

Community Gardener's Companion

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DULUTH COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM



The MISSION of the Duluth Community Garden Program is to strengthen the Duluth area community and foster self-sufficiency by providing access for all to food production and preservation resources and promoting sustainable gardening practices.

The Duluth Community Garden Program Needs Your Help Today!

Our mothers used to tell us that it's better to give than to receive. In this year of hard economic times, the giving isn't keeping up with the need—not even close. As a result, our 32-year-old Duluth Community Garden Program (DCGP) is in the midst of a financial crisis, and without immediate financial support from our greater community we won't be able to meet our 2009 budget needs. This could result in cutting DCGP programming.

Ironically, during these hard economic times, the food security program of the DCGP is experiencing unprecedented demand. Requests for garden sites have increased consistently over the past several years. In 2009, the demand is unparalleled, with over 65 new requests for garden space – an 18% increase over 2008. Unfortunately, due to the recession's negative impact on foundation and individual giving, we struggle to maintain our existing program, let alone meet the new demand.

The DCGP's 16 community gardens, located throughout the City of Duluth, have helped individuals and low-income families access fresh and nutritious foods that support good health for over three decades. Over the years, many Twin Ports families have come to rely on the garden program to grow some of their own vegetables, fruits,

and herbs to save money on their food bills. Now that hard times have hit, others are just realizing the value of a community garden.

Beyond food security, our community gardens provide benefits that keep our community healthy and strong. Community gardens are environmentally sustainable, local, and healthy. They beautify our community and help bring neighbors together. Community gardens are a proven tool to reduce neighborhood crime—particularly when vacant, blighted lots are developed as gardens. Duluth's community gardens provide safe, recreational green space. They contribute to keeping our urban air clean. They offer a place to exercise and breathe fresh air, which reduces stress and increases a sense of wellness and belonging. They provide a place for families from other cultures to grow traditional foods not available in the supermarket. Many in our Twin Ports' vibrant Hmong population are community gardeners.

While some Twin Ports residents may have sunny backyards or balconies where they can plant a garden whenever they have the time and energy, for many others the DCGP provides an important option.

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Would you like to write for the newsletter? What would you like to see in this publication? We are always looking for fresh perspectives.

Add your voice.

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Community Gardener's Companion: News of the Duluth Community Garden Program

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A Primer on Soil

By Pat Farrell

Soil is the dark realm of hope to which we turn over our seeds each spring. Without fail, the soil does not disappoint. What is going on in that dark underworld, anyway? And what can we do to protect it, nurture it, and appreciate it?

Soil is a living dynamic system, a great recycling machine with parts too numerous to count. Nature writer, William Bryant Logan, describes processes in the soil as "orchestral," and the late soil scientist, Hans Jenny, was fond of pointing out that there is more living biomass below the ground than above. In fact, the biomass beneath each single acre is equivalent to that of twelve horses! Contributing to that biomass are the springtails, pseudoscorpions, beetles, mites, worms, actinomycetes, bacteria and protozoa (to name a few) who are the movers and shakers of the nutrient recycling system. By mechanical and chemical work, they disassemble organic tissue, making its carbon and nutrient parts available for reuse.

Maintaining healthy soil, therefore, is not simply a matter of keeping adequate amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (N,P,K) in the soil, but also of maintaining the habitat and biodiversity of the organisms in the soil food web. Adding compost and mulches, keeping the soil well granulated, and avoiding chemical herbicides, are all ways to improve the soil health for organisms. The soil microbes have needs, just as our garden plants do. Compost and other organic material added to soil provide for those needs, especially for carbon, nitrogen and energy. Nitrogen is often in short supply for microbes, so it is important that our compost contains more than enough nitrogen. Otherwise, microbes will hoard the nitrogen and our plants may suffer nitrogen deficiency. If, however, we

add compost that has plenty of available nitrogen, the microbes can satisfy their needs and the excess can be released for use by plants.

The amount of nitrogen, relative to carbon, is expressed as the C:N ratio of organic residue. Narrow C:N ratio residues (such as newspaper, wood chips and straw) will decay slowly and will not readily release nitrogen for plant use. Wide C:N ratio residues (such as manure, cover crops and composted kitchen waste) provide plenty of nitrogen for microbes and plants and will decompose rapidly.

If you garden in Duluth, you are no doubt familiar with clay and stones. In most cases, you can thank the ice sheet for both. Some 12,000 years ago, Glacial Lake Duluth covered what is now the western tip of Lake Superior and its waters extended up to the approximate elevation of Skyline Drive. The still waters of this enormous lake allowed clay to settle in thick layers on its bottom. Now we are left with those lake clays in our gardens. A little clay is a very good thing, but too much clay is not. The non-living portion of soil that is smaller than gravel is composed of three particle sizes. From largest to smallest, those particle sizes are sand, silt, and clay. The relative amounts of these particle sizes determine the "texture" of the soil. It is texture that influences important soil characteristics such as drainage, workability, water-holding and nutrient-holding capacity. The smaller the soil particle size, the greater the surface area onto which water and nutrients may attach. So a clayey soil can hold more water and nutrients (than sand or silt), but too much clay makes it difficult for water, roots, and shovels to penetrate the soil. The best texture is a mixture of all three particle sizes: loam. We cannot change the texture of our

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garden soils without adding or removing sand, silt or clay particles. By adding organic residues, however, we can give our soil the benefits of clay without the problems. Humus is the ultimate decay product of decomposed organic residues. It is colloidal in size, meaning it is even smaller than most clay particles. Humus is a wonderful addition to our soils because it adds surface area for water and nutrients, and it also helps to preserve the structure and aeration of the soil. A little humus goes a long way!

As the long, slow soil thaw begins, what can we do for our soil? In spring (after the thaw) is a good time to begin to turn the soil, providing channels and aeration for organisms, aiding the soil to warm and dry. It is also a good time to test for pH and the basic NPK nutrients. A simple kit for these four soil tests can be purchased inexpensively at most garden stores. If the test results reveal that your soil needs amendments, it is good to add those early, allowing some time for the amendments to be incorporated into the soil. Soil pH (acidity) is important because in a low pH (acid) soil,

plants will not be able to take full advantage of soil nutrients. It is a rare occurrence in Duluth, but if your soil pH is too high (alkaline), the soil may be toxic to plants. A good garden soil pH is between 5.8 and 6.5. An easy way to increase the pH of an acidic soil is to add a little lime and continue testing after the lime has had a chance to wash into the soil. To lower pH, add rock sulfur or sphagnum peat moss (4.5 pH). Sedge peat moss (7 pH) does not lower pH.

NPK deficiencies can also be addressed by adding compost, by planting cover crops, and by adding blood meal (for nitrogen), bone meal (for phosphorus), and green sand (for potassium). Adding compost and mixing it into your garden bed is best done before planting. That prevents the annoying task of trying to add compost to an already planted bed.

The smell of the newly turned soil in our gardens is one of the first pleasures of the gardening season, reminding us of the dark realm below, to which we owe our gardening successes.

NO EXTRA COST
TO YOU AND AN
EASY WAY TO
DONATE!

The Duluth Community Garden Program can earn a donation every time you search the Internet or shop online!!!

Follow these easy directions:

1. Go to GoodSearch.com or GoodShop.com.
2. Type "Duluth Community Garden Program" in the box "who do you good-search for?" or "who do you goodshop for?"
3. Click on "Verify", then start searching or shopping and they'll donate a penny (and even more when you buy) to the DCGP each time you use the site!



...Need Your Help continued from page 1

Please help the Duluth Community Garden Program continue its very important mission—providing the means for Twin Ports' residents to grow food. Pledge your financial support today.

Gifts of \$500, \$250, \$100 and \$50 will greatly help us meet our 2009 budget. All gifts are welcome.

Nicole Wilde, secretary DCGP
Dan Kislinger, president DCGP

Very Important Note:

JUNE 15 DEADLINE

Because of great demand for garden space we must insist that you plant your community garden plot and remove weeds by June 15 or it will be forfeit: either tilled up and reassigned, or cover cropped.

My Community Gardening Experience

by Andrea Gelb, community gardener

The way I most often describe my community garden experience is, "I am amazed how it has captured me." It has captured my heart, and although there are days when I may not make it to the garden on the physical plane, there are other days when I am nosing around or playing within my plot, and monitoring what is happening in the other plots, three or more times in a day. The smells change; the play of light—the temperature and dampness of the soil—the neighbors who come around on purpose or by chance—are a continual delight.

Preparing the soil in the spring is one of my favorite parts of the garden season. Working the soil around the perennial flowers, asparagus, strawberries, raspberries and rhubarb, along with the soil that is yet to be planted, sets my imagination flying. Matching this dream state of endless possibilities with the limitations (um.... challenges? opportunities? What word would Pema Chodron use?) of space, climate, or what plants like to be next to others (companion planting) is hopefully informed by the lessons of the previous year.

I have especially appreciated the kind manner in which those lessons have been delivered. My first few gardening years, I was surrounded by experienced hands and gentle teachers. It was Mary that first summer who ever so gently informed me that the tomato cage that I had carefully purchased and set into the ground might actually work better with the three prongs set into the ground rather than pointing skyward. Although she no longer gardens at our site because of her move to the country, last fall Mary gave me a one-on-one demonstration of what "tipping roses" really means. I am looking forward to uncovering those bushes this spring.

Haven't we met somewhere before?

My introduction to Earl actually came before I stepped foot in the garden. I bought two beautiful pieces of art (a lily and rose) at the Duluth Art Institute auction. I did not know the artist, but many other people (when I showed off my purchase) told me what a nice person this Earl Austin was. When we received our garden plot assignments, the half plot that I was assigned to was right beside Earl. (Don't you love Duluth?) Earl gardened using the technique where the seeds are in a group rather than in rows. It minimizes weeding. And the way he planted he could reach over from either side of the garden and do most of his harvesting without stepping into the garden and compacting the soil.

Initially, I inherited Marie's garden plot. How could I be so lucky? I came into some beautifully tended soil (with some bachelor buttons still in residence) because Marie, in her artist's soul, wanted to stretch her design over one canvas instead of having a palate of two half plots. When the chance came, she was not daunted because her fallow plot needed a lot of sweat equity to bring it back. It turns out that I also knew Marie. She was the artist who dressed the "element" puppets that made their first appearance for The Art of Peace. Earth, Air, Water, and Fire can still be seen parading around town at various events and exhibits.

In the short time I've called this small plot mine, gardeners have stayed, or come and gone. Neighbors have moved in and out of houses surrounding our garden, and children have gone from riding in backpacks to propelling themselves forward on their own two feet.

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WEED WARNING:

Right from the start, check on your garden a lot. Weed "armies" will surprise you; don't let them overtake your early planting.

Plant a Row for the Hungry Get Free Seeds

Free seeds will be available this spring for Plant-a-Row for the Hungry. Plant-a-Row is a movement to encourage gardeners to give vegetables to food shelves and soup kitchens. Information packets, row markers and free seeds will be available to gardeners this spring through the generosity of The Happy Gardener, a garden supply company.

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Perennials and transplants from other gardeners, and some of "my" plants, have moved into other gardens. (Wouldn't it be great if these plants had their own genealogy like our family trees? What stories they would tell!) Generous people have offered assistance just because they saw this beautiful space and felt ownership by virtue of being Duluth community. There are specific areas of knowledge where I know I want to grow with my garden, and there are the unexpected lessons my garden gives me year round. May your gardens offer you such delights.

Organic Wonders

by Jennifer Gordon

Hands wrist deep in soil
dark brown, moist clumps
embedding themselves under my fingernails,

I turn the compost into earth
Hands, legs, feet, back
all toil to prepare the soil,
and allow my mind the rest
it desperately needs

Spring sun thaws my soul,
urging it out of its winter slumber
as I lay seedlings out in unorganized rows
hoping for overgrowth and abundance.
I sit on my heels and admire my natural feat.

As the days of summer slip by
the stalks reach up towards the sky
sprouting leaves and then flowers
that will soon be fruit.

The tomatoes, first green,
slowly blush red.

New strawberry plants bare
a few small wonders.

My first beefsteak tomato sits waiting
to be snatched up for some delectable
inaalata caprese or a simply complex sandwich.

A spring poem for Easter day by Jean Garrigue (1914-1972), anthologized in the Everyman's Library Pocket Poets edition *The Four Seasons*, edited by J. D. McClatchy.

Spring Song II

And now my spring beauties,
Things of the earth,
Beetles, shards and wings of moth
And snail houses left
From last summer's wreck,
Now spring smoke
Of the burned dead leaves
And veils of the scent
Of some secret plant,
Come, my beauties, teach me,
Let me have your wild surprise,
Yes, and tell me on my knees
Of your new life.

Gypsy peppers hang sturdy on their vines,
each beautifully twisted in unique contours
This year's surprise, an overeager
pumpkin plant clings its tendrils
onto even the smallest blade of grass,
bursting yellow and green stars
over the entire backyard.
Faceless gourds ready themselves
for character and light.

After months of patience,
happily but hesitantly I reap what I have sown.
Once the last
prize has been plucked
my garden will be put to bed.

Life will again sprout in this haven
but I feel a loss nonetheless,
as I pull up roots and spread
leaves for warmth and protection
against the oncoming frost.

We can do it, but not without you!

Volunteer opportunities abound. (There's nothing good on tv anyway.)

Help out once, twice, or more—we need you.

Projects and commitments.

- Education
- Benevon team
- Truffle sale
- Newsletter
- Tree sale
- Land stewardship
- Seed sale
- Fundraising
- Web redesign

Think you might like to serve on the board of directors? Visit a few board meetings. They are at 5 pm, the second Monday of the month at the garden program office.

How Does Your Garden Grow

by Jan Simmons, St. Louis County Master Gardener

According to the National Gardening Association, it's expected that the number of homes with vegetable gardens will jump by 40% this year. Even the Obamas have started a garden at the White House!

Although it's tempting to rush out and start digging your garden the first sunny, warm day after the snow has melted, it's best to wait until the ground has dried out a bit. If the soil sticks to your shoes or shovel, it's too wet. A good trick is to take a small amount of soil in your hand and press it together. If it stays molded in a ball, it's too wet; if it crumbles into small bits, the moisture is right.

The ideal garden has soil that is deep, friable, well drained and has a lot of organic matter. What is friable? It means your soil does not stick together when you pick up a clump in your hand, but also that it does not sift through your fingers like sand. It has a crumbly texture, like a good crumb topping for an apple pie.

If you're just starting to use your garden spot, you will need to work the soil to remove rocks and plant matter. If you've picked a spot with grass, the grass all needs to be removed. Cutting through with a shovel and taking the top layer off will remove the lawn. You will be glad you removed all the grass roots you can. They're tough devils and will come back to haunt you if you don't.

Once you have bare soil in the shape you want your garden, you need to dig it over using a garden fork. One method is called "double digging" where you start at one edge of the garden, and remove the first foot of soil, one foot down into the soil, all the way across your garden edge, putting it in a wheelbarrow or on a tarp. Using your fork, dig down into the bottom of the

trench, loosening the soil at the bottom, and turning it over. This adds air to the soil and loosens it, giving roots space to grow. Then, dig up the next foot across the garden, and put that soil into the ditch left by digging the first foot. Continue on across the garden in this manner, moving the soil from one row to the next. At the last row, shovel in the soil from the wheelbarrow. Root crops especially benefit from this double digging, as they grow down into the soil and need the room.

Rake the seed bed over to smooth it out and break up any remaining clumps of soil. It's best to have a fine, firm seedbed with loose soil that's not packed. Remember the little seeds have to be able to send down roots and send shoots up through the soil.

It's good to have a soil test. The results of the test will tell you if your soil needs any amendments. The University of Minnesota does this for around \$5.00. Information on this is at <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/index.htm>.

By now, many gardeners have already ordered their seeds from favorite seed companies. You can still do this, or you can go to a local garden center and buy your seed off the rack, or you can buy seeds at the Duluth Community Garden Program office. Many gardeners believe the seed purchased directly from seed companies is better than that on the racks. It is especially important to make sure the seed you buy locally is for use this year. The packets will be stamped with this year's date, so make sure you're not buying seed that was saved from previous years.

Most seed companies have Web sites, so you can browse their catalogs online or request a catalog be sent to you.

What to plant?

What vegetables do you and your family like? Radishes are a great crop, as they produce early, so you see a pretty quick result of your work. Are you planning to preserve some of your crop for meals through the next winter? If so, then choose vegetables that can be preserved.

Another consideration is whether the vegetable you select will grow in this climate. When you look at the packet, catalog or Web site, note the length of the growing season given for your vegetable. For our area, it's recommended you look for crops with less than a 90-day season; those in the 60–70 day range are best.

Some vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, and vine crops such as melons, are best grown from seedlings started indoors. Their growing season is too long to be planted by seed outdoors in this area.

It's wise to have a garden plan laid out on paper before you actually put seed in soil. St. Louis County extension agent Bob Olen recommends laying your plot out in square yards to give maximum results in minimum space. Place tall plants requiring vertical space, such as corn, at the back, or north side of the garden, so they don't shade the shorter plants. Shorter plants such as beets, lettuce and carrots can go at the front or south side. With the square yard plan, three tomato plants can be spaced within the square yard. Carrots can be broadcast planted, or put in rows spaced at least one foot apart. Some vegetables are more suited to close planting than others, and you need to check the seed packet for directions. With your garden plan, you'll know what to plant where, and can consult it again next year when you can move your plants around. You should rotate your crops regularly.

When should you plant?

So, now you've selected your garden spot, laid the boundaries out, and prepared the soil. If you plant too early, the seeds will sit in cold soil, may be subject to heavy rains, may not germinate, may wash away, or rot. The UM Extension Service has recommendations for planting dates for each vegetable, but in general, in this area, it's best to wait until late May or even early June. It really depends on your garden location. There are spots on Duluth's central hillside that get wonderful morning sun, and, with the hillside drainage, could probably be planted earlier in May than some flat areas over the hill.

Keeping your seedlings safe from the danger of frost is important. As northern Minnesotans know, there can be killing frosts as late as mid-June! So, if you plant your seedlings outdoors in late May or early June, be alert, and cover them with towels, sheets or blankets if a frost is predicted.

When you buy seedlings, don't put them out in the garden immediately, but harden them off. This means keeping them out in the sun during the day, and bringing them in the house in the evening when it cools. Remember, these little fellows have only lived in a warm greenhouse, and need to be acclimated to the outdoors. When you plant these little fellows, remember to water them well. I put water in the hole, then drench them with my watering can, and then water them all again when I've finished planting the bed.

The best way to water during the summer is with soaker hoses, which are snaked throughout the garden close to the plants. The best time to water is in the morning rather than the evening when wet plants can be susceptible to diseases. A really good way to save water and money is to use a rain

The Importance Of Garden Sign-Up Days

For reasons of efficiency, the DCGP set April 2–4 for assigning garden plots. On those days, we also had volunteers to help, resources, seeds, plus opportunities to sign up to volunteer at large upcoming events, to request a mentor or become a mentor, or obtain free seeds for Plant-a-Row for the Hungry.

After the signup, gardeners may not get the attention they need when they trickle in to the office, and it delays assigning gardens to folks on the waiting list, and delays making the garden maps. "Community gardening" involves "community." We want people to meet staff and fellow gardeners at the beginning of the season, to make communication easier throughout the season.

Learn More About the DCGP

Interested in learning more about the Duluth Community Garden Program? We will be holding monthly "Plant-A-Lot, Getting to know your Community Garden Program" sessions starting in late May. If you are interested in attending, please call the office at 722-4583. If you would like to help out, many volunteer opportunities are available. Duluth Community Garden Program has been a hidden gem for far too long! In order to survive the economic downturn, we are going to need the support of the community.

...How does your Garden Grow continued from page 7

barrel, which can be placed underneath the downspout on a house to collect rain water runoff from the roof. A hose can run from it to the garden, and you can water as needed. Be sure your barrel has a cover, with wire mesh over the hole for water inflow. This keeps leaves and debris from falling in and rotting or clogging the output hose. It also prevents animals from danger.

What happens when something goes wrong? If a plant wilts, becomes diseased, or attacked by insects, you should first identify what is happening to the plant, then proceed with a plan of action. The UM Extension Web site has a handy dandy Plant Disease Diagnostics module that helps you identify what's wrong and what can be done (<http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/diagnostics/>). Although much of it is currently under construction, try it first.

It's important to keep track of what you plant and how you did it. That is, put your plan on paper, and note when you plant each type of seed or transplant. Keep a list of your vegetables, with columns for variety, planting date, emerging date, and harvest date. You can add other columns if you like, such as when it flowers or when fruit sets. You can get as obsessively detailed as you like! Of most importance is a place to note how the variety does. Did you like it? What problems did you have? Did it produce as well as you thought it would? These notes will be important next year when you decide what varieties to plant again. Why waste time and energy on varieties you or your family wouldn't eat?

The University of Minnesota, cited frequently here, makes some of their plant research available through the Extension Service. The Duluth Public Library is another excellent resource for materials on

gardening and gardening topics. Contact them at 730-4202 or go online to <http://www.duluth.lib.mn.us/>

Sources used for this article:

Planting the vegetable garden. Vincent A. Fritz, 2009. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DGI422.html>

University of Minnesota Extension Gardening Information web site: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo/>

Vegetable varieties for northern Minnesota 2007. Robert M. Olen, University of Minnesota Extension, St. Louis County.

Selected Seed Sources

Johnny's Selected Seeds (Maine), (877) JOHNNYS, Johnnyseeds.com

Fedco Seeds (Maine), (207) 873-7333, fedcoseeds.com

Turtle Tree Biodynamic Seed Initiative (NY), (888) 516-7797, turtletreeseed.org

High Mowing Seeds (Vermont), (802) 472-6174, highmowingseeds.com

Seeds of Change, (888) 762-7333, seedsofchange.com

Seed Savers Exchange (Iowa), (563) 382-5990, seedsavers.org

The Duluth Community Garden Program has seeds available now at the garden program office. Call ahead for office hours (722-4583). In addition, vegetable and flower seedlings will be available at our Seed and Transplant Sale on May 15 and 16.

Recipes

donated by several generous cooks

Oven-roasted Fresh Tomato Glut Sauce

Adapted from This Organic Life, by Joan Dye Gussow.

I have tomato storage techniques to help you get through the winter on the local tomato crop (yours or that of a neighboring farmer). One is a recipe, which I have titled Tomato Glut Sauce because it's what you do when you're short of time and the tomatoes are sitting there on the counter looking reproachfully at you as the fruit flies gather round.

SIMPLE SOLUTION: What you need to know about this recipe is that it is more forgiving than your favorite aunt. The ingredients, other than the tomatoes, garlic, and balsamic vinegar, are pretty much up to you, depending on what you have too much of. The secret seems to lie in the balsamic vinegar and the roasting process itself. All the community gardeners who asked me for the recipe came back thanking me for brightening their whole summer.

Tomato Glut Sauce

Adapted from The New York Times

Preheat oven to 400° F

Put into a large roasting pan:

6 pounds tomatoes (plum are best), cored and quartered

1-1/2 cups coarsely chopped carrots (optional)

1-1/2 cups coarsely chopped celery

1-1/2 cups coarsely chopped onions

9 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

6 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 bay leaf

1-1/2 tablespoons each fresh thyme, oregano, basil, parley

1-1/2 teaspoons salt (or less)

1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

Roast for 45 minutes or until vegetables are soft. Process briefly to leave slightly chunky, and freeze in two-cup portions. Makes 2 quarts (4 pounds).

*The hours when
the mind is ab-
sorbed by beauty
are the only
hours when we
really live.
—Richard Jeffries*

Boston Brown Bread in a jar

Candice Richards

Makes 14 Pints (can easily be halved)

8 cups whole wheat flour

Sift together:

8 teaspoons baking powder

8 teaspoons baking soda

8 teaspoons salt

4 cups yellow cornmeal

Blend in:

24 oz dark molasses

2 quarts buttermilk (1/2 gal.)

Fold into batter:

1 quart raisins (tossed with 1/4 cup flour)

Pour batter into WIDE mouth pint canning jars, a little more than half full. Put on two-piece canning lids. Place jars on rack or plate in large kettle. Fill kettle with boiling water, three-fourths of the way up sides of jars. Cover and steam, keeping water boiling gently for 2-1/2 hours. Remove jars from water and let cool. Bread will slide from jar when cool. Jars will seal and can be kept as any canned good.

Pressure canner instructions:

Prepare batter and jars as above. Use amount of water called for by canner instructions. Bring to boil and cook 20 minutes with vent open, then 25 minutes at 10 #.

*So you can "can"
Bread and have it
for any occasion. It
works!*

*I called this, and
canned baked beans,
"dinner in two jars",
and it was great for a
picnic. I haven't tried
canning other baked
goods, but I would
think any of the
steamed breads would
work fine. Canned
baked bean recipes
are in Ball or Kerr
canning books.*

What it takes is a scale at which one can feel a degree of control over the processes of life, at which individuals become neighbours and lovers instead of just acquaintances and ciphers, makers and creators instead of just users and consumers, participants and protagonists instead of just voters and taxpayers. That scale is the human scale.

—Kirkpatrick Sale (1980), *Human Scale*

Recipes

Nasturtium Capers

Adapted from *The Herbfarm Cookbook* by Jerry Traunfeld (Scribner 2000).

Copyright 2000 by Jerry Traunfeld.

Makes 1/2 cup

Deb Shubat says, "I think the Nasturtium Caper recipe came from *The Splendid Table*, and it is a fun thing to do with green nasturtium fruits."

A real caper is the flower bud of a caper plant, *Capparis spinosa*, and its large seed-pod is called a caper berry. The seedpods of nasturtiums look just like the caper plant's buds, and when pickled they taste remarkably similar. Nasturtiums usually don't start forming seedpods until late in the summer and you have to search for them. You'll find them attached to the stems underneath the foliage, where they develop in clusters of three. Pick only young pods that are still green and soft. When they mature, they turn yellowish and the seed inside the pod is very hard and unpalatable.

2 tablespoons salt

1 cup water

1/2 cup green nasturtium seedpods

3/4 cup white wine vinegar

2 teaspoons sugar

2 fresh bay laurel leaves, or 1 dried

2 3-inch sprigs fresh thyme

Brining: Bring the salt and water to a boil in a small saucepan. Put the nasturtium seedpods in a half-pint glass jar and pour the boiling brine over them. Cover and let them soak at room temperature for 3 days.

Pickling: Drain the nasturtium seedpods in a fine sieve and return them to the jar. Bring the vinegar, sugar, bay leaves, and thyme to a boil in a small (1-quart) saucepan. Pour the boiling vinegar mixture over the seedpods and let cool. Cover the jar and refrigerate for 3 days before using. They'll keep for 6 months in the refrigerator if covered in the vinegar.

Winter Squash Soup

From *Wendi Carlson*

This is a great way to celebrate the squash that might be starting to get a few "spots" in storage.

3 T unsalted butter

1-1/2 cups yellow onions chopped

2 tsp curry powder

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp turmeric

1/4 tsp cumin

1/8 tsp cayenne

2 pounds winter squash cut in 1-inch cubes

3 cups stock

3/4 cups cream

Melt unsalted butter in heavy pot. Add yellow onions, or whatever you have. Simmer for about 4 minutes over medium-high heat till soft. Add minced garlic, curry powder, salt, turmeric, cumin, cayenne, and cook stirring 45 seconds till fragrant. Add squash and stir for 3 minutes. Add stock. Bring to boil and turn down to simmer for about 25 minutes until squash is soft. Remove from heat. Puree. Add heavy cream, stir and adjust seasoning. Serve hot or chilled. Serve with cukes finely chopped and fresh cilantro.

Announcements

• The Duluth Community Garden 2009 Seed and Transplant Sale. Friday, May 15, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. and Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Duluth Community Garden Program office. For more information call 722-4583.

• This Website shows critical spring temperatures for fruit bud development stages. <http://www.canr.msu.edu/vanburen/crit-temp.htm>

• Perennial Plant Exchange Friday, May 8. UMD greenhouse director, Deb Shubat, will lead this 19th annual exchange for new or experienced gardeners. Ms. Shubat will discuss varieties of plants, those good in northern climates, pitfalls and gardening tips and hints. Participants should dig and split perennials that are overgrown and share them with others in this informative evening. Bring your plants in small containers if possible. Label each with plant name, color and size, if known. Helpful items to bring: a splitting knife,

plant labels, gloves, boxes and containers, notebook or paper. Meet in the Ordean School Cafeteria. Call if you need more information: 336-8946. Register through Community Education: <http://www.duluth-communityed.org/duluth/Class#2374>, May 8, Fri 5:30–7:00PM, \$10 Saturday, May 23rd and 30th, 2009.

• Duluth Garden Flower Society-sponsored plant sale at Leif Erikson Rose Garden parking lot. Sale starts at 8 a.m. sharp on Saturday May 23. Features premium plants from Shady Oaks Nursery, Waseca MN, producer of "Plants for Shady Places." <http://www.dgfs.us/2009-plantsale-hires.pdf>

• The 2009 season of Great Gardening begins April 9th on Channel 8!

• Great Gardening, a call-in show designed to give you information about growing in the Northland, airs on PBS eight every Thursday night at 7 p.m. April through June. A full one-hour special Fall Episode is on tap for September.

• The DCGP will be holding its annual Harvest Celebration Dinner this fall. In the past, the prestigious garden awards have been one of the favorite aspects of the festivities, and this year, we will be carrying on that tradition as we honor individual gardeners in the following categories:

1. Most prolific zucchini patch
2. Best Feng Shui
3. Most artsy-fartsy
4. Most unusual vegetable
5. Best use of companion planting
6. Largest cabbage

As you plant and tend your vegetable plot this season, keep in mind these intriguing categories, have fun, and consider the possibility that you, too, could be outstanding in your "field." Happy Gardening!

Creating the world we want is a much more subtle but more powerful mode of operation than destroying the one we don't want.

—Marianne Williamson

Chili Rellenos

From Betty Myshack

This is quicker than stuffing each chili pepper. It works well with Anaheim peppers frozen last fall.

8 Chilies peeled and sliced

1.5 cups Colby cheese

1.5 cups jack cheese

Mix in blender:

3 eggs

3/4 cups milk

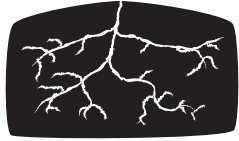
3 T. Flour

Alternate layers of chilies and cheese in 8 X 12 pan, ending with cheese.

Pour batter over the top. Cook for 30 minutes, then top with taco sauce and cook for another 30 minutes.

Duluth Community Garden Program

plant•a•lot



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Please notice the membership date on the label. If it is expired, this is your last newsletter. Please contact the garden program office for renewal.

BECOME A GARDEN PROGRAM MEMBER

Not sure when to renew? Check the expiration date on your address label!

Member benefits include:

- Gardening and food preparation education and equipment use
- Five issues per year of Community Gardener's Companion newsletter
- Discount at annual seed sale
- The satisfaction of supporting the Duluth Community Garden Program's work

Memberships:

Affordable \$10 _____ Sustainable \$50 _____ Lifetime \$500 _____

Seedling \$25 _____ Perennial \$100 _____ Other \$ _____

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