

# ***What's Sprouting!***

**October 2015**



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## **Events**

### **>Next Garden Work Day**

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of November (Nov 7<sup>th</sup>) – watch for an email with a time and any additional information.

### **>Food Day Apple Crunch**

Join the Food Day Apple Crunch on and around October 24, 2015! On and around Food Day 2015, millions of people around the country will crunch into an apple in a unifying action to raise awareness about eating better diets for our health and the environment, access and affordability of fruits and vegetables, and supporting local farmers. Hundreds of thousands of school students will crunch into an apple at lunch time, joined by Americans at public Food Day events, in corporate cafeterias, and at home. You can register at [www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org).



The Apple Crunch originated in New York City in 2012, with approximately 400,000 New Yorkers biting into a locally grown New York State apple at the same time on Food Day. In 2013, the Big Apple Crunch in New York City set a world record with 1,000,000 people participating. The activity has spread across the country, and thousands of locations had Apple Crunches for Food Day 2014.

## **October Garden Tips:**

--Water like crazy! and thanks, OPC!

--Check the weather-when a freeze or frost warning comes up, pick all your tomatoes and put them in a bowl or in a single layer on a platter in your kitchen, away from direct sunlight. If they have

started ripening at all, they will continue to ripen off the vine. (Learn more about the process here: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/ripen-green-tomatoes-zmaz82jfglo.aspx>.)

--Consider a soil test. You can get the special box at the cooperative extension service on Veteran's Drive (by where you get your driver's license). You mix several samples of your soil in the box and mail it off to MS State. In a few weeks, a report will come back to you saying what your soil needs. Be sure to tell them what you are trying to grow.

--Plant some hardy plants. It's getting a little late to start from seed, but no reason not to try! Vegetables such as chard, kale, collards, beets, carrots, turnips may survive through the winter just fine, especially if you provide a little protection during severe cold snaps by covering with a thin blanket or with what's called floating row cover. In early spring, they'll provide you with some nice surprise harvests!

--Clean up and winterize your plot. Our first frost date usually comes by the end of October. When it does, it may blacken any tender annual plants. Then it's time to clean up and mulch your garden. When the weather gets damp and cold, that's a good time to work on your garden notes, start planning your garden for next year, and do some garden reading. Winter is the best time to crawl into a cozy corner and start thinking about what went right in the garden, and what you'll do differently next year.

## Gardening Bookshelf

I have asked some Master gardeners and looked at my library. Here are the books that are most highly recommended for gardeners in the Southern U.S. If you haven't read any of these, winter is a good time to seek them out. A lot of them are about landscape plants, but most have sections on vegetables and fruits. Most are available at the public library and local bookstores, or for your tablet:

1) Southern Living Garden Book by Steve Bender

This comprehensive tome got the most votes. It was recently revised in 2015. It is full of the kind of information that is in *Southern Living* magazine. This includes information about landscaping, pest control and plant selection.

2) Month by Month Gardening in the South by Don Hastings

This one is currently available on amazon for 1 cent, (plus shipping.)

3) A Southern Garden by Elizabeth Lawrence

She was writing 50 years ago, but the latest edition of this book came out in 2001. Her garden was in South Carolina, in zone 7, so there is supposed to be a lot of good advice for our area. This book has been recommended to me many times, with the claim that she is a terrific writer, so this is the one I plan to read next. You can buy a used copy of the hardcover edition on Amazon for \$2.25

4) Tough Plants for Southern Gardens by Felder Rushing

5) Passalong Plants by Steve Bender and Felder Rushing

6) Gardening in the Humid South by Standifer and O'Rourke

7) Southern Gardener's Book of Lists by Lois Trigg Chaplain.

This is more of a useful reference than a juicy read, but very helpful if you want some alternatives for the most obvious plant choices for different environments.

8) Vegetable Gardening in the Southeast by Ira Wallace.

This is a new book that has just come out from Timber Ridge Press. It has lots of variety suggestions and tells you how to improve your soil and alter its pH. It has friendly-looking, easy to read graphics and a soft cover. It was written by a master gardener from North Carolina.

### Some websites I've enjoyed

- Southern Living Magazine's garden blog, *the Grumpy Gardener*
- *Garden and Gun Magazine's* article online: "The Master Gardener's Sketchbook," is a charming story about an artist who draws his vegetable and adds comments on the weather as a daily

journal. By the way, there is no vegetable gardening advice in Garden and Gun's website. I think it is a fashion magazine.

- Rodale's *Organic Life* website and magazine are new versions of their now defunct *Organic Gardening Magazine*. The website has a useful monthly garden calendar for the Southeast and lots of plant descriptions.
- *Kitchen Gardens International* is a political, worldwide website run by a man who thinks vegetable gardening can save the world and that gardening is a subversive act. He claims to be the person who convinced the White House to put in a vegetable garden, which has been going since 2009. He has a Ted Talk, of course. They also have a garden planner that you can download for free for 30 days to see if you like it. It supposedly adapts to your area by being connected to local weather stations, and sends you emails to tell you what to do next in your garden. If you like it, you can pay \$25 a year for it after the free trial period.

### Useful catalogs

Suggestions from Jason Hoeksema: "Seeds of Change is a great catalog, and for southern gardening, I recommend Southern Exposure Seed Exchange."

**Community Gardeners: send in your favorite websites and book choices to [msglyptodon@gmail.com](mailto:msglyptodon@gmail.com)**

### Recipe of the Month

I found a recipe called Sauteed Swiss Chard and Pine Nut Bruschetta in *A Taste of Summer Magazine* back in June. After altering it, I now call it: "Sautéed Maybe Not Swiss Chard and Possibly Pine Nut Bruschetta" (a.k.a. greens on toast)

I think chard is so pretty, and I hoped this flavorful mixture would make me like its taste. However, when I made this recipe the first time, it still tasted like old turnip greens to me, So, I used spinach instead. I also substituted walnuts because I couldn't find pine nuts at Kroger. It could be a nice way to use up the extra greens that you have in the fridge, and of course you could try kale or collards and your favorite flavor of nut (mixed?)

1 lb. spinach  
1 loaf of French bread, sliced  
1/3 c. chopped red onion  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
4 TBSP olive oil  
2 TBSP currants  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 TBSP balsamic vinegar  
1-2 tsp honey  
sea salt and black pepper to taste (might not need any if nuts are salted)  
1/4 nuts, toasted and chopped, if large

1. Wash the greens thoroughly. For big, tough leaves, cut out the stem in the center of each leaf, finely chop any ribs and stems and set aside. Chop the leaves.
2. Put the bread on a cookie sheet and brush with three tablespoons of the oil. Toast in the oven, turning once.
3. Cook red onion and half tsp salt in 1 TBSP oil. Cook it about 10 minutes until lightly caramelized. Add the chopped stems, if using, and the garlic and currants. Sauté about 5 more minutes. Add the leaves and stir until just wilted. Remove from the heat and add vinegar, honey.

and salt and pepper to taste. Spoon onto toasted bread slices and add a few nuts to each one. Should make about 24 slices, depending on your French bread size.

### Cartoon Caption Contest

Recently, I drew a cartoon featuring a Farmer's Market and wrote a pun about plus-sized artisans making pickles. My kids didn't get it. So, I decided to eliminate the words and use the cartoon as a contest picture. You don't need to write a caption unless you want to, this cartoon really just needs some dialogue. Think of this as your chance to practice for the prestigious *New Yorker* magazine cartoon caption contest. Submit your ideas to: [msglyptodon@gmail.com](mailto:msglyptodon@gmail.com) by Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>. The winner will receive a copy of Vegetable Gardening in the Southeast.



This is your last newsletter until March 2016—see you next year!