This is our final issue of 2013! We know many of you have enjoyed a successful growing season and we hope you are all feeling confident about closing down your garden. If some of your plants are still hanging on, as many are this year, we’ve provided some tips to extend the season even further. If, instead, you’re ready for fall cleaning, there’s a convenient checklist of all the traditional tasks. And lastly, if you’re like us and already dreaming up next year’s garden, we’ll leave you with some thoughts on backwards garden planning – a great way to improve on this year’s garden.

Even though the growing season is wrapping up, Growing Places is available to you by phone, email or letter if you find you have questions over the next few months so don’t hesitate to contact us. We’ve so enjoyed working with all our gardeners and volunteers this season and hope you’ve (re)discovered the joy of growing your own food. We look forward to seeing you at the Gardener’s Gathering in March and gardening with you again in 2014!

Happy Gardening

Your Friends at Growing Places

978.598.3723

Hello Gardeners!

Do you love garlic? Chances are, you don’t love it as much as Bob, a second-year GP gardener at the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center (MVOC) gardens. This fall, he’ll be planting a full bed of it and is including seven (yes, seven) different varieties he picked up from the recent North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival. After a successful season of high-maintenance tomatoes, eggplant and more, Bob and Scotty, also a second-year GP gardener at MVOC, are cleaning up for fall, re-evaluating their plant list, and hatching the perfect low-maintenance garden plan to accompany all that garlic! —Contributed by Janet O.

Spotlight: Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center

- **Let the frost threat determine the timing of your harvest of tender, semi-hardy and cold hardy vegetables.**
- **As you plan next year’s garden, think about the end result you want, keeping your time, energy, and resources in mind. Consider crop rotation to help keep your soil healthy from year to year.**

Joanne’s potato harvest—What will you grow next year?

Scotty amidst the collards, 2012

Collards may not make next year’s cut, but winter squash is a strong contender.
Extending the Season

This is the time of the year where the “f” word—frost—starts to appear in the forecast. Frost occurs at the temperature where water turns into ice, 32 degrees Fahrenheit or 0 degrees Celsius. The warning signs of a potential frost are nights where the air is very still, there is no cloud cover, the humidity is low, and the evening temperatures are 45 degrees or less.

Often you can avoid damage caused by frost by covering your beds with old bed sheets, shower curtains, or row cover fabric. Try to create a tent so that the fabric does not touch the leaves of the plants. If the next day is warm, remove the cover so your plants don’t cook.

Since frost damage occurs because the plant cannot replace the moisture that has left its leaves, water the garden thoroughly just before nightfall when a frost is expected. Moist soil holds and releases more heat than dry soil creating a more humid environment around the plant. The plant will suffer less water loss when the frost pulls the moisture from the plant’s leaves.

Plants that have suffered damage from the frost are often dark green to black and wilted. The plants and the fruits or vegetables also look and feel like they are full of water. At that point, there is nothing you can do about them and they should be removed from the garden. Some crops actually taste better after a frost. These plants often survive a hard frost (see list below) and will continue to grow (slowly) into the late fall and early winter.

So when you hear about a frost coming to your area, consider what to do with the crops still in your garden. Tender crops (see list below) should probably be harvested and brought inside so that all the produce is not lost. As best you can, protect those that are semi-hardy and enjoy as soon as possible. — Contributed by Donna M.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tender (Damaged by light frost)</th>
<th>Semi-hardy (Tolerate light frost)</th>
<th>Cold hardy (Tolerate hard frost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Beets</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cucumber</td>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Brussels Sprouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
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<td>Melon</td>
<td>Chard</td>
<td>Collards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>Kale</td>
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<td>Pumpkin</td>
<td>Parsley, Oregano, Thyme</td>
<td>Peas</td>
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<td>Tomato</td>
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<td>Radish</td>
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<td>Basil</td>
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<td>Spinach</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Clean Up Checklist

- Harvest remaining tender vegetables (e.g. tomatoes, peas)
- Leave semi- and cold hardy vegetables for early winter harvest
- Clean out spent plants and all plant debris
- Till in 40-lbs compost per 4x8’ bed
- Plant garlic cloves
- Clean and store tools

To clean garden tools, wash with soapy water, then disinfect with a mix of 3 parts water 2 parts bleach. Oil any metal with WD40.

Extend the season further with low tunnels. Drape plastic sheeting over wire or plastic hoops. Secure at the base with weights or pins and enjoy greens from your mini-greenhouse all winter long.

Eggplant still flowering in Sidney’s garden at Heywood Wakefield

Eggplant still flowering in Sidney’s garden at Heywood Wakefield
Looking Ahead: Your Garden 2014

Once the last tomato has been picked from the vine and the garden has been put to bed, it’s a good time to take stock of what you learned from this year’s garden that will help next year’s be that much better.

Were there things you could have done better in your garden? For instance, this year’s heat waves were brutal. Were you able to keep up with watering? If not, what barriers stood in your way? Did you have to drag a hose around from garden bed to garden bed? Is there a way you could set up a watering system that would make things easier for you next year?

What are your goals for the things you grow? Do you want only enough vegetables to eat fresh, or would you also like to have enough to give away? Do you want to preserve some? If so, how much? For example, if you’re looking to achieve tomato-sauce independence for the year, you’ll need not only to plant a lot of tomatoes, but also to allow yourself enough time to do the processing required to preserve them.

As you review your season, think, too, about how you’ll keep your soil healthy. Each vegetable belongs to a plant family; for example, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and broccoli are all members of the cabbage family. (See your Growing Guide for an extended plant family chart.) Plants within a family all use similar nutrients from the soil so it’s important not to place veggies from the same family in the same space year after year. They’ll quickly use up their favorite nutrients. Instead, to keep your soil healthy, consider a crop rotation plan. This involves changing the location of each family type each year for three or four years, before planting again in the original location. While this kind of planning takes some effort to work out, it gives the soil an opportunity to recharge.

When you plan this way—the back end of the garden season first—you’ll be better prepared to deal with next year’s results. And what better way to spend a cold winter’s night than dreaming and scheming about the garden season to come? — Contributed by Lynda K. and Janet O.

Rustic Sage and Butternut Squash Pie

**Ingredients**
- 3 tbsps. butter
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 1 large butternut squash, cut in 1/8” slices
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsps. fresh sage leaves
- 1 pre-made 12” pie crust
- Heavy cream, if desired
- 1/2 cup blue cheese

**Method**
Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high. Cook squash, shallots, salt and pepper until tender, 8 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, add sage, and let cool.

Line a baking sheet with parchment and unroll pie crust. Top with squash mixture, leaving a 2-inch border. Fold the edges of the pie crust toward the center, overlapping slightly and covering part of the squash. Chill at least 20 minutes, up to 1 hour.

Heat oven to 350°. Brush piecrust with cream if desired. Bake until crust is golden, 45-55 minutes. Top with crumbled blue cheese. — Contributed by Janet O.
Growing Places Has Moved!

Our new address is

325 Lindell Avenue
Leominster, MA 01453

Don’t forget to update your records!
Thank you!

Food Day 2013

Celebrate Food Day with Growing Places at the Fitchburg Farmers Market!
Join in the fun, festivities, and garlic planting 101!

When: October 24, 3-6PM

Where: Lowe Playground on Elm Street in Fitchburg, located behind the Fitchburg Art Museum

One of the fantastic views from our new location on the Doyle Community Park and Center property

Food Day is a nationwide celebration of healthy, affordable, and sustainably produced food and a grassroots campaign for better food policies.