



# Growing Times

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## HELLO GARDENERS!

The cooler weather seems to have slowed down the ripening of tomatoes, peppers and other heat loving crops. The larger tomatoes take much longer to ripen than all those little cherry tomatoes. But don't be disheartened, the bigger ones will get there soon. The green peppers in Cindy's garden are just beginning to think about turning red and becoming sweet. It will probably be a few more weeks before they finish ripening.

Please remember that if you have questions, comments or stories to share, give us a call. We enjoy hearing from you.

*Cindy & Kate*

### TIPS ON...

#### Maintenance

Keep weeding, especially those grasses and weeds that are producing seeds right now.

#### Pests

Cabbage worms eat kale and collards too. Pick them off if you see them and make sure to wash leaves in salt water before using.

#### Harvesting

**Eggplant** can be harvested any time after they reach about half of their mature size. The longer they stay on the vine, the more seeds they will develop making them tougher. Use a sharp knife to remove the eggplant from the stem. **Basil** can be harvested and stored for use through the year. Pick leaves, wash and let drain until dry. Put leaves on single layer of a cookie sheet spaced apart and freeze until rigid (about 1 hour). Place leaves in small freezer bags, press out air, seal and return to freezer.

### CROPS OF THE WEEK

THESE MAY BE READY TO HARVEST...

Cherry tomatoes, bell peppers, summer squash, cucumbers, eggplant, zucchini, green beans



### THINGS TO DO

- ✓ Remove plants that are no longer producing for you (string beans, broccoli, peas, lettuce, etc) and plant some lettuce or spinach for a fall crop.
- ✓ If your garlic has been drying and the outside is papery to touch, remove stem to about 1/2-1 inch above the bulb, cut off any remaining roots but don't cut the bulb and store the bulbs in an old onion bag or something that allows the air to flow through. Place bag in dark, dry, cool location (basements are good). Enjoy at will!

## RECIPES

### Eggplant gratin

3 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed  
1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
a 1-pound eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1/4 cup dry bread crumbs

Set a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F. In a heavy skillet cook the onion in 2 tablespoons of the oil over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until it is golden. Add garlic and stir for 1 minute. While onion is cooking, steam the eggplant in a steamer set over boiling water, covered, for 10 minutes, or until tender, transfer to a colander, and drain 5 minutes. In a bowl toss together eggplant, the onion mixture, 1/3 cup of parsley, salt and pepper to taste and spread mixture in a greased 3-cup shallow baking dish. In a small bowl stir together Parmesan cheese, bread crumbs, and remaining 2 tablespoons parsley, sprinkle mixture over eggplant mixture, and drizzle top with remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Bake gratin in the middle of the oven for 20 minutes, or until the topping is golden and the mixture is bubbling around the edges.

**Extra eggplant?** Wash, peel if desired and slice 1/3-inch thick. Blanch in 1 gallon boiling water with 1/2 cup lemon juice, covered for 4 minutes. Cool, drain and package in zip lock freezer bags leaving 1/2 inch space at top of bag. Freeze. **Or** fry slices, drain on paper towels, pack into freezer bags with freezer wrap between layers and freeze.

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### A few tidbits

Did you know that you can freeze garlic? Just pop whole unpeeled heads in the freezer in freezer bags and then remove the individual cloves as you need them. You can also peel and chop or mash the cloves; freeze tightly wrapped in plastic then grate or break off what you need. Or peel and puree 2 parts garlic cloves and 1 part oil together in blender or food processor then freeze in small quantities. And the last idea, cover fresh peeled cloves in oil and store in freezer.



*Freshly dried garlic (left) and ready to store or use (right)*

To reduce the acid in tomatoes when cooking, add a tablespoon or more of molasses, honey or sugar while cooking. Careful not to make it sweet!



*Larger tomatoes just starting to ripen*