



Hello Gardeners!

Summer is quickly drawing to a close –the days are noticeably shorter and the nights refreshingly cooler. Your garden harvest is hopefully in full swing, with an appetizing array of vegetables of all colors and types. This week's newsletter has some scrumptious recipes, as well as some non-edible suggestions for using up all those cucumbers. Who knew cukes were so handy!

If you are having trouble sorting out all the various greens in your garden, we have included an article just for you. Be sure to check it out to get the most from your crop.

Don't forget, please give us a call if you have questions, concerns, successes or funny stories.

Your Friends at Growing Places

What's Happening...

- Be sure to check daily for produce that is ready to harvest. Watch for carrots, green beans, cucumbers, onions, summer squash, tomatoes, kale, cauliflower, beets and more!
- Pull **garlic** out of the ground if you planted it last fall, and set it out to cure. See the article, **Time to do the Garlic**, in last week's newsletter for details.
- When about half of the top of an **onion** falls over and is turning brown, it's time to harvest. Gently pull your onions from the soil and leave them to cure about 1 week in the sun. When the tops and skin are dry and crinkly, clip the tops about 1" from the bulbs and store in a cool dry place.
- Harvest **cauliflower** when the head is tight and regular and the curds have not begun to separate. Remove from the stem with a knife.
- Cut off **cabbage** head any time after it reaches the size of a softball. They can grow larger but are more tender and tasty at this stage. Cut with knife; sometimes more heads will grow from the cut stem)

Tips for a Better Garden...

- Pull out plants that have stopped producing to discourage rotting and prevent pests from making a home.
- Plant another square or two of lettuce, radishes, and spinach for fall crops.
- Did you know that tomatoes and pickling cucumbers should **not** be refrigerated? If they are, they could be subject to dehydration, internal browning, or internal and external pitting. In addition, snap beans, melons and corn on the cob should not be stored below 37 degrees Fahrenheit.

Is that a monster in my garden!!

Look what Donna found in her garden!



A tomato hornworm! Have you seen any in your garden? They feed on *solanaceous* plants, most often tomato, but will also attack pepper, potato and eggplant. Handpicking the hornworms from infested plants is a safe and effective way to get rid of them. **But**, if they look like this one, don't worry –just leave it alone. A parasitic insect has already set up its home and is working on destroying the hornworm. Mother Nature's own pest management!

The Cucumber Story

According to the history pages, the Roman Emperor Tiberius enjoyed cucumbers so much that he insisted on eating them at every meal. Cucumbers can be used in a variety of ways:

-  Cucumbers contain most of the vitamins you need every day, just one cucumber contains Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc.
-  Using a pen and made a mistake? Take the outside of the cucumber and slowly use it to erase the pen writing, also works great on crayons and markers that the kids have used to decorate the walls!!
-  Tired of your bathroom mirror fogging up after a shower? Try rubbing a cucumber slice along the mirror, it will eliminate the fog and provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.
-  Looking for a 'green' way to clean your faucets, sinks or stainless steel? Take a slice of cucumber and rub it on the surface you want to clean, not only will it remove years of tarnish and bring back the shine, but is won't leave streaks and won't harm you fingers or fingernails while you clean.
-  Out of WD 40 and need to fix a squeaky hinge? Take a cucumber slice and rub it along the problematic hinge, and voila, the squeak is gone!

(Excerpted from the NY Times, 'Spotlight on Home Series')

Eco-Friendly Fruit Fly Trap

Fill the jar or glass with a half-inch of apple cider vinegar and top with a splash of fruit juice or piece of ripe fruit. Roll the piece of paper into a cone so that it fits tightly at the top of the glass (but make sure the bottom of the cone doesn't touch the liquid.) Tape closed. Place the cone into the jar or glass. Then sit back and watch the trapping begin!



COLLARDS, KALE, SWISS CHARD, and MUSTARD

These greens are sometimes difficult to tell apart from one another unless you know what they are and know what to look for. It's harder when they are young and gets easier as they mature. So here's some information on each one of these with the hopes that it'll be easier to figure out what you have in your garden!



Collards: Looks just like broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage when it's young. As it matures, it develops large, thick, smooth leaves. Collards are often confused with cabbage due to the strong similarity in the leaves, however

collards never produce a head like cabbage. Harvest by cutting leaves at their base but do not remove the central stalk.



Kale: Looks very similar to collards when young except the leaves are more ruffled around the edges. Kale can grow into a very large plant. Harvest by cutting off the leaves at their base but do not remove the central stalk. Highly nutritious, very young collards and kale

can be added to salads. The larger older leaves are better when they are steamed or stir fried with added liquid. Always remove the tough center rib that runs through the leaf. Add them to a stew or soup for some extra vitamins, collards and kale are often sweeter after a frost because some of the starch gets converted to sugar to keep the plant from freezing.



Swiss chard: This is another big leafy green vegetable but it is more tender than the previous ones. It also comes in red or red-yellow-orange variety called Brite-lites. Chard is related to beets and it does not develop a single

central stalk that all the leaves come from. It can be eaten very young in salads or stir fried with other vegetables, added to soups and stews. There is no need to remove the center rib, just cut it into smaller pieces and cook those longer than the leaves. Chard will not usually survive a hard frost.



Mustard greens: These ruffled leaves look very similar to kale though they are light green in color much more tender feeling (more like Swiss chard). They have a tangy mustard-like taste (hence the name!). Whole small leaves can be used in salads but the larger leaves are better with the ribs removed and slow cooked or blanched to remove some of the

bitterness. Harvest chard and mustard greens by cutting each leaf at the base of the stalk but don't cut off the entire plant as it will continue to grow new leaves.

Recipes...

Summer Slaw

1 head of cabbage (about 1 lb) sliced very thin
1 lg red onion, chopped
1 green or orange pepper, chopped
4 broccoli crowns, chopped into small pieces
1/2 bunch scallions, chopped
1 cup raisins
1 apple, skinned and chopped (optional)
1/2 cup sunflower seed hearts
Dressing - Combine 1 cup mayo, 1/2 cup sugar, 4 tbs apple cider vinegar
Mix all the vegetables and toss with dressing. This salad tastes even better when you make it the day before and let it sit overnight.



Eggplant Stew

| | |
|--|---|
| 1/4 C canola oil | 1 tsp ground coriander |
| 1 1/2 tsp whole cumin seeds | 1 C tomato puree |
| 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed | 2 1/4 tsp salt |
| 3/4 lb potatoes, cut into 1" chunks | 3/4 C well-packed, very finely minced fresh cilantro leaves |
| 3/4 lb eggplants, cut into 1" chunks | |
| 3/4 lb mushrooms, cut to match size of other veggies | 2 1/4 C drained cooked chickpeas |
| 1/4 tsp ground turmeric | |

Put the oil in a large, wide pot and set over high heat. When hot put in the cumin and let sizzle for 10 seconds. Put in the garlic and potatoes. Stir and fry for a minute. Put in the eggplant chunks. Stir and fry for 2 minutes. Put in the mushrooms. Stir and fry for another 2 minutes. Now put in the turmeric and ground coriander. Stir once and put in the tomato puree, 4 cups of water, salt, cilantro and chickpeas. Bring to a boil. Cover, turn the heat down to low, and cook gently for 35 to 40 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.

Serves 4 to 6

Garden Spotlight

A Bevy of Berlin Gardeners



Barbara's innovative garden supports keep her plants healthy and pest free!

You can almost smell the basil in this picture!



Julie's onions and purple cabbage are thriving in her garden.



Sue's Brussels sprouts, beets and broccoli are cared for under the watchful eye of her special helper, Fritz.



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Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.

P.O. Box 17

Clinton, MA 01510

(978) 598-3723



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Things to Remember

Upcoming Events:

- 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

Farmer's Markets:

| Name | Address | Hours |
|---|--|--|
| Fitchburg-Burbank Campus Farmers Market | 275 Nichols Rd | Mon. and Wed. 11:00—4:00 07/11—10/26 |
| Fitchburg Farmers Market at Riverfront Park | Riverfront Park, 40 Commercial | Thu. 3:00—7:00 07/7—10/28 |
| Sterling Farmers Market | Town Hall, 1 Park Street, Rte 12, Sterling Common | Fri. 3:00—6:30 05/27-10/30 |
| Gardner Farmers Market | Monument Park along Park St. | Thu. 8:30 - 12:00 Fri. 3:00-6:00 05/05-10/28 |
| Lancaster Farmers Market | Lancaster Fairgrounds, Rte. 117 | Thu. 3:00-6:00 07/07-09/29 |

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Cook them tasty food.

