

# Growing Times



June 16, 2008 Volume 5, Issue 1

Building Gardens, Growing Gardeners

## Hello Gardeners!

Welcome to the 2008 Newsletter from Growing Places Garden Project. We'll start off with a brief introduction of our new Executive Director, Jodi Breidel. Some of you may already know Jodi since she comes to us from Clinton where she was previously the Executive Director of WHEAT Community Services. Many of this year's gardeners have had the pleasure of meeting Jodi when she helped build their gardens - she was hauling lumber and slinging soil with the rest of us. We are excited for the future of GPGP with Jodi at the helm.

If you have a chance, check out our website. It has undergone a major revision. We also have a new phone number which is on the back of this page. Change is growth and GPGP is growing in more ways than one!

"Growing Times" will be sent out every other week between now and mid-October. We'll provide you with gardening tips, recipes and other information to help you get the most out of your garden. We would **love to have you** give us recipes or stories about what is happening in your garden so that we can share them with our readers. Please phone or email us with any of these or if you have any questions or concerns about your garden.

We wish you gentle rains, perfect sun and a wonderful growing season!

*Jodi, Kate and Cindy, Growing Places Garden Project*

## What's Happening...

Pea blossoms and some small pea pods are clinging to their vines. . . . It is almost time to savor this short seasoned treat! Peas are at their sweetest and crunchiest immediately after harvest so eat them in the garden or at that evening's meal. They will keep for up to 5 days unwashed, in plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Greens and spinach should be in abundance. Harvesting the outer leaves for eating today will allow the central leaves to become ready in another few days. Think: salads, stir fry, even a great addition to soups.

Radishes are raising their "shoulders" above the soil, a sure sign it's time to harvest! The roots can be used cooked or raw adding a tangy crunch to salad, slaw, sandwiches, and stir fry. Be tender with the tops as you pull them up, because they are "greens" and can be enjoyed cooked or fresh in salads.

Remember. . . . Use those herbs, not only do they add a new dimension to your cooking and salads; they also add lots of valuable vitamins too. AND the plants benefit too - as you pinch or cut back the plants they will reward you by coming back chubbier and happier!

Be sure to plant your squash, bean and cucumber seeds. Check your Growing Guide!

## Tips for a Better Garden...

**WATER:** aim for a thirst quenching drink once a week. The rain may graciously provide this, or you may have to do it yourself. Water can be recycled from the drippings of the air conditioner, the dehumidifier, even the kiddie pool. It is normal for many plants to look wilted in the heat of the day. If by morning they have not perked up it is time to give the garden a soak. It is best to water early in the day to keep leaf mold and fungus to a minimum.

**MULCHING:** is not a necessity, but it does provide substantial benefits- water conservation, weed control, and it helps keeps the soil cool in summer. Try grass clippings, (if no chemicals are used to treat the lawn), spread 1-2 inches thick, no more, and leave the area immediately at the base of plants bare. Or newspaper (only black and white, nothing glossy) can be layered 6-8 sheets thick and overlapped by neighboring layers; anchor with a thin layer of soil, rocks, or wood chips.

**THINNING:** is vital to the success of your plants. By removing seedlings which are too closely spaced, you are making room for those left behind to grow to their full potential. Scraggly radish, carrots, beets, spinach or Swiss chard are not appealing. It is hard on a gardener to pull out perfectly healthy seedlings, BUT they can be rinsed and tossed into your salad, so think of them as fancy "micro greens" and enjoy.

# THANK YOU!

## Did you know...

How much you helped?

GPGP's work is impossible without the efforts of our phenomenal volunteers. We tracked the hours you donated to build and plant this spring's gardens and here are the data:

It took about 500 hours to prepare for, construct, and plant this year's gardens.

**Volunteers and GPGP gardeners supplied over 375 of those hours.**

We are really grateful and you should be really proud!



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# RECIPES

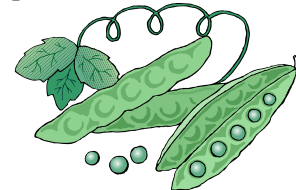
## Spring Peas with Mint or Thyme

(adapted from Nikki, GPGP Volunteer)

This simple recipe is not only light and wonderful but can also use lettuce that is "past its prime," and can be made with shucking peas, snow peas (trimmed) or sugar snaps (unzipped) or a combination.

Bring  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **chicken or vegetable broth** to a boil. Add **2 cup peas** and simmer until heated through, about 4 minutes. Stir in **1 cup thinly sliced romaine lettuce** (or a variety of lettuces with milk in the leaves) and **3 Tbs. fresh mint or thyme**. Season to taste with **salt**.

Note: Milk in lettuce leaves is the white liquid you see when you cut the lettuce from the plant.



A special thanks to Nikki Conzo for her many other contributions to this edition of Growing Times!