



GNO Gardening Magazine

April 2020



**PLANT A GARDEN
for VICTORY**

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WAR PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

COVID-19 Victory Garden Issue

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Container Gardening

The recent travel restrictions, business and school closures and product shortages due to Covid-19 has caused many people to consider taking up gardening as a relaxing hobby while staying home, as a learning activity for kids while they are shut out of school or as a way to have fresh food available without concerns about shortages or cost. For most of you, gardening in a small area is all you have space or time for. But with a little work and a little information, anyone can be a successful gardener. A windowsill, patio, balcony or doorstep can provide sufficient space for a productive container garden. In the Greater New Orleans area, one of the easiest and most successful ways to garden is container gardening. Problems with soilborne diseases, nematodes or poor soil can also be overcome through container gardening. Anything can be used as a "container" as long as it fits two criteria: 1) it must contain enough soil to

support the root system of whatever you're trying to grow as well as the mature plant and 2) it must

provide good drainage. Most often just some holes in the bottom will suffice.

The second condition is easy to meet. If you intend to use a container not normally designed for growing plants, then you will need to drill some holes in the bottom to allow

for drainage. Holes with a diameter between 3/8" and 1/2" are best. This is large enough so the holes don't easily get clogged but small enough that your soil won't be washing out through the holes.

Meeting the first condition will depend on what crop you intend to grow. Generally, all plants require a minimum of 8 inches of soil depth whether in a container or inground. Make sure your container has at least that much space - 12 inches is even better. Almost any vegetable that will grow in a typical backyard garden will also do well as a container-grown plant. Most varieties that will do well



A collection of tomatoes growing in containers. Photo by Dr. Joe Willis



A Tabasco pepper growing in a container. Photo by Dr. Joe Willis

April Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety
Snap Beans (bush or pole)	Bush-Blue Lake 274, Bronco, Derby, Lynx, Strike Pole-Blue Lake, Kentucky Blue, McCaslin
Sweet Corn	Merit, Silver Queen, Honey 'n Pearl, Ambrosia
Summer Squash	Gold Rush, Justice III, Multipik, Patriot II
Hot Peppers (transplant)	Grande, Tula, Mariachi, Mitla,
Cantaloupe	Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Athena, Primo, Vienna
Southern Peas	Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus
Tomato (transplant)	Better Boy, Big Beef, Cupid, Pink Girl, Juliet, Sweet Milton, Bella Rosa, Carolina Gold
Collards	Champion, Flash, Georgia, Top Bunch, Vates
Cucumbers	Dasher II, Diva, Fanfare, General Lee, Indy, Olympian, Sweet Success, Sweet Slice
Cucuzza	None Given
Lima Beans (bush or pole)	Dixie Butterpea, Jackson Wonder, Thorogreen Florida Speckled, King of Garden
Bell Peppers (transplants)	Aristotle X3R, Jupiter, Lilac, Plato, Tequila
Kohlrabi	Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner
Okra	Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless
Pumpkins	Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer
Radishes	Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross
Swiss Chard	None Given
Winter Squash	Honey Bear, Sweet Mama, Table Queen, Tivoli
Eggplant	Dusky, Night Shadow, Epic, Santana, Calliope

Container Gardening

when planted inground will also do well in containers. Table 1 indicates the minimum container size needed for a number of different warm season vegetables.

Vegetable	Container Size
Cucumber	1 gallon/plant
Eggplant	5 gallons/plant
Green Beans	2 gallons/3 plants
Pepper	5 gallons/1-2 plants
Summer Squash	5 gallons/1-2 plants
Tomato	5 gallons/plant

Table 1: Container size needed for various vegetable plants.

The more container space you provide for your plants, the easier it is to keep them adequately watered during the summer heat. That's an important consideration when deciding on container size.

A lot of seed companies now offer a large selection of vegetable varieties developed especially for containers. These tend to be more compact, bush varieties. The drawback is that many are less productive over the duration of the growing season or set one main crop. As stated earlier, most varieties



A likely cat lover, this gardener is growing some nice bell peppers in litter containers.



Gretchen Duerr has come up with a clever combination garden. She has lined milk crates with plastic to hold the soil creating individual growing containers and by arranging them in a rectangle, she has also created a space for a raised bed for additional plants.

that do well inground in our area will also do quite well when grown in containers. You may have to provide support for certain crops such as vining cucumber and indeterminate tomato varieties. This is easy enough to do but should be planned for and considered in advance. Any trellising or other support should be installed while the plants are young to avoid damaging the roots or the plants when tying them to the supports.

Container Gardening

The growing media for your containers or raised beds is also a very important consideration. You can't dig soil out of the yard and use it for raised beds or

containers. This soil may be great for growing plants inground, but it is too heavy (dense), too easily compacted and probably has insufficient water holding capacity for containers. A fairly lightweight potting mix is needed for container vegetable gardening. Container medium needs to be porous because roots require both air and water. Packaged potting soil available at local garden centers is relatively lightweight and may make a good container medium. However, the medium has to have enough weight to hold the plant upright during normal daily breezes. For a large container garden the expense of prepackaged or soilless mixes may be quite high. Try mixing your own with one part peat moss, one part potting soil and one part clean coarse builder's sand or perlite and a slow-release complete fertilizer. Another good mix consists of 1 part mature compost, 1 part garden topsoil and 1 part builder's sand.

Gardeners are often warned against reusing container soil from one year to the next. Nutrient depletion and the possibility of soil-borne pathogen build-up are the primary reasons for this warning. However, unless you had a disease problem in your container, the likely presence of a soil-borne pathogen is low. The biggest difference between your growing medium from one season to the next is the depletion of organic matter.

Microorganisms will continually breakdown the organic matter releasing the locked nutrients making them available to the plants. That's a good thing. But

before you reuse last year's potting mix, add 1 part of finished compost to 2 parts of old potting mix to replenish the lost organic matter. You will also want to add a slow release fertilizer. During the growing season, nitrogen will become the primary limiting nutrient for your plants if it is not regularly supplied. You can provide this by using a water-soluble fertilizer on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. You can also incorporate blood meal into your potting mix prior to planting or even after planting. Blood meal is 13-0-0 and will provide a slow release nitrogen source for 3-4 months.

When growing your own vegetables in limited space, it is important to grow vegetables that will make the gardening worthwhile. It isn't very efficient or rewarding to spend your resources and time growing something that will provide enough vegetables for one meal and then you must start again.

This is the case with something like cauliflower or cabbage. It's also very disappointing to have to store produce from multiple harvests in order to have enough to serve. This is the case with something like okra. While there are short branching varieties of okra that produce multiple pods for each harvest, each okra plant needs about 3 gallons of soil. Even harvesting 3-4 pods off each plant every 2-3 days requires at least four containers



Homer Johnson has a nice layout of containers and raised beds.

Container Gardening

of okra to make it worthwhile. If you have limited space, use it to grow something that makes it rewarding. One the other hand, growing cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, or pole beans provides enough produce each harvest. A good source to help decide the highest producing crops can usually be found in seed catalogs or



Cucumbers from Dr. Joe's container garden.

on their websites or doing a search for "How Much to Plant per Person in the Vegetable Garden". The fewer plants or space needed per person, the higher the productive potential.

Finally, what about watering

your containers. Plants grown in containers need watering more often than plants growing inground. Good containers drain easily

but also dry faster; therefore, they will need watering on a regular (daily) basis to reduce stress and keep the plants healthy. Containers should be watered until water begins to run out of the container and should be watered as soon as the soil begins to dry. As the plants mature, this will be more often. You can reduce the drying some degree by mulching your container gardens. Automatic irrigation can be a valuable addition to your container garden.

Container or raised bed gardening can be a valuable way to reduce stress, increase physical activity and provide fresh produce for your diet. We hope these pointers will help to make your gardening a rewarding experience.

~Dr. Joe Willis



Easy, fun, attractive and efficient, you can harvest loads of cherry tomatoes from a trailing variety grown in a container. In the photo is a Terenzo variety which is an All-American selection winner.



A kiddie pool can also make a nice container garden. Remember to cut holes in the bottom for drainage.

The Importance of Local Foods and Where to Find It

With many local farmers markets and food hubs shuttered, finding local foods is becoming increasingly difficult for those of us accustomed to taking a weekly trip to the farmers market. Several markets in the GNO area have moved to a “drive by” model, but most have decided to close temporarily. Local farms are still producing a lot of really great things, and farmers are becoming innovative in distributing this produce to customers. Now is a great time to “shop local, eat local” and support some of our small business owners and farmers.

Why it's important to eat local:

- Selecting locally grown food supports local food growers and providers. Money spent on local foods tends to stay local and be reinvested in businesses in our community.
- Local produce and other food items are fresher than the same items found in the stores. This is because it spends less time in a truck and on the shelf, it will almost always last longer in your fridge at home.
- Local foods help promote a safer food supply. This is because fewer people have an opportunity to handle these items between the farm and your kitchen. The more steps there are between the farm and your home, the larger the chance for contamination.
- Local food is eating seasonally. Produce grown locally in season typically has a better flavor than produce that was picked elsewhere and shipped to our area.

- Local growers can tell you exactly how your food was grown. Farms using sustainable, organic, biodynamic, or other growing practices are happy to share that information and see it as a value-added benefit for their foods.



Farmers at the Red Stick Farmers Market set up a drive through shopping experience.

Where to Find Local Foods:

In conversations with local growers and nursery stock providers, many are seeing a huge increase in direct consumer sales, facilitated mainly through online order forms or software

platforms. Things are changing daily and availability varies by week for most farms. For an up-to-date listing of who's growing and offering local foods, this is a good resource maintained by the Greater New Orleans Grower's Alliance (GNOGA): https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GL9I-zONIAZXcj19UBO3q_SQC9Ni7Hc6lwZMiAMs2kU/edit?fbclid=IwAR31I92pXmgXGRJa6h5XqqDxyGQIwRGMfZTU1ExR8CaRko4MRfbmnLkSuGw#gid=0

Shopping Smart and Safely:

Follow all social distancing practices when picking up an order from a local farm or food provider. Most have good practices in place to minimize contact such as pre-packing orders and limiting the number of customers in an area. Bring your own bag and ask the farmer or staff on hand what their protocol for picking up your order is. Many are using a table out in the open to distribute orders or have marks on the floor of their establishment every six feet to maintain distancing. Follow each grower's instructions and help keep them and your household safe and healthy.

~Anna Timmerman

Growing Fruit Trees in Containers

People frequently want to grow fruit trees in containers. This could be due to poor soil, less than ideal climate or lack of sufficient space. Fortunately, a wide variety of fruit crops can be grown in containers with some degree of success. The results in looks and production won't be quite as good as those grown under optimal conditions in the ground, but it can be a rewarding endeavor.

One oft stated reason for growing fruit plants in containers is portability. Tropical and subtropical fruits can be grown in containers in areas where freezing temperatures are a possibility. Properly planned and chosen containers allows the plants to be moved indoors during periods of damaging temperatures. However, this doesn't mean that you can grow temperate fruits in a subtropical climate.



Photo by Chris Dunaway

Hundreds of blueberries growing in containers at a Star Nursery in Belle Chasse, LA.

Fruit	Min. Container Size (gal)
Avocado	25
Blackberry	10
Blueberry	10
Fig	15
Grapefruit	20
Guava	10
Kumquat	15
Lemon	15
Lime	10
Orange	20
Papaya	20
Pear	20
Persimmon	15
Pomegranate	20
Satsuma	25

Table 1: Some fruit trees that can be grown in containers southern Louisiana.

They still have a requisite number of chill hours in order to grow properly and produce fruit. Table 1 lists some of the fruits that can be grown in containers but is definitely not complete.

As with all containers used for plants, drainage is very important. Never try to grow your fruit trees in any container without excellent drainage that won't easily clog. With portability being a major advantage/desire of container-grown fruit trees, container choice is very important. A 15 gallon container can weigh 70 to 125 pounds depending on what the container is made of, type of soil and size of tree. Containers with thin walls or constructed of flimsy material are also more difficult to move. Fruit trees live for many years; therefore, a strong durable container that will last for many seasons is also a must. Versailles pots are also great for fruit trees.

Growing media characteristics for fruit trees is very much the same as that used for vegetable container gardening. Here is a good container mix for growing fruit trees:

4 parts peat moss or aged pine bark

Growing Fruit Trees in Containers

2 parts sand

2 parts perlite

2 parts finished compost

Fruit production requires regular fertilizing all year long. Monthly feeding is a good regimen to maintain. Cut back the nitrogen in fall and winter to avoid encouraging new growth in those seasons. If your container mix includes a slow-release fertilizer such as Osmocote, it's good for several months. After that, a good balanced fertilizer with a 3-1-2 ratio works well. For fruits requiring acidic soil conditions, use a fertilizer formulated for acid-loving plants.

The most important part of watering is regular deep watering with proper drainage. Between waterings, allow the soil to dry well, but it shouldn't dry out completely; drought stress can cause fruit drop. An outdoor container plant in the sun can dry out very quickly and needs more than one watering per day.

Pruning controls a tree's size and shape, maximizes fruit production, and maintains tree health. Prune



Photo by Chris Dunaway

A blood orange tree growing in a container.

your containerized fruit tree the same way that is recommended for the same variety if grown inground. Every few years, either move your tree to a larger container or remove it from its container, prune the roots and repot. The container size will determine the mature size of your fruit tree – a tree can't outgrow what the roots can support. Most container plants eventually reach an optimum size for a specific container size. Fruit trees, especially citrus, can live more than 75 years, so regular repotting is the best way to maintain the health and vigor of both plant and soil. In the spring, repot the plants, remove about an inch of the rootball, and comb the root tangles. Prune a similar amount of foliage at the same time. Additional summer pruning may be necessary to limit the tree's size.

Growing fruit trees in containers can be a long and rewarding gardening adventure.

~Dr. Joe Willis



Photo by Chris Dunaway

An Arbequina olive tree growing in a container.

Growing in Raised Beds

As many of us are concerned about access to fresh vegetables and personal health, raised beds can be the solution to a number of challenges when it comes to home vegetable gardens.

There are many advantages to gardening in raised beds. 1. The soil can drain faster during periods of heavy rain. 2. You can select the soil to use tailoring it to the specific crop to be grown. 3. Raised beds elevate the plants over problem soils with low fertility or potentially toxic substances. 4. Overall, raised beds are easier to maintain than traditional in-ground beds. And with careful management, they can be even more productive than typical garden beds.

As a result, the use of raised beds is becoming increasingly popular in home vegetable gardening. It's also a great way to garden with kids.

Raised beds are generally about 8 to 12 inches high but may be higher. The width of a raised bed should generally be no wider than you can comfortably reach into the middle when standing just outside the bed or sitting on the edge. For most adults, a bed 3 to 4 feet wide is best. The length of the bed is up to you.

You should be able to plant, weed and harvest while staying outside the bed and reaching in. This allows you to avoid walking in the bed once it is planted. Walking in the bed after planting reduces the planting area and compacts the soil.

You may construct the sides of the raised bed with a

variety of materials, such as landscape timbers, bricks, cinder blocks, plastic lumber, rot-resistant wood like cedar and redwood or pressure-treated lumber.



Christopher Joseph Paul has built two beds in the corner of his small back yard. They have repurposed an old piece of furniture to create a trellis.

In our climate, rot and termites are real concerns. Even rot-resistant wood can succumb to these problems. Using materials such as pressure-treated wood, plastic lumber and cinder blocks will create a more permanent raised bed. The bottom of the raised bed is left open – the sides simply sit on the existing the ground. This ensures good drainage.

For construction tips,

you can find plenty of information on the Internet. Building small beds is something a person with average skills should be able to do. Building larger or taller beds needs more careful planning, so you may want to hire a carpenter.

Once constructed, raised beds will need to be filled with soil. Before adding the new soil, kill or remove any unwanted grass or weeds present in the bottom. Scrape the existing plants off with a shovel or use a non-selective herbicide. Given enough time, you can also cover the area with a light blocking material like cardboard boxes or black plastic to kill the plants. Remove these items before adding soil.

Till the soil in the bottom of the raised bed, add a few inches of organic matter and work that in before filling the bed with soil. The roots of the vegetables may grow down into the existing soil at the bottom of the bed, particularly if the raised bed is less than 12 inches deep. This creates a transition that helps the

Growing in Raised Beds

roots grow deeper. If tilling is impractical, you can simply put the soil mix in over the existing soil after the weeds are dead.

Use a good well draining soil mix to fill the beds. Topsoil is too dense and will not allow for proper drainage. Here is a recipe for a home-made raised bed mix. Mix 1 part of compost or other organic material for every 2 parts coarse sand. Add a general complete fertilizer according to the label directions and mix together. Fill the beds to a couple of inches below the edge of the sides. This facilitates watering and allows for room to add mulch to cover the soil.

Instead of blending your own soil mix, you might choose to purchase a blended soil mix, often called garden soil, from a local company or nursery. The soil company or nursery can help you decide how much soil you need based on the dimensions of the raised beds. Make sure the organic matter in the mix, such as ground wood chips, has been well composted. These undigested pieces may tie up the available nitrogen in the soil so more frequent applications of nitrogen fertilizer may be necessary until the organic

matter breaks down.

For small-scale gardens, it's often easiest to purchase bagged soil mix from a local nursery. For larger jobs, some nurseries and soil companies sell blended soil mixes by the cubic yard and deliver it if your order is large enough. You can often get it yourself if you have a pickup truck. As the plants grow, the organic material in the soil will continue to break down and release nutrients back to the soil for use by the growing plants. After each season, refill the bed with compost back to the original level, add more fertilizer and incorporate it into the garden.

You can grow anything in raised beds that you can grow in the ground as long as you provide the proper growing conditions. Look to this magazine, the LSU AgCenter Vegetable Planting Guide or your local garden centers for information on plants to grow in our area that are appropriate for the season. Check out the Lawn & Garden section of LSUAgCenter.com for much more information on gardening.

~Chris Dunaway



Bell Peppers growing in raised beds at LaSalle Park in Metairie

What's Bugging You? Tiger Moth Caterpillar!

Woollybear or Woolly Worm is a common name applied to the densely haired caterpillars of the Tiger Moth group or the Arctiinae subfamily. The adult moths are quite colorful and attractive, though you may never have seen them since they are primarily active at night (nocturnal).

They overwinter as pupae hidden amongst leaves and plant debris. Adults emerge in early spring, mate and begin laying eggs on host plants in masses of 50 or more.

Generally, tiger moth larvae feed on a broad range of broadleaf plants (polyphagous), so the female will



Banded Woollybear Moth (*Pyrrharcia Isabella*) adult and caterpillar.



deposit egg masses on almost any plant.

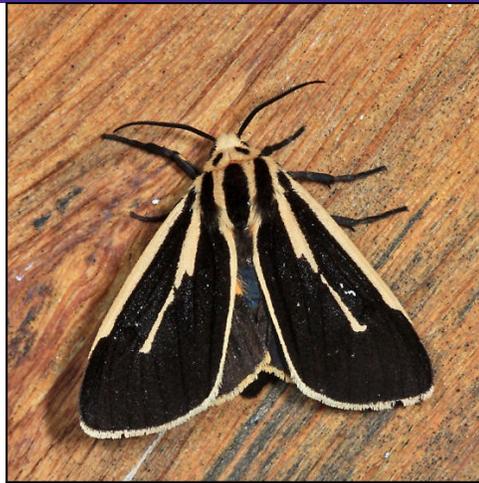
When the eggs hatch, the tiny caterpillars start out feeding as a group but as they grow, they spread out and feed singly. Early feeding usually appears as a small skeletonized patch and the larger

individual larvae eat entire leaves. When full grown they move to the soil surface, find a protected site and spin a cocoon within which they transform to the pupal stage. When adults emerge a few weeks later, the cycle begins again.

There can be two to three generations per year. Though they may look dangerous, these caterpillars do not sting. However, some people have shown an allergic reaction to the caterpillar hairs and they can irritate eyes or mucous membranes.



Harnessed Tiger Moth (*Apantesis phalerata*) adult and caterpillar.



Banded Tiger Moth (*Apantesis carlotta-nais-phalerata-vittata*) adult and caterpillar.



What's Bugging You? Tiger Moth Caterpillar!

As stated before, Woollybear caterpillars will eat almost any plant. While larger plants can handle some feeding without harm, a small plant or one heavily infested can be completely defoliated. You can handpick the caterpillars from your valuable plants and place them elsewhere or dispose of them. BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is also a good control measure and very safe as well. Carbaryl-containing insecticides (e.g. Sevin) also work effectively against these caterpillars. Please be very judicious in the use of any control sprays and be sure to read and follow the label directions.

~Dr. Joe Willis



Parthenice Tiger Moth (*Apantesis parthenice*) adult and caterpillar.



Salt Marsh Moth (*Estigmene acrea*) adult and caterpillar.



Yellow Woollybear Moth (*Spilosoma virginica*) adult and caterpillar.

Tips for Shopping at Local Independent Garden Centers Due to COVID-19

Any nursery or garden center selling edible plants (vegetable transplants/seed, fruit trees, herbs, and gardening supplies) is considered to be critical infrastructure. Gardening at home and providing food for your table helps keep personal morale and family wellbeing high and is a good use of time while we are all stuck at home. Gardening with kids is also a great way to tie school lessons to real-world things like butterfly gardening, food production, and botany.

Locally, there have been some nursery closures, so plan to call ahead and order items over the phone if possible. Many garden centers are practicing strict social distancing and have a curbside pickup

option or delivery service in place. Call ahead with a list of the items you need for your garden, payment is usually available over the phone and a pickup time can be arranged. Most local garden centers are staggering pickup times to minimize contact between customers and staff.

Local soil vendors are also offering delivery for a fee. On the following page is a list of contacts for GNO area independent

garden centers as well as soil and compost providers who offer home delivery that are currently open as of 3/30/2020. Remember to call ahead before visiting these retailers.



A selection of vegetable transplants on sale at a local garden center.



Bulk and pre-packaged seed are also available at most local garden centers.

Local Independent Garden Centers

Orleans	Address	Contact
Urban Roots	2375 Tchoupitoulas St., New Orleans	(504) 522-4949
The Plant Gallery	9401 Airline Hwy., New Orleans	(504) 488-8887
Harold's Plants	1135 Press St., New Orleans	(504) 947-7554
We Bite Rare and Unusual Plants	1225 Mandeville St., New Orleans	(504) 380-4628
Hot Plants	1715 Feliciana St., New Orleans	www.hotplantsnursery.com
Delta Floral Native Plants	Pop Up Locations	(504) 224-8682
Pelican Greenhouse Sales	2 Celebration Dr., New Orleans	(504) 483-9437
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans	(504) 644-4713
Jefferson Feed Mid-City	309 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans	(504) 488-8118
Jefferson Feed Uptown	6047 Magazine St., New Orleans	(504) 218-4220
Jefferson		
Perino's Garden Center	3100 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Metairie	(504) 834-7888
Rose Garden Center	4005 Westbank Expressway, Marrero	(504) 341-5664
Rose Garden Center	5420 Lapalco Blvd., Marrero	(504) 347-8777
Banting's Nursery	3425 River Rd., Bridge City	(504) 436-4343
Jefferson Feed	4421 Jefferson Hwy., Jefferson	(504) 733-8572
Nine Mile Point Plant Nursery	2141 River Rd., Westwego	(504) 436-4915
Palm Garden Depot	351 Hickory Ave., Harahan	(504) 305-6170
Double M Feed Harahan	8400 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan	(504) 738-5007
Double M Feed Metairie	3212 W. Esplanade Ave., Metairie	(504) 835-9800
Double M Feed Terrytown	543 Holmes Blvd., Terrytown	(504) 361-4405
Sunrise Trading Co. Inc.	42 3rd St., Kenner	(504) 469-0077
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie	(504) 887-4336
Creative Gardens & Landscape	2309 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey	(504) 367-9099
Plaquemines		
Southern Gateway Garden Center	107 Timber Ridge St., Belle Chasse	(504) 393-9300
St. Charles		
Plant & Palm Tropical Outlet	10018 River Rd., St. Rose	(504) 468-7256
Martin's Nursery & Landscape	320 3rd St., Luling	(985) 785-6165
St. Bernard		
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette	(504) 682-9911
Soil Vendors		
Schmelly's Dirt Farm (Compost Only)	https://www.schmellys.com/compost-sales/	
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie	(504) 887-4336
Reliable Soil	725 Reverand Richard Wilson Dr., Kenner	(504) 467-1078
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette	(504) 682-9911
Rock n' Soil NOLA	9119 Airline Hwy., New Orleans	(504) 488-0908

We recommend that you call before visiting to enquire about operating hours or special instructions.

Free Gardening Curriculum for Kids Online

Vegetable and ornamental plant growing can be an excellent healthful and educational experience for children. Below are a few sources to help get you started with the kids in your life. Who knows, you may even learn something yourself.

LSU AgCenter School Gardening How-To Guides:

https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/school_gardens/pub-web

LSU AgCenter Curriculum Hub:

https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/school_gardens/pub-web/school-garden-curriculum-resources

Other Free Resources:

- Kids Gardening Curriculum, focus on easy lessons with nutrition aspects: <https://kidsgardening.org/lesson-plans/>
- Whole Kids Foundation: School Garden Lesson Plans. Can be easily adapted to a home garden: <https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/assets/documents/school-garden-lesson-plans.pdf>
- Life Lab: Free curriculum and resources: <https://www.lifelab.org/for-educators/schoolgardens/#lessons>
- Edible Schoolyard Curriculum for 6th-8th grades, pairs gardening with cooking and nutrition, free lessons available here: <https://edibleschoolyard.org/curriculum>
- Big Green's Garden Lessons: <https://biggreen.org/thegreenhouse/>
- UGA Extension School Garden Lessons, all ages: <https://extension.uga.edu/programs-services/school-garden-resources/curriculum.html>
- National Education Association (NEA) School Garden Curriculum: <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/61378.htm>
- Junior Master Gardeners (some resources free, handbook must be purchased): <http://imgkids.us/>
- TeacherVision: Worksheets and activities: <https://www.teachervision.com/gardening>
- Growing Gardens Lesson Plan Manual (free!): <https://www.growing-gardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Growing-Gardens-Youth-Grow-Lesson-Plan-Manual-Jan-2016.pdf>
- Rodale Institute School Garden Curriculum: <https://rodaleinstitute.org/myfirstgarden/>
- Nourish Free worksheets and printable coloring books: <http://www.nourishinteractive.com/nutrition-education-printables/category/9-kids-gardening-growing-healthy-food>
- Kindergarten Printable Pack: Gardening: <https://www.kindergartenworksheetsandgames.com/2018/02/free-garden-worksheets-for-kids.html>

More resources will be added as we compile them!



A young visitor to LaSalle Park picks some Brussels sprouts

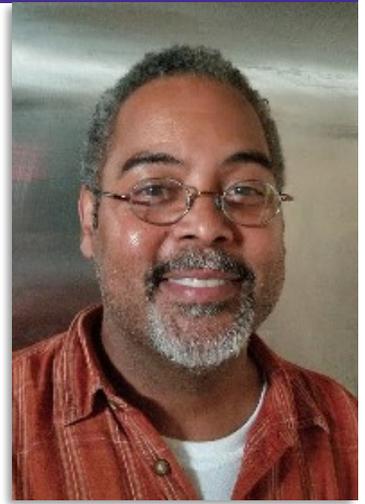
In the Kitchen with Austin

Asparagus Pasta

For those of you who like asparagus, you will love this recipe. It's so bright. You'll feel like you're eating sunshine on a plate!

Ingredients:

1 lb asparagus	¼ cup lemon juice
1 lb pasta	Dried herb of choice (oregano, thyme, basil)
3 Tbs butter	½ cup parmesan cheese
¾ cup heavy cream	Salt and pepper
Zest of one lemon	



A bowl of asparagus pasta.

Directions:

Cut asparagus into 1 inch pieces.

Cook pasta in boiling salted water to your desired doneness.

In a skillet heat butter and cream over low fire until butter is melted. Stir in asparagus, zest, lemon juice, dried herb, salt and pepper.

Drain pasta reserving about ¼ cup of pasta water. Add to cream sauce and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, tossing until sauce is absorbed by pasta.

Remove skillet from heat and toss in parmesan cheese.

Bon Manger!

Checklist/Garden Tips

1. Constant watering rapidly leaches nutrient elements from the soils of container grown plants. To replace them it is best to use either soluble fertilizers or slow release fertilizers. Soluble fertilizers are easy to apply especially when you use a hose end applicator, but they must be applied every two weeks to maintain a constant supply of nutrients. Slow release fertilizers provide nutrients over several months from one application and so cut down on labor.
2. If crape myrtle aphids have been a problem on your trees in the past, treat this month with Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control with Merit. This is applied as a drench to the base of the trees and is absorbed by the roots. The insecticide travels through the tree's circulatory system up into the foliage making it toxic to the aphids. One treatment protects the tree all summer, preventing aphids and the unsightly black sooty mold they cause.
3. Spray crape myrtles with mancozeb, chlorothalonil or other labeled fungicides to control serious infections of powdery mildew. Powdery mildew appears as a white, powdery material on the leaves. Unlike many fungus diseases that are worse when weather is rainy, this disease is favored by humid, warm weather without rain. It also occurs on a variety of other landscape plants such as dogwood, euonymus, gerbera daisy, rose and hydrangea, to name a few.
4. Oak trees infested with buck moth caterpillars should be sprayed before the caterpillars begin to migrate down the trunk. Contact local tree care companies to get your trees sprayed.
5. Aphids are a real problem on roses and many other plants in spring. Control with insecticidal soap, oil spray, Malathion or Acephate.

April Garden Checklist

6. As much as is practical, continue to deadhead or remove faded, dead flowers from cool season bedding plants such as pansy, snapdragon and dianthus to promote extended flowering.
7. As much as is practical, continue to deadhead or remove faded, dead flowers from cool season bedding plants such as pansy, snapdragon and dianthus to promote extended flowering.
8. When buying pesticides, ask for a recommendation for the least toxic material that will do the job and buy the smallest container available. Large sized containers take years to use up and by then the pesticide has often lost its effectiveness. Be sure to follow label directions for storage.
9. Keep your Louisiana irises well watered now while they flower and through mid summer. Remove any developing seed pods after flowering is finished.
10. Small birds called sapsuckers peck holes in neat rows. The holes just penetrate the bark and cause sap to bleed from them. Later, the sapsuckers return to feed on the sugary sap and any insects that may have been attracted to it. The damage is usually minor, and control is generally not necessary or practical.
11. Do not delay planting many of the warm season vegetables beyond the middle part of this month. Tomatoes, snap beans, lima beans and bell peppers all set fruit poorly when temperatures are hot. Squashes and corn are both far more likely to have major insect and disease problems when planted later.
12. Cool season herbs and those that thrive during mild weather, such as parsley, dill, tarragon, thyme, sage, cilantro, borage, lavender, chamomile, chervil and arugula, are at their peak this month. They will begin to decline toward late May and finish in early June, so harvest them generously over the next six to eight weeks. Extra harvest can be dried or frozen for use during the summer.
13. If you need to prune spring flowering shrubs such as spirea, viburnum, quince, azalea, camellia, jasmine and mock orange, you may do so as soon as they finish flowering. Remember to prune with a specific purpose in mind, and, unless you are trying to create a clipped formal hedge, try to preserve the natural shape of the shrub.
14. Watch for spider mite damage on many vegetables and ornamentals during dry weather. Very tiny, spider mites are not readily visible to the naked eye. Use a magnifying glass to inspect the plant and look for the tiny red or green eight legged mites. Infested plants get a dull, dusty, unhealthy look to the foliage which eventually turns brown. The spider mites are primarily under the leaves. Spray with a horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, Malathion or Kelthane.
15. It is very important to pull up and dispose of cool season annual weeds such as henbit, bedstraw and chickweed now. These weeds are currently setting thousands of seeds that will plague you next winter if not removed now.
16. Save some of your own seed from your cool season annuals to plant again in your garden this fall. This time of year collect seeds from sweet peas, violas, nicotiana, poppies, calendulas and cosmos. Make sure the seed pods are mature before harvesting.
17. Tomatoes are staked to keep the plants from sprawling on the ground where the fruit would be more likely to rot. Wait for the first cluster of flowers to appear, and place the stake on the opposite side of the plant's stem. All of the flower clusters will grow from the same side of the stem, and this will keep developing fruit from getting caught between the stake and the stem.
18. Azaleas with leaves that have tiny light spots all over them have been attacked by azalea lacebugs. Treat with Malathion or Acephate as needed through the summer and fall. Any damage that has already occurred will not go away, but treatment will prevent any more damage.
19. Pay careful attention to thoroughly watering newly planted trees, shrubs, bedding plants, ground covers and lawns during dry spring weather. Continue watering about twice a week until there is significant rainfall.
20. After planting bedding plants, water them in with a half- strength solution of your favorite water soluble fertilizer. This gets them off to a good start.

Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

Do:

1. This is the prime planting season for warm season grasses such as St. Augustine, centipede, Bermuda and zoysia.
2. Take a soil test.
3. Apply sulfur or lime to adjust the pH if necessary according to soil lab recommendations.
4. Make the first application of the recommended rate of nitrogen fertilizer for your turf variety if you have not done so. See the fertilizer recommendations on page 5 of the Louisiana Lawns Best Management Practices Guide. [Go to https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/7/c/8/e/7c8e4b17a12a51839443d9296bd03edc/pub2940louisianalawnsmarch2008.pdf to see the guide.](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/7/c/8/e/7c8e4b17a12a51839443d9296bd03edc/pub2940louisianalawnsmarch2008.pdf) Do not apply phosphorous or potassium fertilizer unless recommended by a soil test.
5. Apply selective herbicides and sedge killers to kill off weeds growing in the lawn. You may also scout the lawn and remove weeds by hand. Make a game out of it with kids and grandkids.
6. One of the biggest hurdles to growing a good lawn is soil compaction. Continuous foot traffic, rainfall and the depletion of soil organic material has compressed the soil particles eliminating pore space. This pore space allows water and air to enter the soil and is critical to growing plants.

Use a core aerator to open up channels in the soil. Spread a mix of fine compost and sand over the lawn in a 1/4 inch layer.

7. Dethatch the lawn if necessary.
8. Set your mower to the correct height for your turfgrass type. This is one of the most important things that you can do. See Table 1.
9. Continue to scout for disease and insect pests and apply treatment if necessary.

Recommended Mowing Height	
Turfgrass Type	Mowing Height (Inches)
Bermuda	0.75—1
Zoysia	1—2
St. Augustine	2.5—3.5
Centipede	1—2

Table 1. Recommended mowing height for turfgrass type.

Do Not:

1. Do not cut more than 1/3 of the height at a single time.
2. Do not let winter weeds go to seed in the lawn. Use the bagging mower to collect clippings and dispose of them if seed heads are present.

Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help

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