeds, followed by intermittent rains to give you a break from watering detail.

You may be growing vegetables you have never tried before this summer; experiment with new recipes and methods of cooking to find out how you and your family enjoy things best!

In this issue, you will find that it is "Time to do the garlic" as well as tips for warming up to prevent injury before bending down in the garden.

If you have any questions, stories, or tid-bits to share, please let us know!

*Your Friends at Growing Places*

## What's Happening...

- Keep an eye out for carrots, onions, and beets to crest the soil. This is a good indication that they are ready. If you're unsure, gently remove some dirt from the top of the root and check the size of the root.
- Pull garlic out of the ground if you planted it last year, and set it out to cure. (See article following, "Time to do the Garlic")
- Check your zucchini and summer squash plants daily if possibly. In this heat, the squashes can become mature overnight and you may pick a couple per day!
- Use grass clippings as mulch or add to your compost pile.



## Tips for a Better Garden...

- Now is the perfect time to get back in the garden for a few hours, clear away some of the vegetables that have done their thing and are on their way out. Pull out anything that has bolted, green bean and pea plants that have stopped producing, and harvest your roots crops that are ready. Guess what? now you've got room for the next set of vegetables!
- With that extra room, plant kale, broccoli, spinach, and lettuce and others that prefer to be out of the hot July heat. Start plants indoors or seed directly into your garden. Keep seeds and baby plants well watered; they are more delicate than a mature plant.
- Pick the largest leaves off kale, swiss chard, collards, and spinach for a continual harvest.



## Time to do the Garlic!

When  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the tops of the garlic that you planted last year have yellowed, it's time to harvest. Check a single bulb by digging gently around it to loosen the soil, and then remove the entire plant. Try not to bruise or nick the bulbs, as they will not store as well. Bulbs should be well segmented and cloves easy to separate – if not they need to grow a bit longer.

Once you have dug them up, brush off excess dirt and spread plants in a single layer on a screen or paper (or tie into bundles to hang) in a warm, dry, airy location out of the sun. After 2-3 weeks, when the bulbs are completely dry (outer skins are paperlike), remove roots and tops leaving 1" of stem. Be sure they are completely dry: improperly dried bulbs will sprout. Store in a mesh bag (old onion bags work well) in a cool, dry location and use them as needed – delicious!

## How to Dry Herbs

*Cut herbs just as the dew does dry.*

*Tie them loosely and hang them high.*

*If you plan to store away,*

*Stir the leaves a bit each day.*

*-American Farmer, 1842*



**Hanging Method:** Gather 4 to 6 stems of fresh herbs in a bunch and tie with string, leaving a loop for hanging. Or use a rubber band with a paper clip attached.

Hang in a warm, well-ventilated area, out of direct sunlight until dry. For herbs that have full seed heads, use a paper bag. Punch holes in the bag for ventilation; tie a string around the top of the bag.

**In the oven:** Preheat to 140°F. Place a cloth on a cookie sheet to prevent herbs from reacting to the metal. Arrange herbs in single layer and place sheet in oven. Check every 15 minutes or so for doneness and turn the herbs as needed. Average drying time is 2 to 4 hours.

## Hints to prevent strains and injury:

☺ Warm up before gardening by taking a stroll through your yard to elevate the temperature of your muscles. Once your blood is flowing you can move on to stretches.

☺ Start with the largest muscle groups first: your legs. Try a basic hamstring stretch, then move on to the hips and work each side to ensure you keep an even keel. Next do some toe raises to get the blood flowing to your calves and help prevent dangerous pulls and tears. Simple arm circles help prevent sore arms and help get your body ready for the range of motion needed in gardening, particularly in your shoulders.



☺ Stay well hydrated. *Drink even when you're not thirsty.*

☺ Remain as upright as you can when raking, hoeing and performing other gardening tasks. This keeps the strain off your back. Also be sure to buy tools with handles made for your height.

☺ Use your legs and tighten your abs (as if you're bracing for a punch) when pulling weeds or performing other chores that require bending over, such as a squat.

☺ When lifting, use your legs. Squat down, keep your back straight and lift. Or if you need to drag a heavy item, keep your arms straight and use your legs to pull, rather than pulling with your arms.

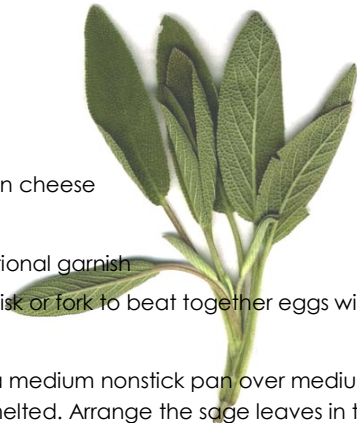
*Excerpted from hgtv.com*

## Recipes...

### Sage and Eggs

(from The Good Herb by Judith Benn Hurley)

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 7 large fresh sage leaves
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons of parmesan cheese
- Splash of milk or water
- Sage or chive flowers \*optional garnish



IN A MEDIUM BOWL, use a whisk or fork to beat together eggs with a splash of water or milk.

HEAT the oil and butter in a medium nonstick pan over medium heat until the butter has melted. Arrange the sage leaves in the pan and let them sizzle for 20 seconds, or until fragrant.

POUR the eggs over the sage leaves and immediately sprinkle on the cheese. If necessary, rotate the pan so the egg mixture cooks evenly. When it is firm and no longer runny, slide the omelet onto a waiting plate flipping half of the omelet over on itself. Garnish with sage or chive flowers if you have them.

Makes two servings; 180 calories per serving

Sage can protect other plants in your garden from disease and predator insects. It is said that the camphor aroma of sage acts as an insect repellent, helping to keep cabbage moths at bay.

### Classic Gazpacho

(from The Old Farmer's Almanac Garden-Fresh Cookbook)

This quintessential summer soup has been a tradition in Spain for centuries.

- 3 lbs of tomatoes, diced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 large or 2 small green bell peppers, diced
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar or other vinegar
- 1 slice white bread, crust cut off, soaked with cold water
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 tablespoon hot-pepper sauce
- 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste



In a blender or food processor, puree the tomatoes, onion, and peppers (you may need to do each separately) until smooth. In a large bowl, combine the processed vegetables, add remaining ingredients, and stir to blend. Set the soup aside for 30 minutes to an hour to allow the flavors to marry. Serve cold. **Makes 6 servings**

## Garden Spotlight

Heidi is enjoying her second year with her garden and has just harvested her garlic so she has room to plant more!



Her brassicas are flourishing allowing frequent pickings of collards and kale.

This garden has a personal touch and a feeling of serenity.





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## Things to Remember

"Gardening is more than just good for the soil—it is good for the soul."

"Yup, gardening and laughing are two of the best things in life you can do to promote good health and a sense of well being."

- David Hobson

"Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon."

- Doug Larson

## Upcoming Events:

Canning class: Lancaster Agway,

Thurs. Aug. 8, 4-6 pm

Bolton Fair: Lancaster Fair Grounds,

Aug. 11-14th

Canning class: Littleton Agway,

Thurs. Aug. 18, 4-6 pm

Plant Sale: Wakefield Masonic Lodge

Sat. Aug 27, 11 am start

Guided Hikes: Fruitlands Museum

Every Saturday @ 3 pm

Knitting Night: Harvest Café, Hudson

1st and 3rd Thurs. 7 pm