

Growing Times



Feeding Families Together

July 13, 2012 Volume 9, Issue 3

Growing Places Garden Project

From Garden to Harvest



Hello Gardeners,

You must have all read the news by now, one of “Hannaford’s Health Heroes” is Julie Pratt of Berlin, a dedicated volunteer at GPGP for several years. She was nominated by GPGP staff for her commitment to increasing access to fresh and healthy foods for low-income families through community gardening programs.

Julie continues to give freely of her time, energies and expertise in assisting the organization in whatever task they need help with. Over the past years, and as she currently does, she recruits and organizes mentors and trainings, coordinates many garden builds, loads and drives the truck, hauls the dirt and installs many gardens. She delivers seedlings to clients, and assists many new gardeners herself as a garden mentor. She strives to spread the good word about GPGP, to promote the many benefits of the program, and encourages people to get involved.

Share with us in thanking Julie and all of those volunteers who make the program a success enabling so many people, young and old, to access fresh, local food.

Your Friends at Growing Places

What's Happening...

We are probably all about 4 to 6 weeks into the garden adventure or should I say, experiment, because we are all in this together. That plant that grew 3 feet last year maybe didn't get more than a foot this year, and just isn't producing. Sound familiar? Or to a new gardener, you may not understand yet but you may have a crop that didn't grow to your expectation.

Time to harvest the garlic if you haven't done so yet. Remember to dig it out, don't pull it! And let it dry it a shaded spot, wipe the dry dirt off the heads, and after 2 weeks, trim the dried stalks to 1 inch of the head, you can almost trim off the excess roots.

Lettuce bolting in the heat? This means the center stalk begins to send up a shoot, maybe even a flower? You should be harvesting your lettuce by removing the larger leaves and if you have too much, trim and store in the refrigerator within a moist paper towel.

Make sure you have thinned your beets, radishes, and carrots. The harvest will be fuller the more space you give these root crops.

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What's Bugging You...

Keep a close eye on yard plants NOW and or the next few weeks as the long stretch of heat without rain has brought some not so friendly visitors...

The Mexican Bean Beetle and the Japanese Beetle both attack the bean plant leaf, creating a lacy look to the leaf, almost skeletal. If bugs are visible on the plant, wrap a paper towel or baggie over the area and shake them into the bag, trapping and disposing of them.

The Cabbage Worm sneaks up disguised as a pretty white butterfly fluttering around your garden. She will lay her eggs on the plant underneath the leaves on the cabbage plant, they will hatch within a few days and begin munching away. Best to regularly inspect your plants, if you see egg larvae, take a toothpick and wipe off eggs into a towel.

Aphids and whitefly are among us...when disturbed you see small flying insects. They will suck away the sweet juice of the new leaves. Mix 2 tbs of hot pepper sauce OR 1 tbs of canola oil with a few drops of dish liquid into a quart of water, let it stand overnight, and spray onto the leaves before the sun is directly on the plant. Pay close attention to the PESTS among your plants before they BUG you!

A Gardener's Tidbit...

Did you know our third president, Thomas Jefferson, was a Master Gardener? He was a trader and collector of seeds from all over the world, Monticello was his garden, inside and out, with raised beds and containers. It is said he found refuge and contentment when he spent time in the garden with his hands in the soil and savoring his plants. Do you know this feeling?



What's Happening...from Page 1

Tomato plants need your attention. Have you tied them to the stake? Use a piece of soft cloth or twine. Check for worms, flies, and also yellow leaves at the base of the plants. Yellow leaves can be caused by a few different reasons, but disposing of them is a good thing. That means throwing them away, NOT composting them.

Since we are all in this heat together, the amount of watering we are doing can zap the nutrients from the soil, leaching out too quickly from the plant to take them up. This calls for some additional fertilizer every couple of weeks. A light application of an organic vegetable fertilizer will benefit the plants during this time of stress. Read the package instructions carefully.

You can also continue to save those egg shells. Dry and then crush them into a watering can, add water and let set for a day or two. Use this water on your tomato and pepper plants. This will assist the plant in producing healthy fruit. You can also water with Epsom Salts using 1 tabs to 1 gallon of water, this encourages plant vitality while producing so much fruit. You can also scratch some into the soil around the base of the plant before the next rain...use sparingly or you may end up with some yellowing of the leaves.

If you are already getting fruit on your tomato plants and see any black or brown spot on the bottom of the fruit, you may have a blossom end rot condition. If can be cured by using a product called Rot Stop by Boride, found at your local nursery or Agway. One treatment and you shouldn't see anymore of this!

A garden is pure love and must be tended to diligently!

Recipes Using the Harvest

Greek Style Zucchini Salad (makes 2 servings)

Ingredients:

1/2 pound zucchini (grated)
1 tablespoon mint (chopped)
1 tablespoon dill (chopped)
1 green onion (sliced)
1/4 cup feta (crumbled)
1/2 lemon (juice and zest)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 clove garlic (grated)
salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Mix the zucchini, mint, dill, green onions and feta in a large bowl.
2. Mix the lemon juice, zest, olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper in a small bowl.
3. Toss the salad and the dressing.
4. Chill in the fridge for several hours to overnight before serving.

Summer Garden Tempura (Serve as many as you like)

For the Batter: GET THE KIDS INVOLVED HERE!

1 1/2 c. all purpose flour; salt and pepper to taste; 2 eggs beaten; 1 1/2 c. iced sparkling water

Choose: Green Beans ends trimmed, Red and Green Bell Peppers cut into strips, Eggplant cut into discs, Zucchini and Summer Squash cut in wedges (no seeds).

Make the batter, stir ingredients together to make it the thickness of heavy cream. Keep in fridge till ready to dip. Prepare the veggies. Pour **3 cups of sunflower or peanut oil into a deep pot.** Heat the oil to 325 degrees.

Dip the vegetables into the batter a few at a time, then into the hot oil until golden brown and crisp. Place on a paper towel when done.

Best eaten warm, sprinkle with sea salt or your favorite pepper blend, or even a little bit of parmesan cheese. Kids might like to dip them into their favorite dressing...Ranch? Ketchup? Whatever it takes to get them eating fresh veggies!

Tips for the Container Gardens

Growing vegetables in containers requires some attention to plant needs due to the size of the plant, its specific growing needs and the size and location of the pot. The need to water is especially important with the containers and with this hot, dry weather it may take a couple times a day to keep on top of it.

Mulching with grass clippings or other material such as straw or even bits of shredded cardboard (recycle those old egg cartons-soak well in water before applying to soil) may be helpful in retaining some moisture. With this high water demand, precious nutrients are lost at a greater rate in containers than in raised bed gardens. You can use an organic fertilizer like fish emulsion, Neptune Fish and Seaweed or Espoma Organic Vegetable, or even Miracle Gro 1/2 strength, every couple weeks when it appears that growth is slowing down or foliage is yellowing.

Continue to inspect regularly for issues and in this intense heat, powdery mildew can show up on some leaves overnight in any garden due to damp, hot conditions and an over crowding of leaves. One day the leaf is shining and green, the next day it has a haze of gray dust all over it...if you should see this condition, immediately spray with a baking soda solution-1 tbs baking soda, 1 tsp dish liquid, and 1 gallon of water. Spray when the plant is NOT in direct sunlight. A reminder to water the soil, NOT the leaves during the sunlight hours. Happy Gardening!



Garden Spotlight

Leominster Senior Center Container Gardens



*Thank you to our container
gardening expert and mentor
Connie Grabowy for the tips
and photos and for making
gardening fun and accessible
for people with limited space.
Over 20 new container gardens
were installed this year.*

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Don't Forget to Save the Date

Growing Places Garden Harvest
October 4, 2012

The BIG Event of the Year
Makes all the gardens possible!

How can you get involved?

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