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Editor: Sarah Chappelow



# Green Thumb Gazette

## Update from the Chair

Finally, we can enjoy the fruits of all that hoeing, weed pulling, pest control, watering, not to mention a thousand and one other tasks that have gone into this year's garden! Sitting down to a meal with veggies from your own garden brings not only a sense of satisfaction for a job well done but also gives you the assurance that the food you and your family are eating is safe, nutritious and fresh from the vine.

Speaking of which, there are some families here in Boscawen and the surrounding communities that are not food secure; that is, they do not have enough food consistently to maintain themselves or their families. One response to this problem is to share your excess with local food pantries. There are three pantries in the immediate area: the Boscawen Congregational Church (just down the road), the United Church, and Immaculate Conception in Penacook. Contact information and hours of operation can be found at their respective websites or in the phone directory.

This year, with the addition of the herb garden, there is another set of new food choices. Many of us have harvested fresh basil, cilantro and parsley to add either a new flavor or a more intense flavor to our meals. If you are familiar with these herbs, please take advantage of these and other herbs at the community garden. If you have not used herbs in your cooking, give them a try. Ann LaCroix and Louise Jacob are priceless resources of knowledge about their cultivation, care and use.

See you at the garden.

John Keegan, Chair

## Upcoming Workshops

### How to Grow, Harvest, and Use Culinary Herbs

**Tuesday, August 4, 2015, 6:30 - 7:30 PM**

**Boscawen Community Garden, Woodbury Lane, Boscawen**

Join UNH Cooperative Extension Master Gardener, Ann LaCroix and Louise Jacob at the Boscawen Community Garden's new culinary herb garden for an outdoor discussion of how to grow, harvest, and use culinary herbs. Attendees will have the opportunity to harvest some fresh herbs to take home, so please bring a few zip-lock bags along with you. If you have a favorite recipe for using herbs, please bring 12 or so copies to share. This workshop is a joint initiative of UNH Cooperative Extension and the Boscawen Agricultural Commission. Rain or Shine. **Please contact the Boscawen Ag Commission to pre-register (for handouts) and for directions, at 753- 9188 x 301 or email [agriculture03303@gmail.com](mailto:agriculture03303@gmail.com).**

### Hands-on IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in the Garden

**Tuesday, August 11, 2015, 6:30 - 7:30 PM**

**Boscawen Community Garden, Woodbury Lane, Boscawen**

As the growing season progresses, new pests emerge in the garden. Dot Perkins, UNHCE Field Specialist, will discuss pests that may be bugging you. Learn how to identify pests, recognize the damage they cause, and control them using non-chemical methods. This talk is free and open to the public, but we ask that you contact the Boscawen Agricultural Commission to pre-register by calling 753-9188 x 301 or email: [agriculture03303@gmail.com](mailto:agriculture03303@gmail.com).

## Watching for Blossom End Rot– by Ann LaCroix

As you start picking tomatoes this month, you may notice some tomatoes on the vine have a brown rot at the bottom of the fruit. This condition is called blossom end rot, caused by too little calcium in the soil. Both peppers and tomatoes may get this condition and therefore need some extra calcium for their fruit development. If you plan on growing tomatoes next year, begin adding crushed egg shells to your soil or compost to provide the extra calcium. Liquid calcium for blossom end rot purchased at your local garden/feed store can be sprayed on each plant to get immediate results. Lobster or crab shells are also a good source of calcium and are found in the Coast of Maine composts.



## Storing Seeds– by Ann LaCroix

Seeds are living organisms that form after a flower is pollinated (fertilized by wind, water, or insects). Seeds have a seed coat and stored food for next year's germination and therefore require specific storage conditions to remain preserved for next year's crop.

The life time of keeping seeds varies with temperature and humidity. Seeds chosen from grocery or hardware racks probably experience higher temperatures at times and high humidity. These conditions cause seeds to lose their viability for germination. Choose seed from quality seed companies and then storing them in air tight containers in a dry and cool environment (in the refrigerator where temperatures are lower than 50 degrees and at a humidity level of 30-40%). A cool basement of your home can prolong the life of saved seed for several years. Using silica gel packets or dry rice in with the seed may help keep the humidity lower.

Choose seeds that are open pollinated, meaning that when you save the seed, the next year's plant will be similar to the mother plant. Heirloom seeds are also open pollinated. Hybrid seeds are produced by crossing two open-pollinated varieties so you cannot expect similar results saving seeds from hybrids.

**Long-lived seeds** maintaining good viability of up to 5 years include beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, collards, Kohlrabi, chicory, endive, radicchio, cucumber, kale, lettuce, melons, mustard, peppers, radish, rutabaga, sunflower, tomato, and turnip.

**Medium-lived seeds** maintaining good viability up to 3 years or more are carrot, chard, eggplant, parsley, pea, pumpkin, salsify, and squash.

**Short-lived seeds** that must be used within 1-2 years are corn, leek, onion, parsnip, and spinach.

Some seeds are easily picked as dried flower heads and saved in a paper bag in the refrigerator. Other seeds such as tomato, pumpkin, melon, or squash which are found inside the fruit need to sit in warm water to release their pulp. Change the water frequently until the pulp releases from the seed, then dry the seed thoroughly before storing for next year. It's amazing what you can save for seed year to year!



## ***Cropfit: Gardening for Functional Fitness– by Jim Chappelow***

We all know that gardening is healthy way to maintain a wholesome diet. But even the act of gardening itself can be an important component of an overall healthy lifestyle. In fact, many normal gardening activities are copied as exercises that are popular among amateur and professional athletes. These include carrying watering cans; hoeing and turning the soil; pushing a wheelbarrow; lifting and moving rocks, timbers, and sacks of material to clear ground or landscape raised garden beds.

### **Farmer's Walk**

Simply walking with a heavy object hand or one in each hand is an increasingly common conditioning exercise for all sorts of athletes, appropriately known as the Farmer's Walk. This exercise is even commonly seen in top level strength competitions such as the annual World's Strongest Man. The Farmer's Walk builds stamina, grip, and strengthens the hands, forearms, core, and leg muscles. When picking up objects be sure to use your legs and hips rather than flexing your spine, and brace your core muscles throughout.

### **Shovel Glove**

Shovel Glove is a method of exercise popular among primal fitness enthusiasts, which uses a sledge hammer or similar implement to simulate digging, raking, chopping, and other motions as functional exercises. Shovel Gloving is thought to especially benefit the grip, shoulders, and core muscles, while building cardio vascular endurance. When doing these motions, be sure to use a tool with a long enough handle to allow you to maintain good posture while working, in order to protect your lower back.

### **Loaded pushing/pulling**

Pushing and pulling loaded sleds or carts builds leg, core, and grip strength, and helps condition athletes for high intensity sports up to and including professional footballers and elite Crossfit Games competitors. These exercises all directly mimic the fitness demands of moving a wheelbarrow or garden cart. Again, be conscious of proper posture and brace your core to keep safe spinal alignment.

### **Odd Object Lifting**

My personal favorite, odd object lifting is an absolute staple of the growing sport of competitive Strongman. Competitors and trainees lift, flip, drag, carry, and load objects such as logs, large stones, and heavy sandbags for distance, weight, and time. These are obviously analogous to kinds of activities normally required from time to time in the course of building and maintaining a garden. These exercises work virtually every muscle in the body as well as cardiovascular capacity. In fact, doing volunteer work at the Boscawen community garden this season was an integral part of my own training in preparation for the Granite State Strongman Championship in July.

*Editor's note: Thanks in part to his training at the community garden, Jim placed first in the men's novice division at the Granite State Strongman Championship, held in Hampton, NH on July 25.*



Jim lifts heavy logs to get strong for the competition



All that hard work paid off!



One... two... three... LIFT!



## Calendula Garden— by Judith Abbe

Some may have noticed the bright yellow and orange blossoms of Calendula (*calendula officinalis*) in our community garden. This happy flower is one of my favorites, continuing to gift us with blooms well into the fall.

Calendula can be enjoyed in a number of ways. The fresh flower petals can be tossed into a salad or soup, adding flavor, color and vitamin C. It's a good substitute for saffron in adding flavor and color to rice and other dishes. Calendula is best known for its healing property used externally on the skin. In addition to promoting cell repair, it is antiseptic and soothing to the skin. My preference is to 'solar infuse' the flowers in grape seed oil, which I then use in a skin cream. It is also wonderful in olive oil, which can be used in salves and lip balm.

To make a solar infusion, the flowers should be overnight wilted, so some of the moisture can escape. Calendula is 'sticky' to pick, you'll feel the resin on your hands. I gently pull the flowers apart to open it some, and leave it to dry for a few days, out of direct sunlight. Then place the flowers in a glass jar and cover with the oil of your choice. There must be enough oil to completely cover the herbs with 2 to 3 inches of oil. Place your happy herb jar in a warm sunny spot for at least two weeks. Gently shake your jars periodically, giving them a warm hug!

If moisture beads up on the inside walls of the jar above the oil, carefully wipe it away with a paper towel. Sometimes I will place muslin or a coffee filter as a lid, to let moisture out. Be careful not to let rain water in if you've placed the jar outside!

An alternative way to infuse plants/herbs in oil is the double boiler method. This is simple and quick, but lacks the warmth or solar energy. Put your plant material in the top of a double boiler and get the water boiling, NOT the oil. Cover and let simmer for at least 40 minutes.

To strain infused oil, I prefer to use a piece of muslin placed in a strainer, over a clean glass jar. Pour in the oil-herb blend and give it time to drain well. When everyone is ready, you and your concoction, use your hands to gently squееееееее the last drops of oil out.



Here is the recipe from my herbal teacher, Rosemary Gladstar.

### Rosemary's Perfect Cream

2/3 cup water	1 cup of oil of choice
1/3 cup aloe vera gel	½ to 1 ounce of beeswax

Warm the oils and beeswax in a double boiler until the wax is melted. Let it cool just a bit, not quite to room temperature. Pour the oil into blender and set at high speed. In a slow thin drizzle, add the water mixture into the center of the vortex. When the cream looks thick and white, which is in a matter of a few minutes, turn off the blender. Sometimes I find the blending needs a little coaxing with a spatula stir to get it going. While still warm, pour your luscious cream into clean glass jars, cover and store in a cool dark place (I use the fridge, especially in summer).

Another fun part of creating your own skin cream is to play with the recipe, try different oils and combinations. Keep a 'recipe book' of your blends, adding notes about how you like the cream or not, and thoughts of what's going on in your life at the time. Enjoy!

## ***Recipe Corner: Stuffed Pepper Recipes***

### **Cilantro Rice-Stuffed Peppers– Submitted by Ann Lacroix**

2/3 brown or white rice	1 Tbsp olive oil
8 Italian poblano peppers or bell peppers	1 tsp ground cumin
½ c chopped yellow or red bell peppers	1 tsp chili powder
2 Tbsp toasted and chopped pumpkin seeds	Optional: 1 tsp low sodium salt

Cook 2/3 cup brown or white rice according to package directions, omitting salt if desired. While the rice is cooking, roast and peel 8 whole poblano or long Italian peppers. Use bell peppers if that's what you have. Roast on a grill, under a broiler, or over a gas flame. Just be sure to roast them until blackened all over, then when cool enough to handle, remove the skin.

Cut a 2 inch long lengthwise slit in each roasted pepper, leaving stem intact. Carefully remove seeds and discard. Stir together rice, ½ cup fresh yellow or red bell pepper, ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro, 2 Tbsp toasted and chopped pumpkin seeds, 1 Tbsp olive oil, 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp chili powder, and optional for 1 tsp salt in medium bowl. Stuff each pepper with about 1/3 cup of rice mixture. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Source: Best Darn Food Ever Weight Watchers Points Plus; 2012 WWTwentyfirst Corp. NY NY



### **Twenty-First Century Stuffed Peppers– Submitted by Barb Keegan**

#### **Ingredients:**

½ cup uncooked white or brown rice	2 large garlic cloves, minced
¾ cup water	2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
4 bell peppers, your choice of color	1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
8 ounces ground beef, ground turkey, ground veal, or tofu	2 cups tomato sauce
3 tbsp olive oil	4 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese, optional
1 onion, chopped	Salt and pepper to taste

#### **Method:**

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Combine rice and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes. Cut off tops of peppers, remove seeds and arrange in large baking dish lined with aluminum foil. Save tops of peppers for another recipe. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Saute onion and garlic until soft. Stir in mushrooms and cook until just beginning to soften. Stir in ground meat or tofu and parsley. Reduce heat to low and cook 5 minutes. Mix in rice and 1 1/3 cups tomato sauce. Taste and then season with salt and pepper if needed. Spoon mixture into peppers. Cover and bake about 45 minutes. Uncover, top each pepper with mozzarella cheese and bake until cheese is melted. Serve with remaining tomato sauce.

## ***Garden Song by Dave Mallett***

### Chorus

Inch by inch, row by row  
Gonna make this garden grow  
All it takes is a rake and a hoe  
And a piece of fertile ground  
Inch by inch, row by row  
Someone bless these seeds I sow  
Someone warm them from below  
Till the rains come tumbling down

Pulling weeds, picking stones  
Man is made of dreams and bones  
Feel the need to grow my own  
Because the time is close at hand  
Grain for grain in nature's chain  
Tune my body and my brain  
To the music of the land

### Chorus

Plant your rows straight and long  
Temper them with prayer and song  
Mother Earth will make you strong  
If you give her love and care  
An old crow watching hungrily  
From his perch in yonder tree  
In my garden I'm as free as that  
Feathered thief up there

### Chorus

Submitted by Jeff Abbe



Jeff Abbe with grandson Logan, age 1



Lots of vegetables and flowers at the garden!