



GN Gardening Magazine

May 2020



In This Issue:

Give Your Plants Nutrients

By: Dr. Joe Willis

Dog Vomit Slime Mold

By: Chris Dunaway

Victory Garden Top 10 Problems and How to Manage Them

By: Anna Timmerman

Controlling Weeds in Vegetable Gardens Without Chemicals

By: Dr. Joe Willis

May Planting Guide

In the Kitchen with Austin

Upcoming Events

May Garden Checklist

Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

Cover Photo is of tomatoes growing in the LaSalle Park Demonstration Garden in Jefferson Parish. Photo by Chris Dunaway

Give Your Plants Nutrients

Whether you are a seasoned gardener or a rookie, it's easy to forget that while the plants in your vegetable garden are continuously providing you with fresh food, they are removing nutrients from the soil to do so and not replacing them. While your ornamental landscape plants should be fertilized annually, they will usually still perform pretty well even if you forget to fertilize.

A quick analogy will help to understand why fertilization can be so vital to some plants and not as much to others. It's like a checking account compared to a savings account. We deposit money in our checking account to have it readily available to use for purchases. Even if it is an interest earning account, we are constantly removing money from it and it will soon be empty if we don't make deposits.

With our savings account, we put money in with hopes that we don't really take money out except in emergencies. No matter what the interest rate, as long as we don't make withdrawals, the account will continue to grow as the interest accrues, compounds and begins to also earn interest.

Ornamental landscape plants, open fields and forests are like savings accounts. Since very few nutrients are being taken from them, they can survive and grow quite successfully without any additional fertilization.

Vegetable gardens, on the other hand, are like checking accounts. Even if the plants have more than enough nutrients when the garden is installed, we are constantly harvesting produce from them and they will run out of one nutrient or another if we don't

fertilize. This is especially true for plants in containers and raised beds.

A good fertilization guide for vegetable plants being grown inground is the "Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide" – LSU AgCenter Publication # 1980. You can get an electronic version online at the LSU Agcenter website. This contains a nice table with all the commonly grown vegetables and the fertilization



An image of someone adding Osmocote fertilizer to a container plant. Each encapsulated granule contains the same ratio of nutrients that are released over time.

recommendations for the season. Note: the publication clearly states, *"General fertilizer recommendations are based on soils of average fertility that have no imbalances of major soil nutrients. A soil analysis will determine if certain soil nutrients are exceptionally high or low. Most garden vegetables need a soil pH (acidity) between 6 and 7. You should have your soil tested at least every three*

years!" A soil test is the most accurate method to determine what nutrients your plants actually need to have supplied.

A fertilization plan for container grown vegetable plants is much different. In containers, and raised beds many times, there is limited total soil for storing available plant nutrients. Plants will quickly take-up and utilize available nutrients. These nutrients must be replenished on a continual basis. There are three primary ways of providing these nutrients.

The first is to mix a slow release fertilizer, such as Osmocote. Slow- or time-release fertilizers release nutrients slowly over time to deliver an ongoing supply of nutrition to your plants. Osmocote fertilizers are encapsulated nutrients contained in round resin-coated prill is designed to supply

May Vegetable Planting Guide

| Crop | Recommended Variety |
|------------------------------|---|
| Amaranth | None Given |
| Cantaloupe | Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Athena, Primo, Vienna |
| Cucuzza | None Given |
| Cushaw | None Given |
| Eggplant | Dusky, Night Shadow, Epic, Santana, Calliope |
| Hot Peppers (transplant) | Grande, Tula, Mariachi, Mitla, |
| Lima Beans (bush or pole) | Dixie Butterpea, Jackson Wonder, Thorogreen Florida Speckled, King of Garden |
| Luffa Gourd | None Given |
| Malbar Spinace | None Given |
| Mirlitons | None Given |
| Okra | Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless |
| Peanuts | None Given |
| Pumpkins | Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer |
| Southern Peas | Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus |
| Soybeans | None Given |
| Sweet Potato | Beauregard, Evangeline, Hernandez, Jewel |
| Watermelon | Seedless: Cooperstown, Gypsy, Matrix, Millennium Seeded: Mickey Lee, Sugar Baby, Amarillo |
| Yardlong Beans | None Given |

Give Your Plants Nutrients

nutrients for 3 to 4 months. Each time you water your plants, small amounts of the nutrients pass through the coating to deliver a little fertilizer to the plants. The vegetable formulation is 14-14-14 meaning that each pellet contains 14% each of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. There are other brands besides Osmocote. The label will tell you how much to use and how often.

The second way to provide a steady source of nutrients to your vegetables is to mix organic nutrient sources into your growing media prior to and/or after planting. There are several materials that are used as organic fertilizers: blood meal, bone meal, fish meal, green sand, etc. See an article by Anna Timmerman in GNO Gardening September 2019 for more information on organic fertilizers. Organic fertilizers are just special forms of organic matter that release their nutrients as soil microorganisms break them down. The

microorganisms will use what they need and release the rest for use by the plants. The plants, in return, will provide food to the microorganisms through root exudates. Because of the need for microorganisms

to break down the organic fertilizers and release their nutrients, it is important to avoid using any other soil

additives or pesticides that could harm these soil microorganisms.

The third way is to use a water-soluble fertilizer and feed your plants when you water them. There are several brands of water-soluble fertilizers for sale.

Generally, you need to fertilize your actively growing containerized vegetable plants about once a week. Depending on the crop, stage of growth and fertilizer concentration, it could be more often or less often. The label will provide you with a

recommended concentration rate and use frequency for each crop. Water-soluble fertilizers are used more often simply because all the nutrients are just that –

water-soluble. They will leach out of the container media more easily every time you water.

Well-nourished vegetable plants will be more disease and insect resistant and be more productive and for a longer period of time. If you're going to invest the time and money into starting a vegetable garden, invest in fertilization to make it successful.



Blood meal which is dehydrated animal blood, is a source of nitrogen.



Bone meal which is ground animal bone, is a source of phosphorous and calcium.



Water soluble fertilizers can be mixed in your watering can.

~Dr. Joe Willis

Dog Vomit Slime Mold

I considered titling this article, If I had known I would ever see something called “Dog Vomit Slime” I Never Would have Taken Up

Gardening, but it seemed a little long. And yet for having such an un-flattering name, dog vomit slime molds are fascinating and harmless creatures that provide a useful service. As they creep along, yes they move, they engulf and ingest bacteria, yeasts, spores, and decaying organic matter. In other words, they are

natures cleaning crew. But because their favorite home is in decaying plant material and compost piles are made up of decaying plant material, these molds will frequently take up residence in our gardens. Don't worry because they are not harmful to the growing plants and in fact, their presence can actually be an indicator of low fertility in the garden. This is because unfinished compost has more of the wood digesting bacteria and fungi which are the slime

mold's primary food source. These fungi actually lock up essential nutrients, especially nitrogen, as they work to break down the cellulosic material. This is

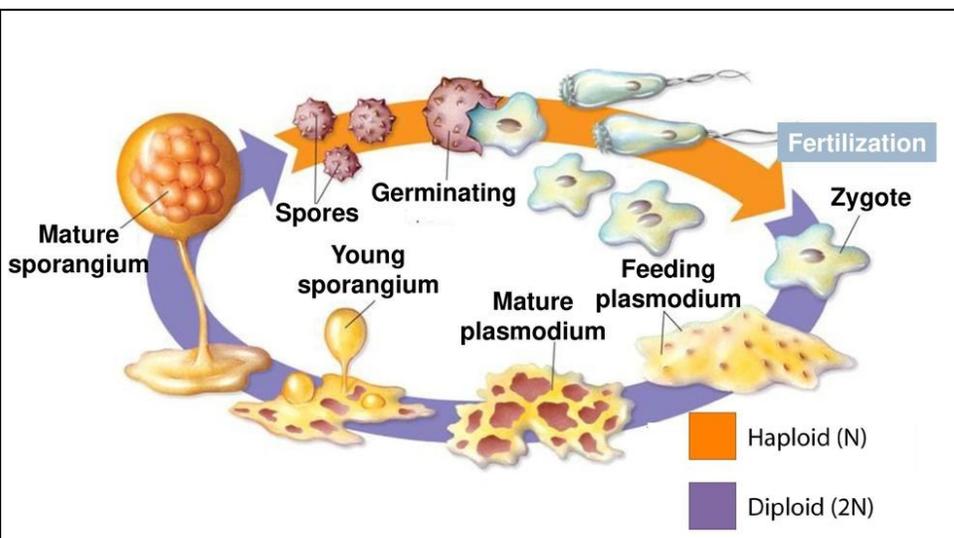


This dog vomit slime mold gets its name from the color of the spore containing sporangia.

common in new gardens made with garden soil from dealers that add undigested wood chips to their mix. If you see dog vomit slime molds in your garden, fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer that is readily available to the plants. Over time the soil will improve as the organic material continues to break down.

The form of slime molds that we see are basically the “mature” form of this organism. At this stage they are a giant single cell with multiple nuclei and two sets of chromosomes so they are capable of reproduction. Just like the chicken v. egg question we have to determine where to start our story; Let's start with the egg.

Dog vomit slime molds start their lives as spores released from their dead parent. (*Sounds like a Disney movie.*) The spores are then carried by the wind and can travel long distances. These spores are resistant to unfavorable conditions and can remain



The life cycle of a plasmodial slime mold.

Dog Vomit Slime Mold

dormant for up to 75 years. Under favorable conditions, the spores will release single cell amoebae-like organisms that feed by engulfing bacteria and can divide asexually by splitting. If free water is present they will transform into a free swimming flagellated form and then back into the amoeboid when the water recedes. Each amoeboid is actually a haploid sex cell meaning it only has one set of chromosomes like a sperm or an egg. These cells can remain in this independent form indefinitely as they slowly move around seeking another cell with a compatible mating type. This goes way beyond basic male and female. The average slime mold can have hundreds of different mating types. (*And you thought we had problems with pronouns!*) This is all microscopic so goes on undetected until the magic happens and two become one.

When two amoebae with compatible mating types meet, they merge together and their nuclei fuse



A magnified image of the spore containing sporangia. The structure on the right has already released its spores.



A dog vomit slime mold plasmodium feeding on white fungus.

becoming a diploid plasmodium. Once this happens the cell stops dividing but the nuclei inside do not, causing it to grow larger and larger. Some slime molds have been recorded covering several square meters. This plasmodium can move with pulsing contractions of the cell wall. This slow inevitable search for food was the inspiration for the classic horror movie The Blob. If you are interested, search for “moving slime molds” on YouTube for some fascinating footage.

When they have exhausted an area of food, the slime

mold will form hundreds of fruiting bodies called sporangia containing millions of tiny spores. Then, to complete the circle, the slime mold will die and form a hard crust to protect the spores within until the conditions are right for their release. It is the odd bile-colored appearance of these sporangia

and amorphous shape of this final process are what give the dog vomit slime mold its inauspicious name.

~Chris Dunaway

Victory Garden Top 10 Problems and How to Manage Them

An amazing thing is happening. We are all at home and tons of people are gardening in their yards, some for the first time ever.

Many of us have the time now to develop our gardens to de-stress, grow some food, and beautify our homes. Kids are stuck at home and some area schools are

requiring “gardening at home” as a remote learning school project, using existing home gardens or even new container gardens for those with small spaces. On my block, some of the kids got seeds, a bag of potting soil, and a few flowerpots along with their curriculum for the week from a teacher drop-off.

Every day I am receiving a myriad of questions from both new and experienced gardeners who are extremely concerned about their plant’s health now that they are observing their gardens on a daily (or many times a day basis!). We are all noticing small changes to our gardens, almost in real time. I know at my home I tend to notice

the day a new plant begins to flower, or a new insect makes an appearance!

Here are the answers to the top ten questions that I have been receiving including some management practices and links to more detailed articles about each issue if they are available. For those of you not seeing these things yet, keep this list handy for the month of May as the spring turns into summer.

Chances are at least one of these things will make an appearance!

10. Seeds or transplants fail to grow:

A lot of garden centers operate on a regional model, meaning that seeds and transplants are often

available during times of the year that they are not appropriate for in our area. Planting the right plants or seeds for the season is key. Spinach, lettuce, beets, carrots, and other cool season crops should not be seeded now, though you should purchase those seeds for the fall planting period. Many people are trying to

plant strawberries, potatoes, and tomatoes now but really it is much too late. Save these things for the fall season when we can get in a second crop of tomatoes and potatoes.

Store your seed packets in a dry, cool location. A plastic container with a lid is a good idea, keep it in the refrigerator and your seeds will keep well for the next season. Summer is our most difficult, brutal growing season, so planting vegetables and herbs that originated in hot, tropical climates is a good idea. Melons, squash, hot peppers, sweet potatoes, okra, and peanuts all evolved in hot climates and thrive in our summer weather.



Here an unfertilized cucumber withers on the vine.

The LSU Vegetable Planting Guide is a good reference for planting dates, as is this monthly magazine. [Click on this link or go to https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/d/e/3/e/de3e7516e68dfec4a21a84b38caa4df8/pub1980%20vegetable%20planting%20guide%20rev%2001%2017pdf.pdf](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~/media/system/d/e/3/e/de3e7516e68dfec4a21a84b38caa4df8/pub1980%20vegetable%20planting%20guide%20rev%2001%2017pdf.pdf) to see the [LSU AgCenter Vegetable Planting Guide](#).

Recently, LSU AgCenter Vegetable Specialist Dr. Kiki Fontenot weighed in on planting the right things for our area. [Click here to see an article on vegetable gardening from Dr. Fontenot or go to: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rbogren/articles/page1587047895678?](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rbogren/articles/page1587047895678?)

Victory Garden Top 10 Problems and How to Manage Them

[fbclid=IwAR2ItoZ29qLXIYePssPOwz48wCxEpZbd-8BD7uUOXp0nQ2GDSgLHUONbhe4](#)

9. Cucumbers or squash are soft and fall off before getting ripe:

I check my cucumber vines every morning, and I know I am not the only one looking forward to home made pickles. Cucurbits like melons, cucumbers, gourds, squash, and zucchini rely on bees and other pollinators to set their fruit. Without proper pollination, the fruits of these crops will fail to fully form, turn soft, and fall off the plant. You can hand pollinate your flowers if the bees are not finding them to do the job. First you need to identify the female and male flowers of your plants. Female flowers will have a small, embryonic fruit below the petals where the flower attaches to the rest of the plant. Male flowers lack this embryo and have pollen and anthers inside of the flower. Female flowers have a long, sticky pistil with no pollen. Use a paintbrush or a cotton swab to transfer pollen from the male flowers to the end of the pistil inside of the female flowers. Do this in the mornings for best results.

8. Tomato leaves are curled:

While there are several viruses and a mite that cause tomato leaves to curl or “cup”, most cases that I have seen are due to a stress within the environment. Recently transplanted tomatoes sometimes cup or curl in response to transplant shock since the roots are disturbed and cannot take in enough water. Windy, sunny days can also cause curling as the leaves try to conserve water loss through transpiration. This is a self-defense response and helps the plant to retain water. We recently saw a seven-week dry spell which caused this problem for many home gardeners.

Herbicide drift or residues within soil or compost can also cause leaf curl. 2,4-D drift is common since very

little product is needed to trigger a curling response in tomatoes. The particles of 2,4-D are very small and can travel long distances in the wind. In several cases this spring, neighbors used this product to control lawn weeds and caused damage in nearby gardens. Manure used to make compost can also contain herbicides if the pasture or hay the livestock consumed was treated to manage weeds. A product called Grazon is usually to blame and can persist for



Curled tomato leaves can have a variety of causes.

up to 18 months within the manure or compost. Be sure to ask any sources of manure that you utilize if their hay or pasture has been treated with Grazon.

[Click here or go to https://www.nola.com/entertainment-life/home-garden/article_987597b0-ef2d-56a2-9def-434c27541d94.html](https://www.nola.com/entertainment-life/home-garden/article_987597b0-ef2d-56a2-9def-434c27541d94.html) for an article on using manure waste in your garden.

7. Assassin bug (good) or leaf-footed bug (bad):

Leaf-footed bugs (*Leptoglossus*) are always a problem in the GNO area if you are growing any kind of fruit tree or fruiting vegetables. They suck the life out of fruits and transmit a yeast, rendering the tomato or citrus dry, hard, and tasteless. The immature leaf-footed bugs love to congregate on our plants and scurry away as a herd when you approach. Even at a

Victory Garden Top 10 Problems and How to Manage Them

young age, they can do a lot of damage. Many gardeners “SOS” (squish on sight) when they see them. You can also knock them off into a cup of soapy water. Young leaf-footed bugs can be controlled with Sevin, but the adults are usually unaffected by insecticides. Neem, insecticidal soap, and other natural insecticides do not work to control leaf-footed bugs. This year I will be trying a natural kaolin clay-based spray to “mask” my tomatoes and make them invisible to leaf-footed bugs. Fingers crossed it works because I have tried everything under the sun.

Leaf-footed bug nymphs are often confused for nymphs of milkweed assassin bugs (*Zelus longipes*) since they are very similar in appearance. The assassin bugs, however, are beneficial insects in our gardens. Assassin bugs are predators and hunt solo, they are an excellent biological control for caterpillars and other soft-bodied insect pests. You can tell them apart from leaf-footed bugs by looking at the back pair of legs. Leaf-footed bugs have a telltale “flare” and they also tend to congregate in a group. Assassin bugs have long legs with no



Leaf footed bug nymphs feeding on developing tomatoes. The large numbers help to identify them.



Photo by Chris Dunaway

Assassin bug nymphs are solitary hunters.

flare and tend to be solitary. Both adult forms are capable of flight and can be difficult to find.

6. Caterpillars, so many caterpillars:

One new gardener described this spring to me as “Caterpillar Mardi Gras”. I agree, there are crowds of caterpillars seeking my garden out, both good and bad. We had a very mild winter which explains the population boom. Many moth species are generalist feeders and love munching on veggie plants. Dr. Joe wrote about some of the ones we are seeing in large numbers last month and how to control them. [Click here or go to https://](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1585945402508)

www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1585945402508 to see the April 2020 issue of GNO Gardening with the article.

5. All my plants are turning yellow in this new garden:

Good garden soil takes time to build, and with many new gardens being installed around town, folks are beginning to see that new soil can cause some problems. A lot of garden soil, raised bed mix, and topsoil blends that are available contain uncomposted wood materials to help

Victory Garden Top 10 Problems and How to Manage Them

improve drainage and bulk the soil up. This is a good thing in the long term, all that carbon-rich organic matter will break down over time into nutrients that plants can utilize. In the short term, however, many newly installed garden plants are turning yellow and chlorotic with slow growth or completely halted growth. This is due to the wood material binding up the nitrogen in the soil, making it unavailable for plant growth. Supplemental fertilizer is needed to get things growing. Dr. Joe's article in this issue of GNO Gardening Magazine is a good guide for what to use and how to apply fertilizers.

4. Fire ants in my pot/raised bed/garden:

Fire ants love to live in gardens. Any raised bit of soil, garden bed, or container offers them a high and dry home. Accidentally disturbing them while working in the garden can be a painful mistake. There are a lot of DIY ways to control fire ants being talked about in gardening groups. Using grits or cornmeal to kill them, lighting the pile on fire, mixing piles to fight to the death, boiling water, and pouring citrus oil or cinnamon into the nest are all ways that some locals are using to wage war on the fire ants in their gardens. Sadly, many gardeners are finding that the fire ants just pick up and move to another spot in the garden when these methods are employed. Better options are out there including organic bait products labeled for use in vegetable gardens. These are

available at all local garden centers. Dr. Heather Kirk-Ballard wrote an excellent article on how to control fire ants in the garden this month and details several options for home fire ant control. [Click here or go to https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rbogren/](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rbogren/articles/page1587745917271)

[articles/page1587745917271](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rbogren/articles/page1587745917271) to see Dr. Kirk-Ballard's article on fire ants.

3. Tomato plant tops turning yellow:

If the tops of your tomato plants are turning pale and yellow while the rest of the plant looks fine, you may have one of these things going on: 1.) Herbicide damage, particularly glyphosate drift, can cause yellow tops. Keep watering the plants to help them grow out of it. 2.) A shortage of iron can also cause this kind of bleaching of the tops. A

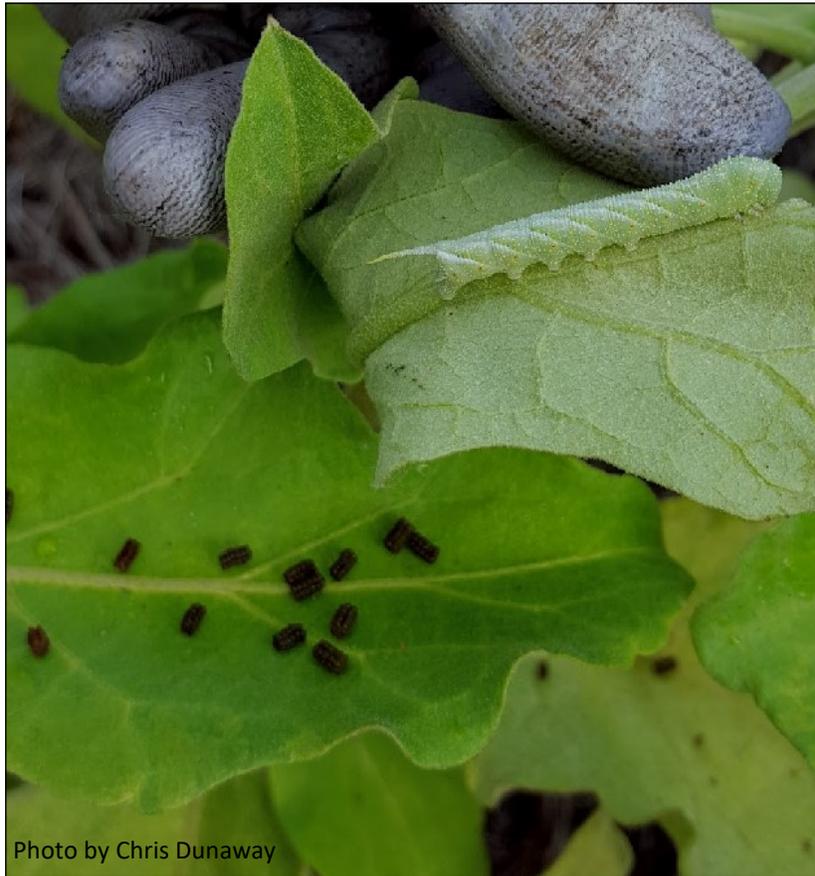


Photo by Chris Dunaway

Tomato hornworm caterpillar can be difficult to spot. Look out for its unique barrel-shaped droppings.

soil test is recommended each year to avoid this condition. Use a chelated iron product to add iron if your soil is lacking adequate levels. Newly transplanted tomatoes across the state are showing this sign, and cool weather can exasperate it. 3.) If the leaves at the tops of the tomato plants are turning yellow and curling, you may have a case of tomato curly top virus, and those plants should be removed. The American Phytopathological Society (APS) recently launched the Tomato MD app for your smartphone which is a handy tool for diagnosing tomato issues. The app can aid home tomato growers in diagnosing these issues. Sending photos to us at

Victory Garden Top 10 Problems and How to Manage Them

gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu is also a good way to determine the cause of tomato top yellowing.

2. Leaf miners:

What is making silvery squiggles on my plants!? Coming in at #2 is the leaf miner! Leaf miners are the larvae of moths that feed inside of the leaves underneath several layers of cells. They mine the leaves and leave a silvery trail behind them. They feed on citrus, tomatoes, cucurbits, peppers, and many other garden plants. Once the miner is mature, it will pupate on the leaf and emerge as a moth to restart the cycle. [Click here to see the January issue of GNO Gardening with an article on citrus leaf miners or go to <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1578426091953>.](#)

1. Dog vomit slime mold and other fungi in my garden:

My number one call or question this month is about the strange, alien life form that appears overnight and looks downright disgusting. Dog vomit slime mold lives up to the name- it truly looks like a dog barfed in the garden. Gross! This slime mold is harmless and beneficial. It does not hurt plants and usually disappears in a few days. New garden soil with a lot of uncomposted wood material will usually see some fungal activity, which is good. The slime mold usually appears after a rain or watering event. These fungi break down material into usable nutrients and soil. If you really hate the look of the dog vomit slime mold, you can scoop it into the compost pile with a shovel where it will happily help your compost to break down. See the article by Chris Dunaway on dog vomit

slime molds in this issue of GNO Gardening.

Next Month:

Several things are on the horizon for our GNO area



Remove leaves with leaf miner damage before bringing them home from the nursery.

victory gardens. Keep an eye out for these problems in May:

- ◆ Squash vine borers, stink bugs, and increasing numbers of leaf-footed bugs.
- ◆ Tomato diseases that like heat and humidity (Early Blight, Southern Blight, Verticillium Wilt).
- ◆ Downy/Powdery mildew on your cucurbits.

Back issues of GNO Gardening have articles about most of these things that we will face down the road. Just add GNO Gardening to your internet search.

Be prepared and stay observant. Try to quickly identify the pest or disease causing an issue in your garden and take appropriate action. Early action is always best! Reach out to any of your Extension Agents via gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu, we are here to help you succeed with new and old gardens alike!

~Anna Timmerman

Controlling Weeds in the Vegetable Garden Without Chemicals

In our series of articles on “soft” pesticides/biopesticides/non-chemical pesticides we have covered products for insect control and products for disease control but have not yet touched on anything for weed control. With the sudden renewed interest in home gardening, now would be a good time to discuss some “old time” cures for weed problems in the garden. What is a weed? The definition most gardeners prefer is “A plant growing where it is not wanted.” Why do we need to control weeds in the first place? The primary reason is competition. Whether your gardening inground, in



Fallen leaves make excellent mulch but should be shredded before adding to the garden.

raised beds or in containers, any plant growing there is going to be using soil nutrients and water to grow and survive. Thus, weeds are in direct competition with your vegetable plants for water and nutrients. Most plants we term “weeds” are great competitors, often more efficient at nutrient and water uptake than our veggie plants. Most have strong, extensive root systems that help them survive environmental stress factors better than our veggie plants. Just take a look at fields left fallow. Have you ever seen one overrun with tomato plants, pepper plants, broccoli, okra, squash, corn or lettuce? No, they will be covered

with plants that most gardeners have probably seen in their own gardens that have been given the space to fully express themselves. And boy can they go wild! So, controlling weeds is one chore required of all gardeners in order to reap the most bountiful harvest. If you want to keep your garden as weed-free as possible without resorting to chemical herbicides, here are a couple of time-honored and result-producing methods to try.

The first is to use mulch. Mulching your garden is a great way to control probably 85% of weeds and conserves water by preventing soil water loss through

evaporation. [Click here or go to https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1513912039060 to see the GNO Gardening January 2018 issue for more information on mulch, mulching and types of mulch.](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1513912039060)

Generally, mulches that are organic material make better mulches for a vegetable garden because they improve the soil as they break down and can be easily incorporated into the soil between crops. Good organic materials include pine straw, shredded hardwood and shredded bark, newspaper and

cardboard, leaves and straw. Mulch should be added to a depth of 2-4 inches. Less than 2 inches and you lose the benefits of mulch; more than 4 inches and air exchange with the plant root system and soil microbiota is inhibited. Mulching should be a part of gardening no matter what other additional methods of weed control you use.

The second effective method of weed control is hand removal of weeds. Yes, the year is 2020 and hand weeding was first employed just after the fall of Adam and Eve. But in all the ensuing years, no other method has been developed that is more selective,

Controlling Weeds in the Vegetable Garden Without Chemicals

more permanent, more safe or more effective than hand weeding. It's simple, easy to understand and almost anyone can do it. True, it can be labor intensive, raise your body temperature and help you discover muscles you didn't know you had, but it can also be invigorating and very satisfying. Here are a

few simple hints to make the job easier and more effective. 1) Don't pull weeds if the soil is dry. If the soil is too dry, the weeds are harder to remove from the ground or simply break off. Weeding is best done after a rain or a good irrigation while the soil is still moist. 2) Don't pull weeds during the hottest part of the day. The weeds don't care but you will surely melt. There's no reason to risk heat stroke when you can save this chore for the early morning or late evening hours. Also, remember to stay hydrated while

gardening. 3) Always wear gloves. Some weeds have briars, some have sharp edged leaves and digging in the soil with unprotected hands can lead to cuts, abrasions and even infections. Not to mention the resulting dry rough hands that your significant other will not appreciate. Cotton gardening gloves will work but it's better to use gloves that have some water resistance to keep your hands dry while working. [Click here or go to https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1517434307963](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/cdunaway/articles/page1517434307963) to see the **GNO Gardening**

[February 2018 issue for a good discussion on gloves.](#) 4) Keep weeding tools handy and use them when you can. Man has always invented tools to make his work easier and it's no different with weeding. [Click on this link or go to https://www.gearhungry.com/best-weeding-tools/](https://www.gearhungry.com/best-weeding-tools/) for the GearHungry website. They



Horticulturist Lee Rouse demonstrates how to use a scuffle hoe.

[To see the video on the GNO Gardening Facebook page click on this link or go to https://www.facebook.com/1030624690304124/videos/1174187749281150/](https://www.facebook.com/1030624690304124/videos/1174187749281150/)

Photo by Chris Dunaway

have a pretty good list and discussion about weeding tools currently available for us to use. Work smarter, not harder! 5) Try to learn something about the different weeds you regularly encounter. Knowing whether a weed is an annual or a perennial is one important characteristic. Annual weeds can often be eliminated by simply breaking them off at the ground. Mulch is very effective against annual weeds. Annual weeds propagate mostly by seed so if you prevent them from making seed you prevent a lot of next

year's weed problems. Perennials, on the other hand, fight back against you year after year. Many will grow through mulches. You do want to prevent them from making seed but it is very important to make sure you remove them from your garden roots and all. Leaving the roots behind means you'll see them again very soon.

Your best weed control method is scouting and taking fast action to remove weed plants before they become established.

~Dr. Joe Willis

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.

In the Kitchen with Austin

Fava Bean Salad

If you are lucky enough to stumble upon fresh fava beans, this recipe is perfect for a light meal or a quick snack. It is exceptionally delicious spooned atop toasted



Fava Bean Salad on Toasted Bread

rounds of French bread. Please do not be put-off by the fact that there are no measurements for the ingredients. This is the time to exercise your individuality in the kitchen.

Cooked fava beans, hulled and par-boiled to remove outer skin

Extra-virgin olive oil

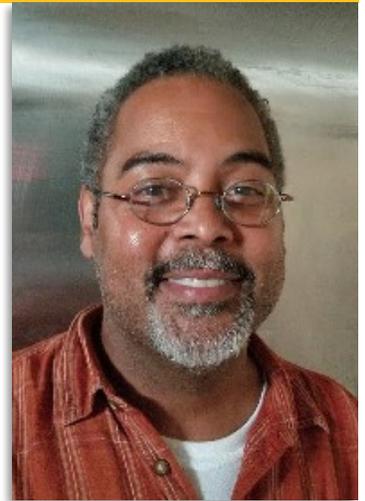
Fresh lemon juice

Red onion, thinly sliced

Fresh mint leaves, chopped

Salt and pepper, to taste

Pecorino Romano cheese



Directions:

Toss cooked fava beans with olive oil, fresh lemon juice, red onion and a few chopped mint leaves. Season with salt and black pepper.

Top with grated Romano cheese.

Bon Manger!

Coming Events



**NEW ORLEANS
BOTANICAL GARDEN**

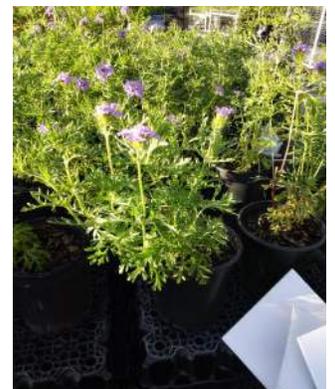
Pelican Greenhouse Online Plant Sale

Tuesday, May 4th, 9 AM

to

Wednesday, May 5th, 5 PM

[FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CLICK HERE OR GO TO HTTPS://
NEWORLEANSBOTANICALGAR-
DEN.SQUARE.SITE/](#)



May Checklist/Garden Tips

- ◆ During dry weather don't forget to keep your compost pile evenly moist. Dry organic matter will not decompose. Do, however, avoid keeping the pile saturated as this will create bad odors.
- ◆ Powdery mildew on many ornamentals (crape myrtles, roses, euonymous) and vegetables (squash, cucumbers) continues to be a problem due to dry weather. Treat with chlorothalonil or other labeled fungicides.
- ◆ Birds will peck holes in tomatoes just before you decide they are ripe enough to harvest. If birds are a problem, cover your plants with bird netting or harvest the fruit in the pink stage and ripen them inside. Bird netting also works well to protect fruit crops, such as blackberries, blueberries and figs, from bird damage, and is available from local nurseries or feed stores.
- ◆ Grow cucumbers on trellises to save space, increase production and improve the quality of the cucumbers produced.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Cannas that have brown, deformed leaves with holes in them have been attacked by canna leaf-rollers, a caterpillar that is devastating to cannas in our area. Control is difficult and requires regular spraying all summer. If you decide to treat, use a systemic insecticide such as acephate and make weekly applications.
- ◆ Plant basil plants now and enjoy a wonderful fresh seasoning for summer cooking. Many herbs already in your garden, such as thyme, sage, oregano, lavender, dill, cilantro and parsley, are at their most productive now and will play out as the weather gets hotter. Harvest freely and dry or freeze the extras.
- ◆ Remove the developing seed pods from such plants as Louisiana irises and amaryllis when they finish blooming. This keeps the plants more attractive and prevents them from wasting effort on seeds that are not needed. It would be better for the plants to put that energy into growing leaves and roots.
- ◆ Watch azaleas for azalea lace bug damage. Small white spots on the upper surface and small dark brown spots on the back of leaves indicates they are present. Spray with a broad spectrum insecticide getting under the leaves thoroughly.
- ◆ Caterpillars will feed on the foliage and flowers of ornamentals and the foliage and fruit of vegetables. The tomato fruit worm eats holes in tomatoes. Sevin, spinosad and BT regularly applied will keep them in check.
- ◆ Termite mating season is upon us and millions of sexually mature Formosan termite alates will be seen flying around light poles at night for the next several weeks. Although termites are active year round, the heightened activity makes it more easy to find the harborages in which they live. Be sure to inspect your home and area trees for signs of infestation. [Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgm3dxqip7g to see a video on inspecting trees for termites.](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgm3dxqip7g)

Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

Do's:

1. Many area lawns are stressed from soil compaction. Core aerate the soil to allow air and water to penetrate the soil.
2. Add a 1/4 inch layer of fine compost or compost and sand mixture over the lawn and filling in the aeration holes to introduce organic matter into the soil profile.
3. Add recommended fertilizer and soil amendments to the mix from step #2 above.
4. This is the prime planting season for warm season grasses such as St. Augustine, centipede, Bermuda and zoysia.
5. This month is the last chance to apply broad leaf weed killers before the weather gets too hot. Continue to scout for fungal damage and control with fungicides if necessary. The most prevalent is called Large Patch of Warm-Season Turfgrass. [Click here to find information about large patch disease from the LSU AgCenter.](#)
6. Irrigate as necessary to moisten the soil to a depth of 4-6 inches.
7. Dethatch the lawn if necessary.
8. Keep an eye open for insect pests and treat if necessary.
9. Set your mower to the correct height for your turfgrass type.
10. If you fertilized your lawn in April, there is no need to do so this month. The exception is if you are growing hybrid Bermuda grass which should get one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

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

This table lists mowing height for each grass type.

Don't's

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.
3. Do not completely cover actively growing grass with fill. Always leave the tips of the grass exposed to continue growing.

Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help

E-mail us at: GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu



Follow us on Facebook at [GNOGardening](#)

For more information visit LSUAgCenter.com

Joe Willis
Orleans Parish
Horticulture Agent
(504)483-9471

Anna Timmerman
Jefferson Parish
Horticulture Agent
(504)736-6519

Chris Dunaway
GNO Area
Horticulture Agent
(985)785-4475

To subscribe to this newsletter please send a request to GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu. The LSU AgCenter is a statewide campus of the LSU System and provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.