



Recipe: Let's make something good!

By Nikki Conzo and Karen Hamilton



Basil leaves can either be dried or frozen for later use.

*****IMPORTANT- do NOT wash first, you will have soggy brown leaves!! *****

To freeze, spread them on a cookie sheet in a single layer and place in freezer. Once frozen, put in a airtight freezer bag (such as Ziploc) and return to freezer.

To dry, gather a bunch of stems together with a rubber band and hang them upside down in a cool dry location (indoors, out of the sun). When the leaves have dried, pinch them off the stem (which may not be dry) and place in freezer bag or glass jar. Store along with other spices.

You can also chop the leaves and store them in a little olive oil in the freezer in ice cube trays. When you need some basil, just pop out a cube and use it. Or pop them all out once they're frozen and store the cubes in a freezer bag in the freezer. This is also a great way to store pesto.

You can also add extra flavor to a salad by slicing up a few leaves, they are also terrific when eaten with fresh sliced tomatoes or added to a variety of soups. Try out this pesto recipe and let us know how it turns out!

- Combine 1/2 cup of coarsely chopped basil in a blender or food processor with 1/4 cup olive oil, 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese and 4 minced garlic cloves. Process the mixture until smooth, pausing occasionally to scrape down the sides.

Use this savory sauce instead of marinara on pasta, slather it on crusty bread, or use it in place of pizza sauce for a bold and flavorful pie topped with a variety of roasted vegetables. You might never eat pizza with "red sauce" again!

This recipe from:

<http://allrecipes.com/HowTo/Beautiful-Basil/Detail.aspx>



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July 24 2009 | Vol .6 | Issue 5

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Basil—the king of summer herbs!

Right about now the smell of basil should be wafting around your garden. That heavenly smell is not the only thing this wondrous herb is good for—the delicious leaves can be used in a variety of dishes to add depth and flavor, so start picking your plants today.



The plants should be bushy and full of nice big leaves and may possibly already have started to flower. Pick the basil leaves from the stem by pinching them off at the base of the leaf. You can cut off the flower stalks and put the little flowers in your salads—they taste like basil too!

Pinching off the flowers and thinning out the plant is an important task. Once the plant starts making lots of flowers it will stop making the leaves, which are the part we LOVE! So keep pinching. If you find you have more than you can use in the moment try some of the methods in the recipe section to keep your beautiful basil around year round.

- Growing Places Garden Project Team

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Cucumbers

Cucumbers come in many varieties—some are more suited to eating (often called slicers) and some are more suited to pickling. They also grow as bushes and as vines. Cucumbers love warm temperatures and full sun. If cucumbers are kept well harvested, they will produce a large number of fruits (yes, cucumbers are technically a berry). They also seem to go from a little finger-length to ready-to-eat in a matter of a day or two. Therefore, you need to keep checking to see if they are ready. If they aren't harvested and get too big, they signal the plant to stop producing and that is sad!

Pick cucumbers when they are of moderate size for their variety: for pickling cucumbers that's about 3-4 inches in length, for slicers pick at about 6-8 inches in length. Rinse in cool water and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

You can pickle slicers if you harvest them when they are small and young.

Container Gardens

GPGP is piloting a new product this season: container gardens! Through a partnership with the Leominster Housing Authority, seven apartment dwellers now have access to healthy produce right off their balconies.



Connie Grabowy, GPGP Trustee, is leading this initiative and working with our new gardeners to ensure they achieve the same success in container gardens that other clients achieve with raised bed gardens. Stay tuned for more updates regarding this pilot in future issues.



- If tomato plants are becoming unmanageable, tie the branches as well as the stem to the stake to keep the fruit off the ground.
- Check squash and cucumber plants frequently and harvest often, the more often you pick the more your plants will produce!
- Check your brassicas for cabbage loopers (the larvae of the cabbage moth). They eat cabbage and other brassicas. (members of the cabbage family). Check your Growing Guide for more info and a picture.
- Peas are in their old age and production has slowed. Pull them out if they are unproductive. You can use the trellis space to sow some more cucumber seeds!
- Spinach and lettuce are beginning to bolt (send up a flower or tall shoots). Both will start to turn bitter. Pull them out when you don't like the taste and plant something new in the square.
- Plant more beans, radishes, beets, chard and lettuce.
- Peppers may be ready. If you like them green eat them green. If you prefer them red, orange or yellow allow them to continue ripening.

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SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2009 - More details to follow!

