Hello Gardeners!

We have been doing garden visits this week – you may have noticed the note about your garden tucked into your doorway and a few bags of compost dropped off by your garden. The compost is for the fall to give your garden some food over the winter. More about that as the time to use it gets closer. You are welcome to move it to another location until you need it.

If you have questions about anything in your note, please give us a call. We have included below some of our observations and what to do about them in the Tips section of the newsletter. We love seeing the gardens grow and thrive though we recognize this is not always the case. We are here to help you as best we can with any problems and clearly love to hear and see your successes.

Even with all the technological advances in the last fifty years, home canning is one of the safest and most reliable methods of preserving food, if done properly. If there is a power outage, you could lose your food in your freezers. If there is a natural disaster and supplies are short, you will have your own food. If done properly and stored properly, home canned foods can last for years and still retain the same taste. If you think you might like to preserve some of your harvest through the winter, Lancaster Agway, Route 70 in Lancaster (next to the flea market and across from the Oak Ridge farm stand), is offering a free canning class at the store Wednesday, Aug. 13 from 5 to 6 p.m. No pre-registration is required.

Jodi, Kate and Cindy, Growing Places Garden Project

What’s Happening…

Quite a few things are happening in your gardens that we could see.

- Spinach and lettuce are beginning to bolt (send up a flower or tall shoot). Both will start to turn bitter. Pull out when you don’t like the taste and plant something new in the square.
- Peppers are almost ready in some gardens; others have a couple more weeks.
- Peas are in their old age and production has slowed. Pull them out if you no longer get what you want from them.
- Summer squash and zucchini are beginning to grow and ripen. Harvest them frequently.
- Some cabbages are large enough to eat (the size of your fist or a softball is a good starting size – you can let them continue to grow if you want).
- Basil is starting to flower – pinch off the tops (the flowers) to encourage leaf growth.
- Tomatoes are forming on the plants, mostly green but a few were in the ripening stages. Make sure you support your tomato plants with stakes.
- String beans are just beginning to come in as are cucumbers. Remember, the more frequently you pick them, the more produce you will get.
- Your Growing Guide is full of information to help you with harvesting and planting – be sure to check it out!

Tips for a Better Garden…

**Powdery Mildew**: Most often found on squash plants, this looks like white spots on the leaves and stems. Remove and destroy any infected stems and leaves with a sharp knife. Try spraying plant with a mixture of 1 part milk to 9 parts water or 1 tsp baking soda in 1 quart water. You can also spray with a copper-based fungicide – check with a local garden shop for this and directions.

**Bugs seen**: Squash vine borers are found on squash plants (your squash leaves will look wilted even if well watered). Ragged holes in cabbage, broccoli, kale and collards can indicate cabbage loopers/worms. Check your Growing Guide for solutions to these bugs.

**Planting**: If you have empty squares, plant something else in them. Beans, lettuce, squash, beets, chard and cucumbers can all be planted now. Try more broccoli for a fall crop.

**Watering and weeding**: Keep up with both of these and your garden will have a better chance at success. It’s been hot and dry lately so you need to be the rain. Weeds love this weather so remove them. If you plant according to the Square Foot method, something that doesn’t look like the other things in the square is probably a weed. Remember “One of these things is not like the others, one of these things just doesn’t belong” from Sesame Street!
Did you know...
These almost 7 foot high tomatoes were discovered at the house of one of our first year Clinton gardeners?! And look at those watermelon vines! YUM!

Cooking Kale

How do I cook this? Often a question we are asked. Wash kale, remove leafy part from the stem and center rib and either tear or chop leaves. Now you can either freeze this in plastic bags or use it. Kale is like cabbage in that it has a tough leaf and requires more cooking time and with a liquid to help soften it up. Its volume also decreases a lot with cooking. It makes a great and healthy addition to soups and stews. Here are some simple ways to cook it:

- Heat some olive oil and chopped garlic in a pan. Add damp chopped kale, cover with lid and steam until tender (add more water or broth if necessary).
- Boil 4 quarts water plus 1 ½ tbsp salt, add kale and cook uncovered 5-7 minutes until just tender. Drain.

Now season your kale with salt and pepper or other seasonings. Add dried cranberries, sliced almonds, cooked chopped apple, sesame seeds, cooked onions, whatever sounds interesting! Delish!