



Hello Gardeners,

We hope all is well with you and yours, and that your gardens are still happily producing. Sometimes, gardening success can become a little overwhelming as the refrigerator, and then the kitchen counters, begin to fill up with vegetables. Or you find you have an excess of one vegetable and can't use it all at once. We can relate to that!

At first, it might feel like too much work to preserve the harvest but it is really worth the effort. It's a great feeling to add a little home-pickled pepper to a mid winter sandwich, and suddenly remember how hot it was the day you picked them, or, at Thanksgiving, to serve a roasted butternut squash that YOU grew and set aside!

Your Friends at Growing Places



Storing your Peppers

The following two methods work for both sweet Bell Peppers and their hot and spicy cousins. When you're working with **hot** peppers, make sure to wear a pair of rubber gloves. The capsaicin oil in peppers, causes an intense burning sensation and it can be very difficult to wash off your skin. Be especially careful not to touch your face with your gloves whilst you are working.



To Freeze Peppers:

Wipe your harvested peppers with kitchen paper. Cut them in half, remove the core and seeds, and slice into 1/2 inch strips or small 1/4 inch chunks. Pack them into a freezer bag, squeeze out the air, seal the bag and place in the freezer. That's all there is to it. Frozen peppers are best used in a dish that is pan fried like stir-fried rice or noodles. You can also make a tasty omelet by adding lightly fried chopped onions and peppers to three beaten eggs. Cook over a medium low heat, and serve as soon as the eggs are set.

Attack of the Slugs!



Yum!
GP Gardeners
are the best!

Are you finding mysterious holes in the leaves of your plants? Or ragged chunks of leaves keep slowly disappearing over the course of a few days. The cool damp nights of the past week are perfect for slugs who may be the culprits! Slugs leave a coating of slime as they feed, which dries into a shiny trail. The slime helps protect their bodies from drying out and a residue often remains where the slug has crawled.

To investigate further, look for these slippery creatures at dusk, or with a flashlight at night. To get rid of them from your garden, handpick the slugs and drop them into a jar of soapy water .

Longley Acres Community Garden



This first year community garden is beautiful and the gardens are overflowing. So much so, we wonder if the electric fence is to keep the critters out or the squash in?



Rainbow Pickled Peppers

1 pint jar with a plastic lid
2 cups of roughly
chopped sweet or hot
peppers in assorted colors
1 pint of white vinegar



Fill the clean pint jar to within an inch of the top with the chopped peppers. Pour in white vinegar to cover them completely. Label and store the jar in the back of your refrigerator for up to 12 months. The peppers will stay crunchy for about two months but will gradually soften. They're a great addition to sandwiches or mixed into pasta and bean salads. The vinegar is flavorful, too and can be added to salad dressing, or drizzled over mashed potatoes or breaded fish.

Eco-Friendly Fruit Fly Trap

If you have been seeing small flies or gnats in your kitchen, they're probably fruit flies. Fruit flies can be a problem year round, but are especially common during late summer/fall because they are attracted to ripened or fermenting fruits and vegetables. The very best way of dealing with them is prevention. Produce which has ripened should be eaten promptly or refrigerated. We recommend that you cut away and discard cracked or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables.

Fruit Flies certainly love tomatoes, and if, like us, you have been harvesting your semi-ripe toms before a rainstorm, you may end up with some unwelcome visitors. Here is a tried and tested trap to win back your kitchen. Fill a jar or glass with a half-inch of apple cider vinegar and add a splash of fruit juice, or a 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 the cone closed. Place the cone into the jar or glass, and run tape around the area where the cone meets the glass. Then sit back and watch the trapping begin! Every few days, take the trap outside, un-tape the cone, rinse out the jar, and begin again.



It's a Keeper!



By now your winter squash should be growing steadily. It's tempting to harvest it ahead of time but winter squash really needs to ripen fully on the vine. If squash is picked too early in the season, the squash will taste watery and flavorless. If the weather turns wet and you're worried that your squash will rot, you can gently lift the squash and slide a couple of small rocks underneath to keep it off the ground. For most winter squash, you can test for ripeness by scraping the skin lightly with a fingernail. If you mark the skin, the squash is not ready to harvest. Butter-nut squash have very tough skin so keep watching for the skin to turn dull and lose its shine. That's the sign to pick!

When it is time to harvest, cut the squash from the vine with a sharp knife or clippers, leaving at least a 2 inch "tail" attached to the top of the squash. Don't carry it by its tail! Wipe down the skin with damp paper towels, or a kitchen cloth but do not rinse under the tap. If you accidentally knock the stem off the squash, or there are any little "nicks" or dents in the skin, you cannot store it. Refrigerate and cook it within two weeks.

If your squash is free from dents and blemishes, you will need to "cure it" by storing it in a warm sunny place for 10 days. This allows



the skin to harden and protects the squash from rot. Once the squash has cured, it can be stored for several weeks in a cool well ventilated place.

Garden Tasks

- Remove plants that are no longer producing – put into trash or compost.
- Do you have radishes that have gone to seed? Try adding the seed pods to salads – they are quite tasty and very mild.
- Old sheets or light-weight shower curtains are great for protecting your garden from frost. If it's going to be cold, just drape them over your plants in the early evening and remove them the next morning.
- First and second year GPGP gardeners will be receiving bags of compost by their gardens in the next few weeks. Instructions for using the compost will be included with the bags. This will provide food for your soil to absorb over the winter months so it is ready to go next spring.
- Now is also a good time to make a plan of your garden beds so that you don't plant the same crop in the same place next year. Rotating your crops like this helps to prevent disease and is a good way to make sure that your soil does not get depleted of nutrients.
- It is important to remove any rotten or dried up produce and leaves from the garden beds. These are sanctuaries for insect and disease pests!!! Yuck, definitely not what we are trying to "cultivate"!
- The weeds are beginning to drop their seeds now, so it is important to keep weeding. Every un-weeded weed can become hundreds next season!



- Keep HARVESTING! Share any extra you are unable to eat or preserve, everyone is grateful for homegrown veggies or herbs!