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Editor: Sarah Chappelow



Green Thumb Gazette

Scenes from the Garden: August

As the sun sets earlier each day, we take pride in our late season crops and prepare for the coming Autumn.



Corn plants grow tall.



Big thanks to Louise Jacob for designing the new Herb Garden sign. It looks great!

You're Invited: End of Season Harvest Suppah!

Community Gardeners, Garden Committee members, and friends of the Garden are invited for an end-of-season Harvest Suppah potluck. Bring a dish to share and celebrate your successes with your fellow garden friends. Door prizes, music, and kids encouraged.

When: Wednesday, September 14th

5:00pm— Supper is Served

6:00pm— Brief meeting to discuss ideas to make our gardens better for next year.

Where: Jeff & Judi Abbe's house, 243 Queen Street, Boscawen

Please **RSVP** to Jeff at 856-3298, or mgdurango@comcast.net

See you there!



Curing and Storing Vegetables– by Ann LaCroix

Hello Gardeners,

In talking with gardeners at work, it's been a dry but great growing year. Hot dry days produced lots of sun and as a result most gardeners had very little blight or mildew on their tomato or squash plants. In fact, many people reported growing some of the largest crops they have ever produced in their gardens this year.

So, with that said, I can imagine you have extra harvest to store for future use. What are the **fastest easiest** ways to store and freeze/ preserve your harvest?

Part I: **Storing your harvest** (Cited source: Mother Earth News Magazine Guide to Fall Gardening, 2016)

Putting by storage crops is something anyone can do. By taking advantage of cold spots in your basement, attached garage, or perhaps a seasonal second refrigerator, you can easily store at least 20 crops for winter eating using simple, time-tested methods.

20 Vegetables and Fruits That Store for 2 Months or More

Apples	Celeriac	Parsnip	Shallot
Dry Beans	Celery	Pears	Sweet Potato
Beet	Grain Corn	Potato	Turnip
Cabbage	Leek	Pumpkin	Winter squash
Carrot	Onion	Rutabaga	



The trick is to lower the temperature and/or provide moisture so crisp root vegetables sense they are still in the ground (although some staple storage crops such as garlic, onions and shallots must have dry conditions to support prolonged dormancy). Most storage crops need to be cured to enhance their storage potential. During the curing process, potatoes and sweet potatoes heal over small wounds to the skin, garlic and onions form a dry seal over the openings at their necks, and dry beans and grain corn let go of excess moisture that could otherwise cause them to rot. Harvesting times, curing periods, and storage requirements vary with each crop. I have tried to summarize groups of crops with similar curing and storage requirements below.

Crops for cool storage (45-60 degrees): dried beans, grain corn, garlic, onion, shallot, potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, and winter squash



Once cured for one to two weeks, store crops in open boxes or mesh bags or on shelves in a cool place with moderate humidity. Exceptions will be potatoes stored in a closed bin and dried beans stored in airtight jars.

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Curing and Storing Vegetables, cont.

Storing Potatoes: To minimize bruising, harvest before soil temperatures fall below 55 degrees. Protect from sun. Wash only to remove dirt clods. Cure, spread out, for 2-3 weeks in a cool, dark, moist place (55-60 degrees). Then store in closed boxes, bins, or cloth-covered baskets in a cool place with moderate humidity. Some store potatoes in a burlap or open weave bag which is tucked into a plastic storage bin left open a little bit in an unheated basement. Secondly, line a plastic laundry basket with newspapers, arranged in layers and place the covered basket in an unheated garage. Another use for old egg cartons: In the basement, make short towers of potatoes, stacking them between layers of egg cartons. Cover the tower with a cloth to protect the potatoes from light. Or sort different potatoes into paper bags and then place the bags in stacked milk crates to prevent bruising. One person used an old dresser in a cool room or basement to store potatoes. Leave drawers partially open for ventilation. Lastly, bury a garbage can horizontally so that its bottom half is at least 12 inches deep in the soil. Place potatoes in the can or old cooler with shredded newspaper or clean straw. Secure the lid with a bungee cord, and, if needed, cover the can with an old blanket to shade out the sun.

***Important Note:** Never store fruits with vegetables as fruits give off ethylene gas and can affect the taste and condition of other produce.

Storing sweet potatoes:

Dig while soil is warm, at least one month before first frost. Cure in an 85 degree or warmer humid place for 1-2 weeks until skin wounds heal. For perfect conditions, cure by placing jugs of hot water into a large cooler. Store in 55-60 degrees with moderate humidity and avoid chilling.

Storing Beets, Carrots or other root crops in cold storage (32-45 degrees):

Parsnips mulched under a thick bed of straw will sweeten up for digging through the winter. However, repeated freezing and thawing of the surface soil will damage shallow-rooted crops like carrots, beets and turnips. Also, many gardeners tend to lose overwintering root crops covered with straw to soil pests such as wireworm, voles, or critters. Harvesting root crops, cleaning them up, and then securing them in cold storage containers is always safer and more convenient. Try bins, buckets, or trugs packed with **damp** sand to maintain high humidity, stashed in cold spots in the basement, under stairs, or in an unheated garage with a cold temperature of 32-40 degrees Fahrenheit. The biggest challenge is keeping a moist environment without promoting mold or soft rot. A seasonal second refrigerator may be used if you have a lot of beets or carrots to store. Store cleaned root crops in plastic bags with just a few sprinkled drops of water in each bag.

Storing leeks, cabbage, and Brussel sprouts: Uproot leeks, cabbage and Brussel sprouts and place cleaned crops in damp sand in open buckets.

Storing parsnips, rutabaga, turnips and celeriac:

Pack cleaned crops in damp sand in a sealed container and stored in a cold basement, garage, or root cellar.



Summer Thyme— by Judith Abbe

These cool summer nights are reminding me that the lazy hazy crazy days of summer will soon become a memory. As the season turns toward autumn, it often brings with it cough and cold season. Our herbal garden can continue to provide us with good medicine in every season. Thyme, in addition to being a culinary treat, has beneficial properties for our respiratory and digestive systems as well.

The essential oils of thyme, mainly thymol and carvacrol, provide both aromatic and medicinal properties. For the respiratory system, thyme helps to thin mucous, making it easier to expectorate or cough up. It also has antimicrobial and antibacterial benefits. Below is a recipe for a cough syrup from one of my favorite herbal healers, Tieraona Low Dog, MD.

Thyme Cough Syrup:

4 tablespoons fresh thyme

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 cup water

¼ cup honey OR ¼ cup maple syrup if using for a child under one year old.

Pour boiling water over thyme and steep, covered, for 15-30 minutes before straining. Add honey OR maple syrup and lemon juice. Refrigerate for up to one week. For children under one year old, give 1/2 tsp every 2 to 3 hours as needed. Children from a year old to teens can have 1 to 2 tsp every 2 to 3 hours as needed. Adults can have 1 to 2 tablespoons every 2 to 3 hours as needed.

Thyme also has carmative properties, which means it helps the digestive system to work properly. It is soothing to the gut wall, reducing inflammation and helping with the removal of gas from the gastrointestinal tract. To make an herbal tea infusion of thyme, pour 1 cup boiling water over 2 teaspoons of dried herb, cover and let steep for 15 to 30 minutes before straining. Enjoy a warm cup of tea three times a day.

Be well!

Compost Bin Needs Your Leaves



Please keep the compost bin in mind when you rake your leaves this Autumn. Leaves are badly needed to be bagged and dumped into Bins 1 & 4 for next year's composting. Thanks in advance!



Freezing Vegetables (and Berries) from Your Garden— by Ann LaCroix

[Cited source: **Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series Magazine, Summer 2016, Pgs 26-29**]

Freezing is a fast and easy form of food preservation. Many crops, including asparagus, broccoli, green beans, peppers, summer squash, dark leafy greens and all types of berries, will actually be preserved best if frozen. As part of the freezing process, you can make use of odds and ends from your garden—or prepare one big batch of your harvest during peak season. Unlike canning, you don't have to pay attention to acidity or salt when freezing. Mix and match vegetable combos such as red and green pepper, summer squash, and green zucchini for winter stir fry or late Fall grilling. Do not include garlic or seed spices such as black pepper in the frozen combos as they undergo unwanted flavor changes when frozen.

20 Crops That Freeze Well:

Asparagus	Chard	Herbs	Peppers
Berries	Collards	Kale	Rhubarb
Broccoli	Corn	Kohlrabi	Spinach
Carrots	Eggplant	Okra	Squash- Summer & Winter
Cauliflower	Green/Yellow snap beans	Peas	Tomatoes

To utilize the greatest amount of space in the freezer, freezer bags can lie flat and stack nicely. First freeze the vegetables flat in a single layer on cookie sheets. Allot freezer space for odd-shaped packages such as those for cabbage leaves that have been steam-blanching and frozen flat for making cabbage rolls in winter. Steam-blanch and freeze an assortment of hollowed-out stuffable veggies such as pattypan squash, zucchini, small eggplant, and peppers.

Freezing Basics

Only use vegetables and berries that are in excellent peak condition and have been thoroughly cleaned. Most vegetables should be steam-blanching for a minimum of 2-5 minutes until just barely soft. Blanching is the process of heating vegetables with steam for 2-5 minutes, then immediately plunging them into ice cold or iced water which stops the enzyme activity that causes vegetables to lose nutrients and change texture. (I use a large pot with a steamer basket inserted which separates the water from the vegetables, thus capturing more flavor and nutrients. Just fill the pot with as little as an inch of water under the steamer



basket, boil the water, then add the vegetables, cover, and steam for 2+ minutes.) The cooled veggies can then be patted dry, frozen in a single layer on cookie sheets, and then put into containers or flat freezer bags. Using cookie sheets for freezing ensures that the fruits and vegetables won't all stick together, thus allowing you to remove a handful at a time from the container. With zip lock freezer bags, remove as much air as possible. Try closing the bag just tight enough to insert a straw. Inhale the air to shrink the bag before freezing. A vacuum sealer will suck out the air as it seals the bag. Vacuum sealing reduces freezer burn which are ice crystals that refreeze around the edges of the food, damaging its taste and texture. According to the National Center for Home Food Preservation (nchfp.uga.edu), fruits and vegetables will last in the freezer from 8-12 months. Always label and date each food bag for proper rotation in the freezer. Freezer bags are more money, but their thicker plastic makes the food last longer.

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Freezing Vegetables (and Berries) from Your Garden, cont.



If you are crunched for time and have a bushel of tomatoes, quickly core them and throw them into gallon freezer bags whole. Then at a later date, the tomatoes will peel like magic when held under warm water. If you want to retain the skins, run half-thawed tomatoes through the food processor to make a base for tomato sauce. Because the tomatoes were not cooked prior to freezing them, some enzyme activity will have taken place which may cause some loss of nutrients and vitamins. This won't happen, however, if you gently stew your tomatoes in their own juice before freezing them.

To cook tomatoes blanch whole tomatoes for about 2-5 minutes, then core and skin them. Skim off liquid and store separately, then chop or dice tomatoes for freezing. Adding some combos like chopped peppers or cilantro intended for a chili base or add okra, peppers and thyme for a jambalaya mixture or just throw eggplant, squash, pepper into diced tomatoes for a nice veggie stew. Just remember to hold off on the onion, garlic or pepper until ready to thaw and cook. Using the tomato liquid may come in handy. Add tomato liquid to freeze with the veggie combos.

If you are a pizza maker, the trick to having the best tasting frozen tomatoes is to dry them halfway first. Removing some moisture intensifies their flavor and gives the ideal pizza or pasta sauce. Use oven at 250 degrees or a food dehydrator or a dry sunny day to half dry tomatoes.

Cut paste and cherry tomatoes lengthwise, slicers into quarters and place cut side up on baking sheets with rims to catch juices. You can season with herbs, sea salt and a drizzle of olive oil. Heat in oven for one hour, then reduce heat to lowest setting and dry for two hours until tomatoes flatten and the edges pucker. In a dehydrator, dry for 4 hours. In the sun, dry on a clean screen until they fully collapse. Freeze half-dry tomatoes on cookie sheets, then pack in freezer containers. When needed, run half thawed tomatoes through a food processor to make pizza or pasta sauce. Yum!

You can steam-blanch veggies and store in canning jars as well. Make sure jars have gone through a good cleaning along with the screw on bands. Good rule of thumb is not to reuse the lids. Fill pint jars, leaving 1 ½ inch space for liquids and a 2 inch space for quarts due to liquids expanding. If freezing dried veggies in canning jars, they will last two years; only one year on a pantry shelf.

If you want to freeze sweet corn, steam-blanch the ears for 2 minutes, cut off kernels and freeze on a cookie sheet, then bag for later. Another idea is to cut corn off the cob, pile it in a big pan with a stick of butter and enough milk to just cover the bottom of the pan. Bake 350 degrees until hot, stirring every 10 minutes. After cooling, spoon into freezer bags. Tastes wonderful!

Enjoy the harvest!

Upcoming Workshops

GOT HEALTHY SOILS?

Monday, September 12, 2016 6:30 PM

Boscawen Municipal Complex, 116 North Main Street, 4th Floor Boscawen, NH

Stacy Luke, Merrimack County Conservation District manager, will discuss the Soil Health Initiative, different ways to improve your soil health, different soil tests, and different equipment available to improve your soils for a better harvest. Come try the penetrometer to test soil compaction. Three ***Building Soils*** books will be raffled off at the event.

Come learn the facts and get your questions answered by Stacy at the Boscawen Municipal Complex (4th floor) on September 12th.

Register by contacting Candace Haithwaite at (603) 753-9188 ext. 301.

Co-sponsored by UNH Cooperative Extension, The Merrimack County Conservation District, and the Boscawen Agricultural Commission.

SUPPORTING POLLINATORS IN THE LANDSCAPE

Thursday, September 22, 2016, 6:30 PM

Wilmot Community Assoc.'s Red Barn, 64 Village Road, Wilmot

UNHCE Food & Agriculture Field Specialist, Amy Papineau, will discuss the many types of bees that you may find in your landscape, the role of these insects in the environment, and how you can design your garden and landscape to provide pollinators with the resources they need. This workshop is free and open to the public.

Go to this link for a flyer and direc-

tions: http://extension.unh.edu/events/index.cfm?e=app.event&event_id=41343

Please register by September 19 by contacting Kristy Heath at [603 – 526-6555](tel:6035266555) or kheath@ausbonsargent.org

What topics do YOU want to learn more about at Boscawen's
First Monday talks? Email ideas to:
agriculture03303@gmail.com.

More About Hornworms– by Ann LaCroix

Last month's newsletter featured information on tomato hornworms.

Correction of photos for tomato-tobacco hornworms in New England:

Tomato hornworms are actually Tobacco hornworms, also referred to as “hummingbird” moths.



Tobacco hornworm larvae eat tomato leaves and tomatoes. (Photo of tobacco hornworm found on Ann La-Croix's tomato plants in August. This guy ate all the leaves and a couple tomatoes before I spied him!) Check on the undersides of tomato leaves around August 1st to locate the larvae and watch for poops left on the leaves. Tobacco hornworms only eat tomato plants in the garden.



Simple Dimple Tomato Sauce– by Jeff Abbe

When you have excess tomatoes this time of year, an easy way to put up a batch of Sauce is to get the Large crock pot out. Cut your tomatoes into chunks, there's no need to peel tomatoes. Fill the crock pot to full with tomatoes. Follow the recipe or experiment with other personal touches of your choosing. This will make about six Quart bags for freezing.

- 1 Crockpot full of chunked tomatoes (minus stems)
- 1 Large cut up onion
- 2 Medium Peppers cut up, your choice sweet and/ or HOT
- Large handful of Fresh Sweet Basil
- Fresh Oregano to taste
- ¼ cup Maple syrup (or sugar)
- 1 Lime squeezed
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar



Turn on crockpot to High for 12 hours with lid on. Then 12 hours with lid off to cook down some of the juice. Stirring occasionally. After sauce cools down bag into ziplock freezer bags. Presto, not sure what to have for dinner take a bag out of freezer and heat up for pasta, pizza, lasagna. Suppahs ready!!! Never buy sketti sauce again. MMMMMMMMM Bon Appetit!

Wrapping Up the Gardening Season

The Garden Committee seeks to bring you a fun, informative newsletter each month during the gardening season. The Green Thumb Gazette wouldn't be possible without the hard work and dedication of those individuals who submit articles, community events, and other items of interest each month.

The Boscawen Community Garden closes for the season on Monday, September 26th. Stay tuned for the final newsletter of the season, which will be distributed by September 19th, for all the important information you need to know for closing up your plots.

As always, I welcome your feedback. What topics do you want to read more about? Send me an email any-time to offer suggestions. Sarah.Chappelow@gmail.com

Sarah Chappelow, Editor