



FEB '12

A BACKYARD FARMER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



BABY TOMATOES FROM LAST SEASON

THE SEED PLANTING HAS ALREADY BEGUN!

The nursery was set up the last weekend of January and we have already begun planting a few seedlings! It's time to think about what vegetables you would like to grow this season!

Words from the Farmers

We hope everyone is enjoying this mild winter. It is certainly a change from last year. We have been busy cooking lots of awesome soups, having more time with family and playing with Cooper. We are looking forward to what we know will be a busy spring season. We can't wait to renew our garden friendships from last year and begin new ones.

There is big news on the gardening frontier this year! The USDA has released a new version of its Plant Hardiness Zone Map, which has not been changed in over 20 years. For the first time the new map offers a Geographic Information System (GIS) an interactive format that is specifically designed to be Internet friendly. The map website also incorporates a "find your zone by ZIP code" function. It can be viewed at <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>. There is also an interactive map which lets you zoom into a specific area of the state. The Metro area and southern Minnesota are now considered zone 4b, which is 5 degrees warmer than zone 4 (which we used to be) and that means we will be able to grow a few more plant varieties.

Contact Information

A Backyard Farm Owners:

Coleen Gregor and Joan James

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Look for us on Facebook!

2012 timeline

February

- Seedlings are started at the nursery
- Vegetable lists sent out
- The Home and Garden Show



March

- Cover gardens with plastic to start to warm
- Maintenance special ends March 1st
- Vegetable lists due March 15th

April

- Spring planting starts
- Seed planting and transplanting continues at the nursery
- Installation special ends April 1st

May

- Hardening off of summer plants



June

- Summer plants done planting by 1st week.

Tip of the Month - Choosing your Vegetables

Here are some things to think about when choosing your vegetables for this season, based on questions we received through out last season.

Most herbs take up a whole square, especially as they mature. If you would like a lot of herbs, keep in mind those squares are then generally occupied all season & limit space for other vegetables. Some great new greens to try are napa cabbage and mizuna. Napa cabbage has a little more protein & less calories than regular cabbage, with a unique flavor like a mild celery or pac choi. It is a little thicker & stronger than lettuce, it stands up well in things like spring rolls, stir fry & soup, adds a nice crunch to salads & slaws, plus it's a great substitute to use for tortillas or lettuce wraps. Mizuna has feathery looking leaves with a mild yet tangy or peppery flavor. It enhances the look & nutritional value of salads with its deep green or purple colors.



Some vegetables and herbs stay in their square all season, like the onions in the middle row here. While others, like the radishes, lettuce & spinach above, will be done in time to make room for summer vegetables such as peppers, eggplants and green beans.

We grow celery leaf instead of celery stalks because celery stalks are more finicky & less consistent to grow in our growing season. Their leaves are harvested to be used primarily in soups.



This Snow Crown cauliflower is beautiful and tasty, but something to think about while choosing your vegetables for this season: cauliflower can be finicky to grow in Minnesota & you do only get one head of cauliflower from each plant. Only one plant fits per square, but if you have room for it & want to try it, it can be wonderful & delicious!

Be sure to try this months' recipes. You may discover some different things you'd like to grow this season such as; fennel, napa cabbage, leeks, garlic, broccoli raab & mizuna. Please contact us if you have any questions about the various vegetables, herbs or fruit bed options!

Please get your vegetable lists in to us ASAP so that we can begin making your garden plans. Thank you!

Cooper's Corner

I know you all think my work is done once your gardens are put to bed. But alas, unlike Joan and Coleen, I never get to rest on my laurels. Here I am at a business meeting. You would think my place would be under the table cleaning up after the ladies, but I am well aware that if someone is not keeping an eye on them directly they will do nothing but gossip. So here I sit. I realize it looks comfortable to you...blanket and all...but in reality I am exhausted from the need for constant supervision. Do you think those vegetables plant themselves??

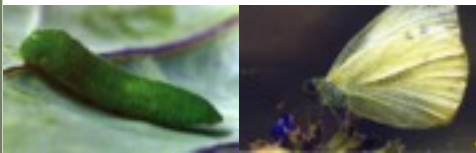


Bug Bites

Monthly bits about good & bad bugs

Cabbageworm

These caterpillars are light green, about 1" long & grow into moths with 1-2" white to yellowish-white colored wings. They chew holes in leaves, attacking spring & fall plants like: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, radish & turnips. They can be tricky to spot so be sure to check underneath leaves & along leaf veins. To get rid of these pests we hand pick them off the leaves &/or apply Pyola, an organic Chrysanthemum based spray which effects the bugs nervous system. Also, if washed with warm salt water after harvesting the cabbage worms will expire and float to the top.



Facts & bug photos from the book: Good Bug Bad Bug by Jessica Walliser

Savings

Returning Customers

If you sign up for maintenance before March 1st for the 2012 season you are credited for one week of free maintenance.

New Customers

If you book your installation before April 1st you receive \$50 off your installation invoice.

Kid's Corner



This is a drawing of Bijou gardening with Joan, wearing her squash hat! Thank you for sharing this wonderful drawing Bijou!

HOME AND GARDEN SHOW IN MINNEAPOLIS

We are busy getting ready for the Minneapolis Home and Garden show February 29th - March 4th at the Minneapolis Convention Center. We'll have our different types of garden beds on display and fun new photos and information. Also, you can see what's new in Home, Gardening, Remodeling, Home Decor and more from over 1,000 experts, plus experience thousands of products and services.

Come visit- we are located at booth 118.



SHOW HOURS

Wednesday, February 29	12:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Thursday, March 1	10:00 am - 9:00 pm
Friday, March 2	10:00 am - 10:00 pm
Saturday, March 3	9:00 am - 9:00 pm
Sunday, March 4	9:00 am - 6:00 pm

ADMISSION

Adults	\$13.00
Adults (Online)	\$10.00
Children Ages 6-12	\$4.00
Children Ages 5 & Under	FREE
Group Tickets (Min of 20 tickets)	\$9.00 each

www.homeandgardenshow.com

(Single tickets valid for 1 day)

ITALIAN SAUSAGE WITH PEPPERS

Ingredients you could be getting from your garden: Peppers, onion, fennel, garlic, tomatoes, basil, and parsley

Directions:

In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil. Sauté the onion, bell peppers and fennel until the vegetables turn golden, 8-10 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté 1-2 minutes longer. Stir in the tomatoes, salt and pepper. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, 15 minutes. Add the sausage; simmer, covered, stirring occasionally until the flavors are blended, about 20 minutes. If the sauce becomes too dry, add 1-2 Tablespoons of water.

Meanwhile cook the pasta according to package directions; drain.

Add the basil, parsley and pasta to the sausage mixture; toss to combine.

Serves 4

To make vegetarian/vegan you can use Field Roast "Italian sausage".

To make this recipe gluten free try using Tinkyada Brown Rice Pasta, we've found them to be a great gluten free pasta.



Ingredients

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, thinly sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 2 medium to large fennel bulbs thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 lb cooked Italian pork sausage
- 2 cups penne or other pasta
- 1/4 cup basil
- 2 T chopped flat-leaf parsley

Ingredients you could be getting from your garden: leeks & cherry tomatoes



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Heat 2 tsp olive oil in 10-inch nonstick ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Add 2 cups sliced leeks (white parts); season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover; cook 5 minutes. Stir in 1 cup cherry tomatoes. Cover; cook 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.

In a separate bowl, beat 6 egg whites to stiff peaks. Whisk in 4 egg yolks.

Brush skillet with 1 tsp olive oil. Add eggs; sprinkle with leeks and tomatoes and 4 oz crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese, pushing just under the surface. Cook over medium heat until sides are dry, 3 minutes. Transfer to oven; bake 15 to 20 minutes.

Serves 4

LEEK AND TOMATO FRITTATA

Ingredients

- 3 tsp olive oil
- 2 cups sliced leeks (white parts)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 6 egg whites
- 4 egg yolks
- 4 oz crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese
- salt and pepper to taste



MIZUNA SALAD & LIME VINAIGRETTE

Ingredients

Salad:

4 cups mizuna leaves
1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
1/4 cup flat parsley, chopped
3 Tbls chives, chopped
20 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
1 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced

Lime vinaigrette:

2 fresh limes, juiced
2 oz canola oil
Salt to taste



Ingredients you could be getting from your garden: Mizuna, cilantro, parsley, chives, cherry tomatoes & bell peppers

Directions:

Whisk the lime juice and canola oil together and season with salt to taste.

Toss the salad ingredients with the lime vinaigrette and put in the refrigerator to chill until ready to serve.

Serves 4-6

BROCCOLI RAAB WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS

Ingredients

3 Tbls Olive oil
1 yellow onion, sliced in slivers
1 large bunch of broccoli raab, rinsed & cut into 2-inch pieces
2-3 garlic cloves, sliced
1/4 tsp red chili flakes
Salt & pepper



Ingredients you could be getting from your garden: Onion, broccoli raab & garlic

Directions:

Heat 3 Tbls olive oil in a large saute pan on medium heat. Add the onions, stirring occasionally until soft and lightly browned, but not dried out.

Meanwhile bring a large pot of water to boil. Prepare an ice bath (fill large bowl half way with ice water). Add the broccoli raab to the boiling water, blanch for 1 minute. Use slotted spoon to remove from boiling water and put in the ice bath to stop the cooking. Drain from the ice water and set aside.

Add chili flakes and garlic to the saute pan with the onions, once the garlic starts to brown add the broccoli raab. Toss so all is coated with the olive oil and cook on high heat until most of moisture is gone, about 5 minutes.

Serves 4-6

A Backyard Farm Vegetable Selection 2012

Spring Season		Summer Season		Fall Season		Multi Season		Perennial**	
Arugula		Bush Beans		Arugula		Beets		Asparagus	
Broccoli		Pole Beans		Broccoli		Carrots		Blueberries	
Broccoli Raab		Slicing Cucumbers		Broccoli Raab		Collard Greens		Rhubarb	
Brussel Sprouts		Pickling cucumbers		Chinese (Napa) Cabbage		Kale		Raspberries	
Chinese (Napa) Cabbage		Cuke Nuts		Fennel		Leaf Lettuce		Strawberries	
Cabbage		Edamame		Garlic*		Butterhead/Bibb Lettuce			
Cauliflower		Regular Eggplant		Kohlrabi		Batavia/Summer Lettuce			
Fennel		Miniature Eggplant		Pac Choi		Romaine Lettuce		Herb Selection	
Kale		Pie Pumpkins		Radish		Mustard Greens		Basil	
Kohlrabi		Hot Peppers		Spinach		Asian Greens (Mizuna)		Chives	
Leeks		Sweet Peppers		Turnip				Cilantro	
Green Onions		Bell Peppers						Cutting Celery	
Bulb Onions		Rutabaga						Dill	
Pac Choi		Squash						Oregano	
Shelling Peas		Acorn						Parsley	
		Butternut							
Snow Peas		Summer						Rosemary	
		Zucchini							
Sugar Snap Peas		Cherry Tomatoes						Sage	
Potatoes		Sun Sugar (orange)						Thyme	
		Sweet Million (red)							
Radish		Heirloom Tomatoes						Marigold	
Spinach		Brandywine						Mint	
		Green Zebra							
Turnip		Peach						Marjoram	
		Black Russian							
		Hybrid Tomatoes						Nasturtium	
		Early Girl						Stevia	
		Beef Steak							
		Roma/Sauce Tomatoes							

*Garlic is planted at the very end of the season & harvested the following summer **Perennials require their own bed

Please indicate your preferences in the box behind each vegetable name using the following: X -I want this
 X! -I really like this & want a lot of this ?? -I would like to try a little of this O -I hate this