

What's Sprouting!

The Newsletter of the Oxford Community Garden Association

July 2015



Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

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Garden Announcements

July Work Day: Normally, the first Saturday of every month is a designated Garden work day, but this month, the first Saturday is the 4th, so we won't hold it. Instead, please dedicate an extra hour or two to a common space or work on pathway maintenance (especially your own!). As well, chip in to the Community Harvest effort. Vicki Reithel leads CH, and she needs help tending and harvesting the CH plots. Throughout July, she'll be in the plots each Tuesday evening from 6:30 and 8:30 pm. Come out and lend a hand. Text Vicki if you need more details (801-7143).

Donate your harvest: If you plan to be out of town this summer, plant a marker in your plot to let CH know you want to donate your fresh vegetables to the Pantry. The marker is a tall bamboo pole with the yellow flowers attached at the top. There is a stash of these poles in the shed. If you only want certain things to be harvested, use the yellow ribbon in the shed to mark specific plants. On Tuesday evenings, the CH volunteers will scan the garden and harvest from marked plots. Text Vicki if you want to make sure she knows about your plot.

Your plot and pathways: The garden looks as good as it ever has, but challenging months lie ahead: vacations and hot temperatures keep us from spending time in the garden and plots get weedy and fruits rot. Please don't neglect your plot, doing so means that much more time when you do get out. If you need help with your plot, contact Jason (oxfordcga@gmail.com) or Tiffany (ocgagardencommitte@gmail.com) and we'll get you some help.

What to Plant Now

Believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about fall crops! Often, the fall is the best gardening season in our area. Once the heat is exhausted, my peppers and tomatoes seem to perk up and put on more fruits.

Winter gardening is only successful if you know the average date of the first killing frost in the region in which you live. Crops need to be planted early enough to let them reach full maturity before the killing frost arrives. Local Cooperative Extension offices can provide information pertaining to the average killing frost in your area. Here are some crop selections for regions whose killing frost comes in late October, as ours typically does.

90 Day Crops: plant these crops in mid July for a fall harvest or later if you want a spring harvest.

Root Crops

Globe onions
Parsnip
Carrots
Beets
Rutabaga

Leaf Crops

Fava bean
Brussels sprouts
Cabbages
Cauliflower
Leeks
Early carrots
Kohlrabi

A popular gardening catalog website, Johnny's Selected Seeds, has a fall planting calculator to help you determine if the varieties you've picked will mature before your last frost date: [http://www.johnnyseeds.com/has fall planting calculator](http://www.johnnyseeds.com/has-fall-planting-calculator)

I have been looking at a website called Urban Farmer that has lots of good suggestions for fall plantings:

Broccoli

Plant in the fall for harvests well into November.

Suggested variety: Calabrese

Carrots

Planting carrots by mid-July yields a fall crop that will keep in the garden until used.

Suggested variety: Scarlet Nantes

Corn

The last practical date to plant any corn variety is the first week in July.

Must plant an early maturing corn variety.

Suggested varieties: Bodacious, Sugar Buns, Early Golden Bantam

Cucumbers

Fast growing vine or bush cucumber plants can produce an abundance of cucumber fruits. Be careful to pick a variety for the space you have in your garden. Vine cucumbers can be the best tasting but need far more space than bush varieties.

Suggested variety: Spacemaster 80, Muncher, Marketmore 76

Kale

Planting kale mid-July through mid-August will yield an excellent harvest in the fall and winter.

Suggested variety: Dwarf Blue

More at Urban farmer: <http://www.ufseeds.com/What-To-Plant-Now.html - July>

Visit With a Gardener

This month I visited with Lee Brewer, who is a novice gardener and also my son. Interviewing him seems like cheating, in a way, but I don't know any other teenagers who have decided to get their own vegetable plots. The news that he wanted to garden completely surprised me. This boy has had many interests over the years: soccer, American history, and large carnivorous prehistoric animals, but never gardening. Lee is a sixteen-year-old rising senior at Oxford High School. He has never liked eating his vegetables.

Me: Why did you decide to start gardening?

Lee: I heard that Vicki was growing vegetables for the food pantry and thought that would be a good way to do something productive for the community.

Me: What did you decide to grow?

Lee: I picked collards because Vicki said the Pantry clients really like greens. I also have sugar snap peas, which are finished now, and green bush beans. I planted marigolds because someone at the garden said they were good for nematode control.

Me: Was there anything you would change about the experience? What went well or didn't go well?

Lee: The soil is rich and loamy, especially now since I put so much compost in there. That was a lot of work, but I am proud of that. The hardest part was making time to water regularly. I had to watch the weather app on my phone and put an alarm on to remind myself to go over there if it looked like the weather was going to be hot and dry. The best thing was when Dad and I brought five grocery sacks of greens and a small bag of beans and peas to the Pantry.

Me: Tell me the truth, didn't you eat any of your crops yourself?

Lee: The sugar snaps were pretty good raw, but I am still getting used to the collards and beans.

Me: Maybe if they were cooked?

Lee: Yeah, I guess learning to cook them is another project.

Me: So will you be gardening next year?

Lee: Yes, I am planning to do it next year. I can't wait to experiment with new crops.

Recipe of the month

Red Beans and Rice Salad

I'm always looking for something to take to a potluck that will fill up a lot of people, is easy to transport, not too boring, and vegetarian-friendly. Lately, this recipe has been working for me. Plus, it uses a lot of different vegetables that are in season now. Let me know what you think.

Ingredients

3 tbsp Lemon juice

3 tbsp olive oil

2-3 tbs chili powder

1 tsp ground cumin

Tabasco sauce to taste

1/4 tsp salt

1/2 tsp garlic powder

1/2 ground black pepper

2 cups of cooked brown or basmati rice, chilled

1 16 oz. can of kidney beans

1 small seeded and chopped tomato

1 small chopped bell pepper (save some for a garnish)

1/2 cup finely chopped red onion (you could use a shallot if you find this too harsh)

1/4 cup finely chopped parsley

Directions

1. Combine all the ingredients down to the black pepper in a mason jar and shake it up.
2. In a large bowl, combine everything else and toss it together. Pour the dressing over it and mix it all together. Refrigerate for at least four hours or up to 24 hours before serving.

Garden Cartoon: Hipster grandma



Do you have comments, questions or contributions? Contact your OCGA newsletter editor, Ashley Brewer, at msglyptodon@gmail.com. Find the Oxford Community Garden on Facebook, or at our website, ocga.org