

Gardening Tip of the Month: Three-Season Lettuce Harvest

You can grow lettuce in your garden all season long, as long as you plant the right plant at the right time. Different lettuce varieties have different tolerance to heat and cold, and it takes planning to know when and what to plant. If you eat a lot of salad, follow the three-season plan below and plant two heads of lettuce or a 1 by 2 foot long row of loose-leaf lettuce per person each week.

Spring: Plant romaine, butterhead, and loose leaf lettuce transplants, or direct seed your lettuce two weeks

before the last-frost date. Cover them with a row cover until the weather warms up.

Summer: When the soil temperatures start climbing above 70 °F, begin to plant heat-tolerant varieties of lettuce, like 'Magenta' Batavian lettuce, 'Green Towers' Romaine lettuce, and 'Simpson Elite' leaf lettuce. Store your lettuce seed in the refrigerator before you sow it, and lay down ice on top of the soil immediately after. Plant in areas of the garden that get shade, such as behind a row of corn, and harvest at the "baby"

stage, before the lettuce gets a chance to form a head.

Fall: In late August start to sow cold-tolerant varieties like 'Salad Bowl' leaf lettuce, 'Winter Density' Butterhead lettuce, and 'Nevada' Batavian lettuce. Use row covers when night time temperatures get below 45 °F.



If you have an announcement, anecdote, recipe or story that you want to share with other gardeners, please feel free to call or email the garden (easmith@camdenchildrensgarden.org) and we will include it in a future newsletter!

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"The Community Gardener" is a publication of the Camden City Garden Club, a 501 (c)(3) private, non-profit organization, registered in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Camden City Garden Club is the operator of the Camden Children's Garden on the Camden Waterfront.



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** Camden Children's Garden is now open Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10 am - 4 pm for the 2010 season, and Thursday by reservation. All existing group reservations will be honored. The Garden offices are open all year round. **

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Putting Up Food: Freezing Spinach

Freezing your garden produce is the easiest and quickest way to preserve it. Follow these simple rules to enjoy garden-fresh spinach all year long.

Materials: large pot, large bowl, ice cubes, tongs, colander, dish towel, sealable plastic bags, marker



Photos by Erica A. Smith

Harvest your spinach the same day that you plan to freeze it. Wash it and remove stems and yellowed leaves. Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil and blanch the spinach for 1-2 minutes. Immediately plunge it into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain and dry it as much as you can with a dish towel and colander. Label the plastic bag with the name and date. Put the spinach into the bag (think about using several small bags and dividing the leaves up into meal-sized amounts for easy defrosting later). Remove as much air as possible from the bags and pop them into the freezer to enjoy later!



Plant This Month

- Lettuce
- Carrots
- Beets
- Rutabaga
- Tomato
- Pepper
- Eggplant
- Herbs
- Beans
- Corn
- Cucumber
- Melon
- Squash
- Okra
- Cabbage
- Brussels
- Sprouts
- Kale



Harvest This Month

- Lettuce
- Beets
- Carrots
- Peas
- Kale
- Broccoli
- Radish
- Collards
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Chard
- Kohlrabi
- Onions
- Squash
- Turnips

NEXT GARDEN CLUB MEETING: MONDAY, June 21, 2010 @ 5:30 pm!

Volunteers Needed for Family Festivals

June 12 and June 13
12 noon to 4pm

StrawBEARy Surprise & Nature in Art Day Family Festival.



This is a celebration of one of summer's sweetest fruits with a special twist to honor Mum Bear, the Garden's mascot, on her 6th birthday. This event will include nature crafts and a planting activity. Families can cool off at the Very Berry Strawberry concession stand.

June 26 and June 27
12 noon to 4pm

Festival de Aibonito Puerto Rico Family Festival.



Enjoy the beauty of tropical plants inside the Plaza de Aibonito, Puerto Rico. This colorful cultural celebration includes Hispanic arts and crafts, games, Puerto Rican activities and delicious tropical fruit. This festival is a part of Camden's Parada San Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist parade). Don't miss the Tropical concession stand.

As a volunteer, you will interact with children and their parents at the education and craft stations positioned around the garden.



June Club Meeting

The next Camden City Garden Club meeting will take place on **Monday, June 21st, 2010, at 5:30pm.**

The topic of discussion will be steaming vegetables and there will be steamed broccoli and carrots for you to snack on. There will also be summer veggie transplants available to take home. **Please feel free to come and get plants seven days a week, ONLY between the hours of 10am and 3pm.**

Tips for Growing Great Cucumbers!

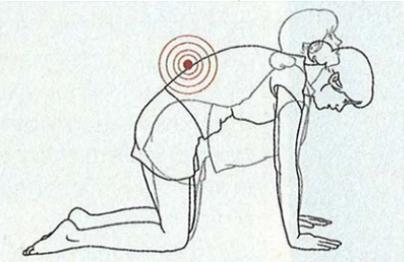
Cucumber flowers depend on bees for successful pollination, so be sure to plant some bright flowers near them to attract pollinators. And unlike most garden vegetables, they have both male and female flowers; female flowers have a miniature cucumber behind the flower, and male flowers don't. You may only see male flowers at first as your vine begins to grow, but be patient and the female flowers will start to develop. If you notice the female flowers falling off without swelling up into mature cucumbers, it's time to take matters into your own hands. "Be the bee," and pollinate those flowers yourself! With a small black paintbrush, gather pollen from the male flowers and deposit it onto the female flowers.

You should see the small yellow dust on the brush as you transfer the pollen. You'll know that you've done your job when the female flower falls off and the cucumber behind it begins to mature.



Picture from: <http://completogarden.wordpress.com/2008/08/18/cucumber-how-to-identifying-male-and-female-flower/>

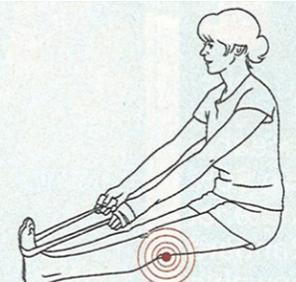
Garden Stretches



LOWER BACK
Cat/Cow pose: Releases your sacrum and the muscles around it.
• Begin on your hands and knees, with your shoulders directly over your wrists and hips over your knees.
• Inhale and slowly arch your back (Cat), lifting your chest away from your belly and extending your tailbone upward.
• As you exhale, round your lower back (Cow), gently contracting your belly.

Keep in tip-top gardening shape by trying these stretches after you garden. Never stretch before you garden; your muscles are cold and you can tear them by pushing yourself too hard. Warm up before you garden by going on a brisk walk for 5 to 15 minutes, or by taking a hot shower to loosen up your muscles.

Diagram source: Huxta, Beth. "Stretching Secrets." *Organic Gardening* May 2008: 17.



KNEES
Seated forward bend: Increases the flexibility and strength of your knees.
• Sit with your back straight against a wall and stretch your legs in front of you with your feet together.
• Lean forward and reach for your shins, ankles, or feet, keeping your legs as straight as possible. You can use a band or belt to help you stretch gently.
• Hold for 30 seconds, then release.

Upcoming Faith-Based Fresh Food BBQ

The second Fresh Food BBQ of the season will be held on Sunday, June 20th at the Camden Children's Garden. There are four BBQs scheduled this summer and they are by invitation only. **Please contact your Pastor/Reverend to see which BBQ of the season your congregation will be attending.**

Children's Garden staff will prepare and grill seasonal vegetables, among other dishes. Admission to the Children's Garden and to the BBQ is free, and each child will get one free ride token. Participants must pay for their own parking (park in the Waterfront Garage).



Roasted Radishes with Balsamic Vinegar

Ingredients:

- ◆ One bunch of radishes with tops (about 10)
- ◆ 2 Tbs olive oil
- ◆ 2 tsp balsamic vinegar
- ◆ 1/2 tsp salt
- ◆ Black pepper to taste

Whisk ingredients together. Toss in radishes and greens until everything is coated evenly with oil. Spread out radishes and greens on roasting pan or baking dish. Bake in oven for about 10 minutes or until greens are crispy. Remove greens and continue to bake roots until they are tender (another 5 minutes).

Preheat oven to 350°. Wash radishes, separating the roots from the greens. Blot dry and cut roots in half if desired. In a large bowl, combine olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and salt.

Recipe and photo from <http://www.whiteonricecouple.com/gardening/roasted-radishes-salad/>.

