








GROWING TIMES

Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.

THE WEATHER:

FROM WWW.WEATHER.COM

Tuesday!!	87° high/ 66° low	
Wednesday	73° high/ 65° low	
Thursday	76° high/ 67° low	
Friday	71° high/ 55° low	
Saturday	70° high/ 58° low	
Sunday	70° high/ 58° low	
Monday	79° high/ 58° low	

TO DO THIS WEEK:

- √ Check melons for ripeness—don't let them go too far or they'll split!
- √ Plant some spinach and lettuce for some yummy fall salads
- √ Remove lower leaves and flowers from tomato plants to speed up ripening
- √ Continue to water garden, especially during dry periods, but give melons less



HELLO GARDENERS,

There goes another incredibly beautiful week. Lots of sunshine and with the exception of Monday, not a lot of rain. Remember to continue to water your garden during these rather dry spells we are having. Your tomatoes should definitely be ripening and you might just be getting overloaded with them, as well as beans, squashes and cucumbers. Your neighbors are probably running at the sight of you coming toward them loaded down with extra veggies to share!

You can quickly freeze many vegetables for use later. Tomatoes can be frozen whole on a cookie sheet and then stored in a plastic bag in the freezer — great for soups and sauces. Summer squash and zucchini can be shredded and frozen in a plastic bag for use in soups and breads in the winter. Kale, collards and chard can be chopped and frozen in a plastic bag for addition to soups and stir fries. And if you're feeling adventuresome, you can always pick up a book at the library about canning and try your hand at that! Hopefully some of you can share your methods of storing food for the winter to help those of us with less experience.

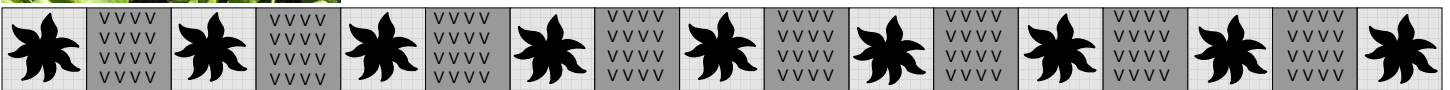
Have any questions or anything unusual to relate about your garden (see Orange Cucumber Mystery on the other side)? Please remember to give us a call so that we can talk about it or come and take a look. We are here to help.

Cindy and Kate

MELONS

Oh so delicious! Oh so hard to wait for! And oh so tough to tell when they are ready to pick. Melons create a mystery all their own with their small globes that become huge sometimes overnight. We know it's hard to wait for them to be perfectly ripe, but they taste best that way. See Issue 9 of our newsletter for hints on how to tell when you can harvest melons. Here are a few more tips:

- Don't water melons as frequently as your other plants. Giving too much water now can cause cracking or a bland taste. They should be able to get by with just rain now.
- Remove any flowers from the vines. This will redirect the plants' energy towards ripening the remaining fruits instead of trying to grow new ones (there aren't enough days left in the season for these flowers to mature fully into melons).
- If you have melons growing up a trellis and are concerned about them falling off, you can create a sling for them from old pantyhose or socks.
- All the melons on a single plant will ripen at about the same time
- After harvest, refrigerate muskmelons (such as cantaloupe) to preserve sweetness. Honeydew and watermelon can be stored in a cool humid spot out of direct light. But remember, they won't keep long so eat as soon as possible and enjoy!



Recipe: Yellow Tomato and Golden Pepper Soup

This soup is beautiful to look at and delicious to eat. It freezes well, so make a double batch! Red tomatoes and peppers are just as good in this soup.

From *Local Flavors* by Deborah Madison

Serves 4: multiply to serve more

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 pound yellow or orange tomatoes | Leaves from 2 sprigs of thyme |
| 1/3 cup white rice | 1 teaspoon paprika |
| Salt and ground pepper | 1 tablespoon tomato paste |
| 1 onion | 1 quart vegetable or chicken broth or water |
| 2 garlic cloves | Slivered basil or chopped parsley for garnish |
| 3 yellow or orange bell peppers | |
| 2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil | |
| 1 bay leaf | |



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1. Bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Slice an X at the base of each tomato. Plunge them, 2 at a time, into the water for 10 seconds, then remove and set aside. Add the rice and 1/2 teaspoon salt to the water, lower the heat to simmer and cook until rice is tender, about 12 minutes. Drain.
2. Chop the onion. Mince the garlic with a pinch of salt until mushy. Remove the seeds and membranes from peppers and dice them into small squares. You should have about 2 cups. Peel and remove the seeds from the tomatoes keeping the juice then dice the walls and mince the cores.
3. Warm the oil in a soup pot and add the onions, peppers, bay leaf, thyme and paprika. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion has begun to soften and turn light brown, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic, then stir in the tomato paste and 1 teaspoon salt. Give it a stir and add 1/4 cup water. Stew 5 minutes, then add tomatoes, their juice, and the stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered for 25 minutes.
4. When ready to serve, reheat to soup with the rice then ladle it in the bowls. Season with pepper and garnish with a little of the basil or parsley.

THE ORANGE CUCUMBER MYSTERY

Kate received a call late last week from Rita in Lancaster. She wanted to know why her cucumbers were turning orange. Kate suggested that GPGP might have given her a variety of cucumbers known as "Lemon Cukes" but Rita said that she had planted Boston pickling cukes and could not understand what had happened to them. Kate asked if they had any kind of mold on them that was orange and if perhaps the skin were green underneath. Rita said "No" and that when she tasted them, they tasted like cucumbers.

Well, it was time to investigate, since Kate had never grown pickling cucumbers before nor had she seen an orange cucumber. So, she went to visit Rita's garden. Indeed, the cucumbers were orange (see picture) and they were not some sort of mysterious squash—they tasted like and had the texture of cucumbers. When Kate went to the Clinton community garden there were orange cucumbers in it too.

So were they overripe? After some research, Kate learned that cucumbers turn a variety of colors when they move into the seed-making stage, including white, yellow and ORANGE. However, Kate also discovered that a local farm stand is also selling orange cukes. So, orange cucumbers may be overripe. However, they are edible enough to be sold! Anyway, we suggest picking and eating them as soon as possible. If you have planted pickling cucumbers, the remaining cucumbers may be small but they will probably taste good when green. Otherwise, you can wait until they turn orange and harvest them.

If you have no more small cucumbers on your vines and you do not see any flowers, it may be too late for new cukes this year. You can just remove the vines and plant peas for a fall crop - yum!

