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*On the cover:  
Fresh, uncured garlic.  
Photograph by  
Oliver Brachat/  
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## THOUGHT LINES

**M**y mother, an English war bride, loved to tell a story about her first grocery-shopping experience in the United States. In short, she stood in the aisles of A&P and wept to see so much food on offer. The England she'd left behind was short on everything, heavy on rationing. When it came to feeding the nation, proteins and fats were tightly regulated, sugar and candy rarities. Even tea, the English lifeblood, was doled out sparingly—ships had more important things to haul than dried plant leaves. The one food group that was plentiful, however, was vegetables. “Dig for Victory” was the exhortation, and the British dug, turning London’s fabled parks and gardens into community allotments to raise the crops that sustained the British diet. Needless to say, this was done organically—the agrochemical industry had turned its chemicals to other uses.

Having learned that as a nation Britain has never been as healthy as it was during rationing, that recent research reveals 6 out of 10 Americans are obese or overweight, and that diabetes and heart disease are two of our nation’s top-ranking causes of death, I decided to research the details of the wartime rationing diet. It was a reality check for sure. In 1945, around the time my mother left England, portion control meant that each person was allotted about 1 pound of meat a week, 2 ounces of butter and lard, 3 ounces of cheese, and 4 ounces of margarine. One could have 1 egg per week or 1 packet of powdered egg (which equaled 12 eggs) every 4 weeks. Every 8 weeks, each person received one tin of powdered milk, which brought the weekly milk allotment up to a total of about 3 pints. You were permitted 2 ounces of tea a week—small comfort—and sweets (candies) were limited to 12 ounces per *month*. Vegetarians, the elderly and infirm, pregnant women, and small children could have more eggs, cheese, and milk, in certain circumstances.

Then I thought about the quantities of those staples that I consume in a week, and it was not a happy comparison; since moving back to the United States from England 10 years ago, I’ve put on at least 40 pounds. Talk about too, too solid flesh! My mother weighed 135 pounds from the age of 22 ’til she died, aged 96. She ate vegetables and fruit at every meal, a morsel of meat or fish now and then, and a boiled egg for breakfast every day, with wheat toast, easy on the butter. So I began to think that rationing’s rationale offered us at *Organic Gardening* the equivalent of the *Inchesoffme Clinic’s Eight-Ab, No-Sweat, Eat What You Like, Belly Fat Loss Diet!* Simply pile on the veggies, hold back on the



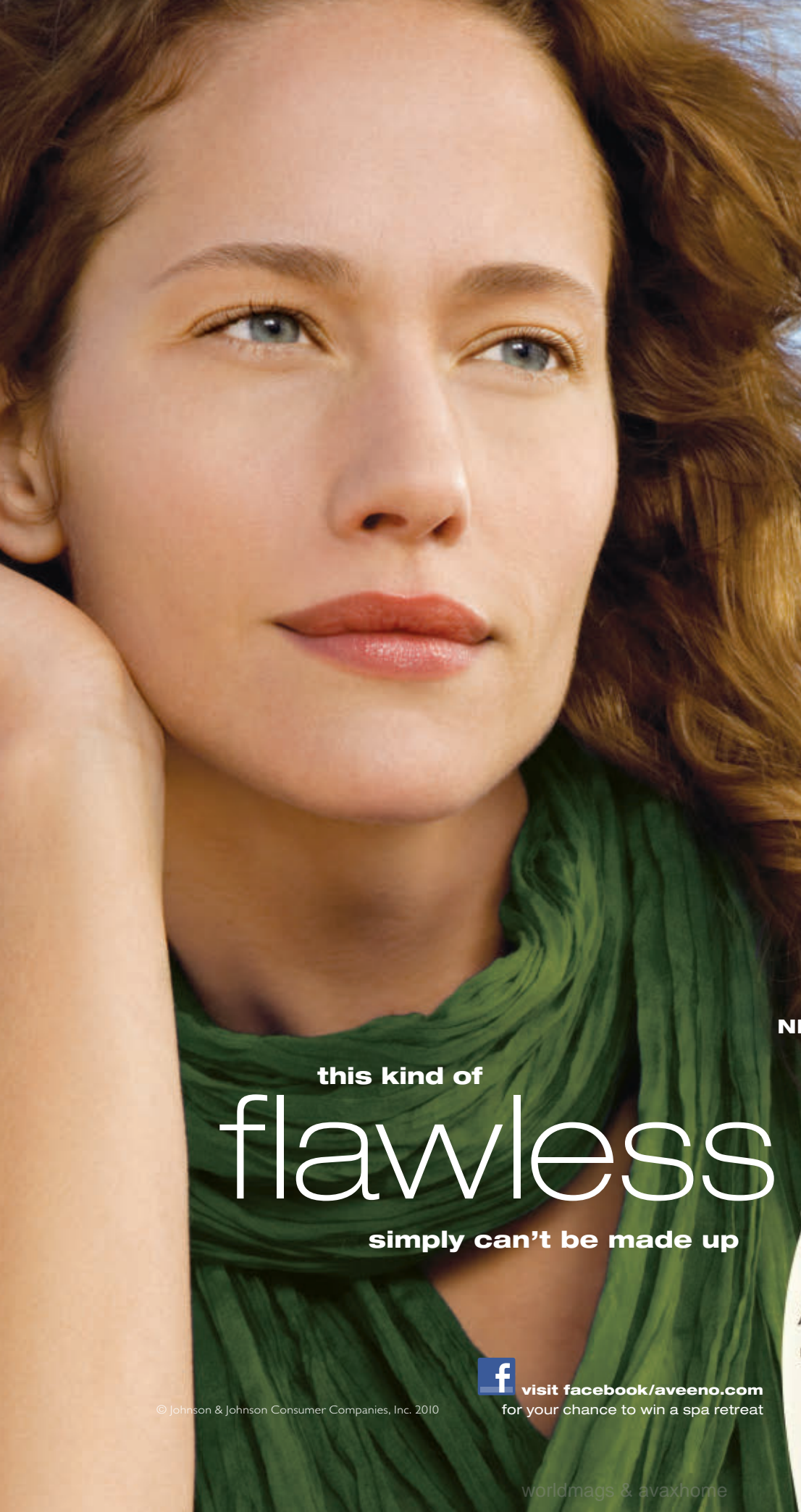
“*Why is our food not deemed edible unless coated in a melted cheeselike substance?*”

meat, the cheese (why is our food not deemed edible unless coated in a melted cheeselike substance?). And use smaller dinner plates! We all need more exercise, so grab the digging fork! Feel the sun on your back? That’s vitamin D. (Yes, wear a hat and sunscreen, but do get out there.) The big win, though, is that organic gardening’s way to health is *not* rocket science; it’s just *wholesome*. Eat less, and get more exercise by growing at least some of what you eat.

Skip the cheese and hold the mayo. Instead of a double-chocolate, super fudge brownie to round off the meal, munch an apple. Mom was right: Eating one a day keeps the doctor away.

A handwritten signature of Ethne Clarke in black ink on a white background. The signature is cursive and reads "Ethne Clarke".

Ethne Clarke  
Editor in Chief



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### larry schweiger

As president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, Larry has been on the spot, witnessing our world's ecological troubles firsthand. In *Earth Matters*, he shares his experience of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill that, beyond the lives already lost, has had a deadly impact on the environment.

### cristina santiestevan

From garden beds to dinner plates, Cristina writes about how, why, and where modern life collides with the natural world. This month, she explores what climate change could mean for gardens.



### shirley remes

When not tilling the sandy soil in her dry, shady garden on the banks of the Fox River 50 miles west of Chicago, Shirley pursues her 15-year-old career, writing eloquently about gardening, which also happens to be her hobby. Her work is widely published in national magazines and newspapers.



### denise cowie

An Australian transplant, Denise was a longtime journalist for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* whose beat included horticulture and gardening. Today, her tendrils reach into the lesser-known creative corners of the gardener's world—like garden-inspired needlework that brings the outdoors inside.



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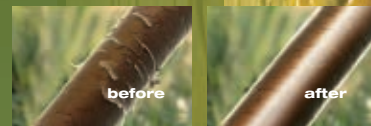
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# Chicken Raves

Thanks for the fun article on keeping backyard chickens in your June/July issue ["Coming Home to Roost"]. The photos were beautiful, and the chicken coop (or should I say "chicken spa") was spectacular.

*Joan Sterrett  
Via email*

I absolutely adore the "poser" rooster picture in the June/July issue. What a great shot! It's America's Next Top Rooster.

*Sally Bolgos  
Ann Arbor, Michigan*

I was delighted to see the great article about raising chickens. Our experience has been mostly pleasurable, and we enjoy about six eggs per day. I was surprised to see no reference about what to do with the manure. I use hay in the coop so I can put that and their leavings into my compost tumbler. After a few weeks, I move the partly composted manure to one of my rotating compost piles. I can report that the veggies I grow in soil enriched with composted chicken manure are the greenest, fastest-growing of all. Maybe this subject belongs with an article on composting, but it deserves a mention when raising chickens is discussed, especially in a magazine about organic gardening.

*Keith Lowery  
Via email*

## Pressure-Treated Lumber

I always enjoy your magazine. The raised beds on page 14 [Design Like a Pro, June/July] made me wonder about the considerations for using treated lumber (as this appears to be) in potential vegetable gardens. Is it possible that toxic material can leach out of the wood when in contact with soil, or is the treatment they use benign enough not to affect anything? Thanks for any guidance you can give.

*Richard Nelson  
Butte, Montana*

*The copper compounds currently used for pressure-treating lumber are less toxic than chromated copper arsenate, or CCA, which the EPA banned in 2004 for most residential uses. Even so, two commonly used preservatives, alkaline copper quat and copper azole, have not been approved by the National Organic Program for use on organic farms, and we do not recommend growing edibles in beds made from lumber treated with these preservatives.*

## Organic Manifesto

I want to comment on *Organic Manifesto* [Maria's Farm Country Kitchen, June/July], by Maria Rodale. Two words: *Oh, yes!* I have been reading it aloud to my three children (two preteens and one teen), and their response is phenomenal. It should be on required reading lists for school. It



**Opposite:**  
*Photographer Matthew Benson's chickens pull up a chair in the back yard of his Stonegate Farm in New York.*

## How to Reach Us

Send us your comments, suggestions, questions, and tips.

**The Web:** *Organic Gardening.com* (click Customer Service)

**Email:** [og@rodale.com](mailto:og@rodale.com)

**Postal mail:** *Organic Gardening* Editors, 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098

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## LETTERS

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We're keeping pace with the new look of *Organic Gardening* magazine by redesigning the website to provide easier access to the best gardening information, plus inspiration and tips on how to garden, cook, and live the organic way.

In the meantime, join our growing community on [facebook.com/organicgardening](https://www.facebook.com/organicgardening) to share stories, upload photos and videos, ask questions, and find timely garden information to use right now. Follow us on Twitter, too: [twitter.com/ogmag](https://twitter.com/ogmag).

promotes conversation and activity. As a homeschooler, I use this book to cover citizenship, science, history, and ecology. What fun to read a meaningful book and discuss it with your children and know it will change their lives and challenge their developing understanding of how their world works.

*Sharon Pavlovits  
St. Louis, Missouri*

### Eat from the Garden

I love your magazine and read it cover-to-cover when it arrives. Thank you for inviting great food writers such as Deborah Madison to inspire us with ideas for how to use the produce we grow. Part of the reason I garden is for taste, and the opportunity to try the different varieties that may not be available in area stores. Recipes in which these vegetables



### Our Fans Are Commenting

What a delight to see you on Facebook. My grandfather was a faithful subscriber, and I remember it in our home from my earliest ability to read, circa 1950. We raised almost all of our veggies. I have no garden now, but do what I can to spread the organic word. Keep on doing what you do so well!

*Louise Butler*

feature prominently are always welcome. Keep the inspiration coming with the magazine, and thanks again.

*Michael Carter  
Kent, Ohio*

### A Word of Caution

The "Raccoons" article in the Earth Matters column [June/July] includes some very dangerous information that could lead to the electrocution of people or pets.

The questionable advice: "To protect vegetable gardens, install two electric wires (6 and 12 inches above the ground) and power them from dusk to dawn." First, this is incomplete information. The most likely interpretation is to power the wires from the household line voltage. This is extremely dangerous and should never, ever be done. I am a retired electrical engineer and recommend that you print a warning to your readers.

*Al Lucas  
Hobe Sound, Florida*

*Properly installed and maintained, an electric fence is a safe and effective device for excluding raccoons from a garden. But, as Mr. Lucas points out, caution is necessary whenever electricity is involved. This type of installation should be done by a professional.*

### Correction

In "From Mild to Wild" [June/July], we forgot to include two hot-pepper seed sources: Pepper Joe's ([pepperjoe.com](http://pepperjoe.com)) and the Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University ([chilepepperinstitute.org](http://chilepepperinstitute.org)). We regret the omission.



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## LETTERS

**Send us your tips** Email your tips to us at [og@rodale.com](mailto:og@rodale.com) or mail to *Organic Gardening* Editors, 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098. Include your mailing address, email address, and telephone number. Submissions should be your original work and no more than 100 words. Submissions, including photos and illustrations, become the property of Rodale, and cannot be returned. We don't test these tips, so we can't guarantee they will work in every garden. But we do screen out anything we think might be harmful.

## TIPS FROM OUR READERS

### Mullein Dish Scrubby

we love this tip!

My son, Cash Taylor, 4 years old, picked up a chunk from the top of a dried mullein stalk and suggested that I use it to scrub the dishes. I tried it and found that the coarse seed head worked very well—better than spruce cones. After finishing the dishes, the mullein scrubby went in the compost. Now there's a dish of mullein chunks by the sink for tough pots.

*John Taylor  
Flagstaff, Arizona*

### Freezing Tomatoes

Last summer, as a huge bumper crop of tomatoes was coming in, I went out of town, leaving my husband at home to pick my harvest. I normally freeze my tomatoes by boiling to get the skin off, then chopping them and placing them in freezer bags. I knew my husband would never do all that, so I told him just to stick them whole in a gallon freezer bag. I will never do it any other way! As they thaw, the peels fall off, and then they can be chopped to add to your recipes. Saves a few extra steps!

*Kristen LaValley  
Madison, Mississippi*

### Cleaning Vegetables

When my dad harvested root vegetables or pulled other crops like lettuces, he took a pail of water out to his garden and swished the vegetables in the water, loosening and washing off most of the dirt. The dirt was left behind in the garden, and the veggies arrived indoors, ready for a final rinse by my mom, who was chopping veggies for that pot of soup that was always bubbling on the stove. Now I do both jobs!

*Martha Egersdorf  
Rochester, Minnesota*

### Plant Ties

Recycling is the thing to do these days, and our local farm has Velcro straps that they wrap around their lettuce, beets, etc. I keep and store the straps in my potting shed in a grapefruit bag and use them to tie up tomato plants, clematis, and roses. The straps work wonderfully, and I use them year after year.

*Doreen Knapp  
Stanfordville, New York*

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## Protecting Tomatoes

One of my favorite gardening tips, which my father taught me, is to place a water bottle around the base of my newly planted tomato plants. Take a plastic water bottle (which would be recycled), cut off the top and bottom, and cut up one side from top to bottom. It makes a protective cuff around the base of the plant so that no slugs or other critters can climb up and damage the plant in its early development. When the season is over, I simply pull out the cuffs and place them in the recycling bin.

Laura Begg  
Basking Ridge, New Jersey

## Easy Watering

What to do with those 2½-gallon plastic water jugs with spouts? They are ideal for slow-drip watering. I cut a hole in the top to refill the jug and place it next to a newly planted bush or plant. The spout allows you to adjust the water from a slow drip to a stream. The gardener is able to do chores while it waters. I have used them on azaleas, roses, and cherry laurels.

Sandra E. Kamaras  
Robbinsville, New Jersey



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# The Economics of Shade

For quick relief in the dog days of summer, grab a cold drink. For a lasting solution, plant a tree.



**T**wenty years ago, Charlie Headington and Debby Seabrooke could hardly stand the sunlight glaring into the south-facing bedroom of their Greensboro, North Carolina, home. It turned the space into a mini hothouse every afternoon from June through September. So they started making shade by planting a trellis of climbing squash and scarlet runner beans to hold the sun at bay during the hottest months. Today, four pear trees and a passionfruit vine protect much of the southern side of the house, while a pair

of plum trees and a grape trellis shade the western wall. On the east, a hardy kiwi and climbing roses swathe the front porch in a living screen. “By the heat of summer, the house is more than three-quarters covered with green,” says Headington, who has transformed the couple’s one-fifth-acre lot into an urban oasis. “Being surrounded by two ponds and lush vegetation, all edible, creates a ‘cool zone’ around the house.”

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, a properly placed shade tree can reduce temperatures beneath its canopy by 25 degrees and slash the annual tab for air conditioning by \$100; such winter-savvy plantings as foundation-sheltering shrubs and windscreens can double the savings. Done right, a \$1,500 landscaping investment can pay off in as little as 6 years. The underlying principles are simple: In the height of summer, deploy shade to reduce solar gain—the heat your home collects from the sun—and channel cooling breezes through interior spaces. In the depths of winter, catch those warming rays and block cooling winds.

“Know where the sun is,” says *Garden and Climate* author Chip Sullivan, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. “That’s something we’ve forgotten. In the winter, the sun is lower, and you design the space to capture as much sun as possible. In the summer, when the sun is higher, you want to create shade to block and obscure it.”

The American elm once lined streets throughout the Northeast for a very simple reason: Its vase-shaped profile blocks high summer sun while welcoming low winter beams. For best effect, plant such deciduous trees as hickory, oak, tulip poplar, or disease-resistant American Liberty elm (*Ulmus americana* American Liberty Series) at least 20 feet from the house but close



**Opposite:** A deciduous maple shades Charlie Headington and Debby Seabrooke's two-story home. While waiting for the shade trees to grow, Headington, **above**, planted fast-growing vines on trellises next to the house. **Top:** Cooled by surrounding vegetation, the porch is comfortable for summer lounging.

enough to someday cast a rooftop shadow. The fastest-growing trees are often weak-wooded at maturity and prone to breakage; instead, choose species that are strong and sturdy. To optimize winter heat and light on walls and windows, consider lopping off large, low branches of both deciduous and evergreen trees that block slanted beams from the south.

No single one-size-fits-all design applies to every home, across all regions, cautions Kay Cafasso, ecological garden designer and consultant for passive-solar home design. "It is important to understand the microclimates of your home landscape," Cafasso says. An efficient home design takes into account such factors as latitude, climate, and the slope of the home site when determining architectural particulars like window placement. "Sixty percent of our energy [consumption] goes to heating and cooling our homes," she says. "When we assess a landscape—where is the sun, where do the winds come from, what are the weather patterns—and then design our homes and surrounding vegetation to balance that environment, that's one way we can really reduce our energy needs." —Sharon Tregaskis

## Window Box Shade

Even an apartment-dwelling urbanite can block high summer sun with fast-growing annual vines planted in boxes mounted below southern and western windows. Try vines with large, overlapping leaves, such as scarlet runner beans or squash. Remove vines in autumn to welcome warming winter rays.

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For more information, see *Find It Here* on page 82.



## Save your cents

Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)

- Sharp thorns
- Invasive
- Zones 5 to 8

A popular 19th-century introduction from Japan, Japanese barberry escaped cultivation and has naturalized along much of the Eastern seaboard and throughout the Midwest. It spreads quickly by seed dispersal assisted by birds and small mammals to form prickly, impenetrable thickets. Adaptable to a broad range of growing conditions, it invades woodlands, pastures, wetlands, and meadows, smothering and shading out other, more diverse plantings. Dig or pull to eradicate this troublesome pest. Don't forget your heavy gloves!

—Lorene Edwards Forkner

LEFT TO RIGHT: BILL JOHNSON/BILL JOHNSON PHOTO; MARK TURNER/TURNER PHOTOGRAPHS

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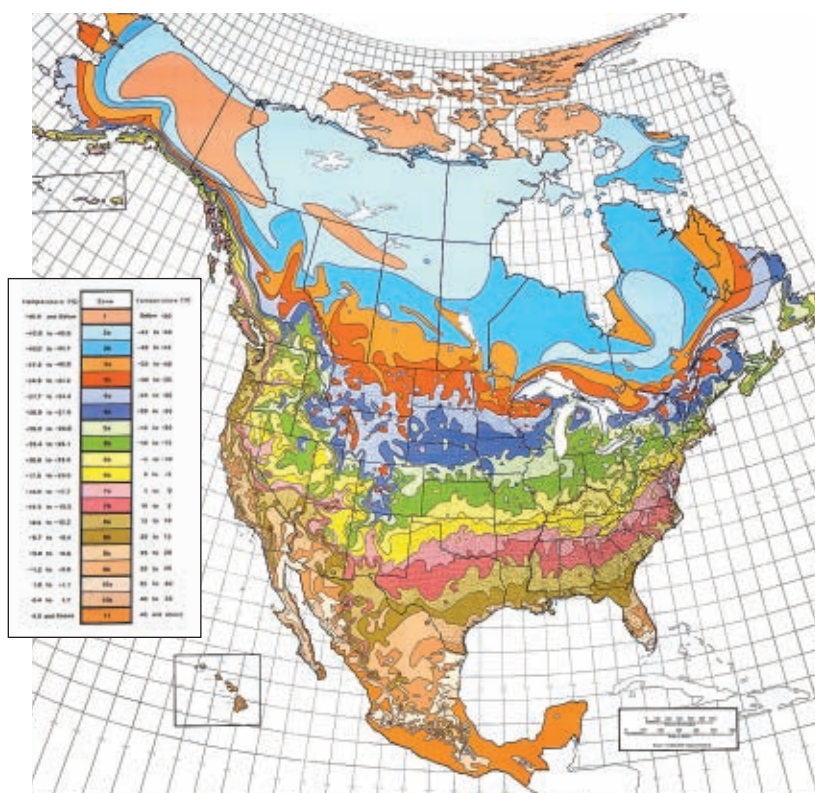
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## COMMON GROUND



An updated, more precise version of the USDA's 1990 plant hardiness zone map, shown at left, is nearing completion.

# We're Not in Zone 6 Anymore

Climate change is bringing milder winters—plus other, less-welcome changes.

Most gardeners would find it difficult to complain about early springs or tomatoes before July. And for many of us, this is how our climate-change revelations will come—in the form of earlier flowers and harvests. As the planet warms, our plants awaken a little earlier. In one study, researchers at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History discovered that Washington, D.C.'s beloved cherry trees bloomed about a week earlier in 2000 than in 1970. At the Chicago Botanic Garden, forsythia bloomed on April 1 last year, nearly a month earlier than in the 1950s. "Two years ago, we had snowdrops blooming in January," says Kayri Havens, Ph.D., director of plant science and conservation at the Chicago Botanic Garden. "That's unheard-of."

Unseasonably warm temperatures actually increase the risk of frost damage: One cold night can decimate an entire tree's worth of too-early blossoms. The same processes that push temperatures

higher also play havoc with precipitation patterns, producing wetter winters and drier summers. The precipitation we receive is more likely to be extreme: heavy rain coupled with strong winds. Weather in a climate-changing world will become increasingly unfriendly.

The impacts of climate change extend far beyond the weather report. Take allergies, for example. Many plants respond to rising temperatures and higher levels of carbon dioxide by blooming earlier and producing more pollen. Ragweed is becoming even more allergenic; not only does increased CO<sub>2</sub> result in more ragweed pollen, but the pollen contains higher levels of an allergy-causing protein, potentially leading to more severe hay-fever attacks. Ticks, mosquitoes, aphids, and other pests prosper due to longer growing seasons. And poison ivy? "The chemical that makes you itch is increasing with higher carbon-dioxide levels," explains Havens. "Poison ivy is becoming more toxic."

Ultimately, climate change is expected to alter every aspect of our gardening experience, from the length of our seasons to the ferocity of our summer storms. In a 2009 report titled *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*, the U.S. Global Change Research Program documents changes that have already occurred and provides predictions for the future. Average temperatures in the United States have risen more than 2°F in the past 50 years, for example, and are expected to increase an additional 4° to 11°F by 2100. Some changes will affect the entire country—extreme weather events, accelerated weed growth, higher pollen counts—but many impacts will vary by region or season. Hotter and drier conditions could decrease productivity in the Southeast, and severe storms coupled with longer droughts may increase the possibility of crop destruction in the Great Plains. In New England, warmer and wetter conditions will allow growers to experiment with new crops, but will also reduce harvests of cool-season favorites

### Prepare for Changes in Your Garden

#### Drier summers:

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**Extreme storms:** Spare plants from water-logged soil by growing them in raised beds.

**Frost damage:** Protect plants from an unwelcome frost with a sheet or row cover.

**Pests and weeds:** Control weeds and pests with beneficial insects, row covers, and mulch.

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### Chronicle Changes in Your Garden

A garden journal may be your best ally. Careful notes will help you learn the climatic quirks of your garden and track changes to weather patterns or plant-growth habits in your region.

Put your observations to work by sharing your notes with Kayri Havens, Ph.D., and her partners at Project BudBurst. This project collects data on phenological events—the timing of leafing, flowering, and fruiting—from volunteers across the country. Visit [budburst.org](http://budburst.org) to get involved.

### Climate change may increase the likelihood of summer droughts or leaf-shredding hailstorms, but individual weather events will determine our tomato harvests.

such as cranberries, broccoli, and maple syrup. It's hard to believe, but by the end of this century, New Hampshire is predicted to have summers similar to what we currently see in Virginia or North Carolina.

Soon, America's gardeners will have a new map to help navigate these changes. The USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is in the final stages of a comprehensive revision to its plant hardiness zone map, according to Kim Kaplan,

ARS spokesperson. The new map will be more precise than the 1990 map, partially because it considers variables beyond temperature, including slope, elevation, and prevailing winds. The internet-friendly map will feature a zip-code finder to help gardeners determine their zone. "I don't know that you'll be able to see your own back yard, but it will probably be close," Kaplan says.

But the map is no more than a guide. "Don't go ripping out what's been thriving in your yard just because some zone on a map has changed," warns Kaplan, who stresses that no one can know their gardens better than the gardeners. "Gardeners should be aware of the mini microclimates in their yards—the cool spot where frost pools, the warm sheltered spot against a south-facing wall."

As for climate change, Kaplan points out that "most perennials don't experience climate; they experience weather." The difference is a matter of scale and influence. Climate can be measured only at the level of decades and centuries—it affects weather patterns but does not control individual weather events. Put another way, a region may have a hot and dry *climate*, but it will still have rainy *weather* from time to time.

And this is the challenge. Our climate is changing, but weather is the real boss. Climate change may increase the likelihood of summer droughts or leaf-shredding hailstorms, but individual weather events will determine our tomato harvests. The best solution for a gardener? Stay alert to long-term changes, but always check the weather report. —Cristina Santiestevan

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*Friends can beautifully see—and relish—the difference between store-bought and homemade pickles. Expand the flavor horizons by varying the mix of herbs and spices used.*

## Refrigerator Pickles

**T**here's nothing more satisfying than hearing the seal “pop” on a new jar of ice-cold pickles. Typically, that's when friends and family have gathered on a summer day, burgers are sizzling on the grill, and lemonade is chilling. A jar of supermarket gherkins might do, but don't deny yourself the pleasure—and the superfresh, homespun flavor—of making your own.

Refrigerator pickles are easier than other pickling methods. To get going, gather up a few ingredients, starting with the star of the show: cucumbers. If homegrown cucumbers are not an option, buy organic ones at a local farmers' market or food co-op. Supermarket cukes often have an edible wax coating to help them retain moisture. Because the wax coating prevents cucumbers from absorbing the pickling liquid well, look for cukes with dull skins—a sure sign they haven't been waxed.

If using homegrown cucumbers, pick them first thing in the morning to get the best flavor. Select cukes that are free of mold, insect damage, blemishes, and soft spots. Plan to make the pickles within a couple of days of harvest. Seed catalogs often recommend which varieties are best for pickling.

Thoroughly wash the cucumbers and assemble the spices. Have fun with the process, trying new flavors with each new batch of pickles. To add a little kick, toss in a clove of fresh garlic, a pinch of crushed red pepper, or a few chopped jalapeños. For a bigger kick, add a habanero. (Just be sure to wear gloves while working with these powerful little peppers.) Ancho peppers will add a peppery boldness, while chipotle chiles (made from dried jalapeños) will give the pickles a rich and spicy smoked flavor. It's all good.

Another nice thing about refrigerator pickles is that they don't require a special technique or container. Vintage jars that show

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## PROVIDENT COOK

off the ingredients make for the loveliest presentations, and can be found for just a dollar or two at flea markets (just make sure to wash the jars and lids well before using them to store food).

Making pickles can be the start of a new family tradition with your kids, grandkids, or best friends. In only a few hours, you'll have beautiful jars of crunchy, delicious pickles ready to serve or give as gifts. To help you on your way, savor this recipe that hails from the Rodale Production Kitchen. —*Brenda McClain*



### Audrey's Pickles

1 pound medium cucumbers  
3 cloves garlic  
½ teaspoon black peppercorns  
½ teaspoon whole mustard seed  
1 teaspoon fresh dill weed  
1 whole dried bay leaf  
⅔ cup brown sugar  
6½ tablespoons white distilled vinegar  
6½ tablespoons white-wine vinegar  
¾ cup water

1. Cut the cucumbers into spears or slices and place in a 2-quart container or jar with a lid. Add the garlic, peppercorns, mustard seed, dill weed, and bay leaf.

2. Stir together the brown sugar, vinegars, and water. Pour the vinegar mixture over the cucumbers and shake the jar well to combine. Cover and chill. For fullest flavor, wait at least 24 hours before serving. These pickles will keep up to 3 months in the refrigerator.

*Makes 2 quarts (about 18 servings)*

## Who Knew?

- The pickle as we know it is thought to have **originated in India**, where cucumbers were first grown.
- A "good pickle" crunch should be **audible from across a room**.
- About **26 billion pickles are packed** yearly in the United States. More than half the cucumbers grown here are pickled.
- Along with **vitamin C**, pickles contain significant amounts of vitamin A, magnesium, potassium, and zinc.
- Americans eat about **9 pounds of pickles** per person annually.
- During **World War II**, 40 percent of all pickles produced were allocated to the armed forces.
- **Julius Caesar** thought pickles had an invigorating effect and shared them with his army.
- **Queen Elizabeth I** loved pickles.

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- 1 organic lemon
- 3 pounds (about 12) medium, firm ripe organic nectarines or peaches
- 6 cups Florida Crystals® Organic Sugar

*Tip: Peeled organic peaches may be substituted for nectarines.*

Grate the rinds of the oranges and lemon. Squeeze the juices and remove any seeds. Do not strain. Combine rinds and juices in a large, heavy kettle or Dutch oven. Chop nectarines into citrus juices. Stir in sugar and bring to boil over medium heat, stirring often. Reduce heat and let simmer slowly until thickened, about 35 to 45 minutes. Stir frequently. (Do not cover.)

Ladle into hot, sterilized canning jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Place lids on jars and tighten screw bands. Place jars on a rack in a pot of simmering water, making sure jars are completely covered by water. Bring to a rolling boil. Boil for 15 minutes; cool. Carefully remove jars from water. Check for proper seal. (If lid pushes down, but springs up, jar is improperly sealed; reprocess immediately.) Store in a cool, dark place. Makes about 5 half-pints.

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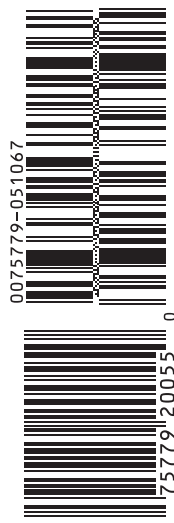
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*Left and above: Joanna Reed's crewelwork creations are remarkable for their botanical realism. Below: Reed expressed her love of gardening through needlework.*

## Making Wool Bloom

Detailed crewelwork flowers are an enduring legacy of plantswoman Joanna Reed.

**P**ennsylvania gardener Joanna Reed didn't despair when, in her mid-50s, she began to suffer arthritis so painful she thought she wouldn't be able to tend the plants in her celebrated 4-acre garden at Longview Farm, near Philadelphia.

If she couldn't garden outdoors, she told her daughter, she'd just garden with wool. It was a natural solution for Reed, whose artistry with a needle matched her prowess with plants. This unassuming woman, who would become president of the Herb Society

of America in 1980, and who was profiled in Starr Ockenga's 1998 book *Earth on Her Hands* as one of America's most notable women gardeners, was also a talented embroiderer, a skill she first learned as a child. And her garden, a work of art that attracted visitors from all over the world, was her inspiration.

Employing mostly the ancient embroidery technique known as crewelwork and a palette of wool yarn in more than 140 shades and colors, Reed re-created her garden's flowers on bed hangings, rugs, cushions, curtains, and furniture upholstery. Her love affair with the art form continued long after her arthritis pain abated.

"Her work was very realistic," says her daughter, Susie Novoa, who inherited her mother's needlework skills. "She would go outside with her basket of yarns to see what was in bloom, and then she'd compare her yarn colors to the colors of the flowers, to see if she had the



PORTRAIT: COURTESY OF SUSAN NOVOA; NEEDLEWORK IN PROGRESS: COURTESY OF ETHNE CLARKE; FINISHED CHAIR: ROB CARDILLO

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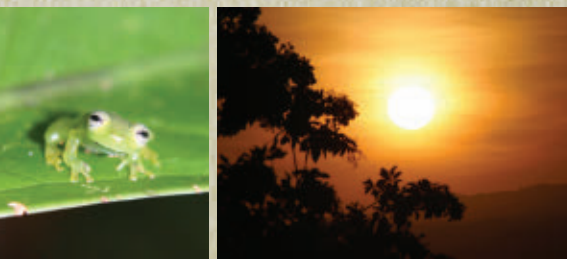
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## FLOWER POWER



right shades. If she did, she'd pick the flower and put it in a bud vase, and then off she'd go," translating the flower onto her fabric.

Reed had the advantage of an artist's eye, both in the garden and on the embroidery hoop. Before she married, she studied painting at what is now the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. But after she began taking horticulture lessons in the 1940s at a school started by Laura Barnes, wife of art collector Albert Barnes, gardening became her chief means of artistic expression. It was later in life that her understanding of plants proved valuable in her embroidery.

"Her skill at accurately depicting the garden's flowers and plants was just incredible," says Judy Jeroy, a certified teacher of crewelwork for the Embroiderers' Guild of America ([egausa.org](http://egausa.org)). Jeroy knew Reed, who died in 2002 at the age of 85, and admired her work. "She was a consummate artist, I felt. Her shading techniques were excellent, and her ability to bring her garden to life was without peer."

That level of skill might be difficult for most of us to achieve, but the ability to interpret favorite plants in wool is accessible to any gardener. "After a one-day class, a student would have enough knowledge to be able to start stitching a basic piece," says Jeroy, who teaches crewel embroidery to groups across the country. "I can teach somebody basic stitches in a day, and after that, it's patience. Students will develop a lot more skill if they are willing to practice."

*A detail of Reed's floral embroidery shows the medley of stitches and colored yarns she used to depict her garden's abundance.*

knots, and chain," says Jeroy. She liked to use French knots for depicting such things as yarrow or sumac, Novoa adds, because the nubby texture mimics the actual plants.

Some images she stitched were scenes gardeners can only imagine: The elaborate embroidery on a Queen Anne wing chair captures bulbs and roots and tiny toads nestled belowground while flowers explode with summer exuberance above. Every petal is executed with meticulous precision.

Reed continued to garden, with real plants and embroidered flowers, almost until her death. And her gardens of wool still bloom on the Queen Anne chair that now sits in Novoa's living room and is used and enjoyed by family and friends.

After all, as Reed once said, that's originally why chairs and other heavily used fabric furnishings were embroidered: The thicker the embroidery, the longer the fabric underneath would last. —Denise Cowie

Crewelwork—surface embroidery using wool yarn and a variety of stitches on such fabrics as tightly woven linen, normally held taut on a hoop or frame—dates back hundreds of years. The word *crewel* refers to the type of wool used, Jeroy says, and there are dozens of different stitches available to the embroiderer.

"Joanna would have used long and short shading [stitches], outline and stem, button-hole, satin, French



# La Vida Locavore

Food revolutionary  
Joan Dye Gussow

Standing against the vast, intemperate sweep of the Hudson River—like an Old Testament prophet—Joan Gussow can't escape the metaphors her storm-tossed garden invokes. "I guess I've been going against the current for ages," she says. Her advocacy in support of local-food systems predates today's green movement by decades, for while the rest of the culture was idling at the drive-through of food consciousness, Gussow was a fist-in-the-air campaigner for nutritional standards. As a writer (*This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader*, Chelsea Green, 2001), educator, and visionary antagonist of the industrial food system, she has helped mobilize the farm-crawling locavore in all of us.

"I used to be considered totally insane," Gussow says, recalling how her ideas were once thought of as far-fetched. "I was one of those people who'd ruin dinner parties by talking about the planet's future." But now that the level of food literacy is up, Gussow is on everyone's Evite list. "There's so much more out there about food, so much talk and action; more farmers' markets, more CSAs," she observes. "Now *local* is a tag word people love."

The decentralized 19th-century agricultural model, in which farms and food production were integrated into communities, may be one ironically progressive solution to righting the wobbly petroleum-



wheeled food cart. And if the peak-oil scenarios are right, and \$300-a-barrel oil is in our imminent future, a 2,000-mile salad from the Salinas Valley of California will be considered a luxury food item, right up there with Périgord black truffles and foie gras. The environmental awakening of the past decade has been encouraging, Gussow admits, but we'll surely need a concerted Darwinian adaptation as a culture in order to prepare ourselves for a sustainable future. "We're all going to have to make other arrangements," she says wryly.

Gussow's expertise as an educator has been in nutrition: She is professor emeritus of nutrition and education at Teachers

*With the Hudson River as a dramatic backdrop, Joan Dye Gussow lovingly tends 22 beds of vegetables and fruit trees.*



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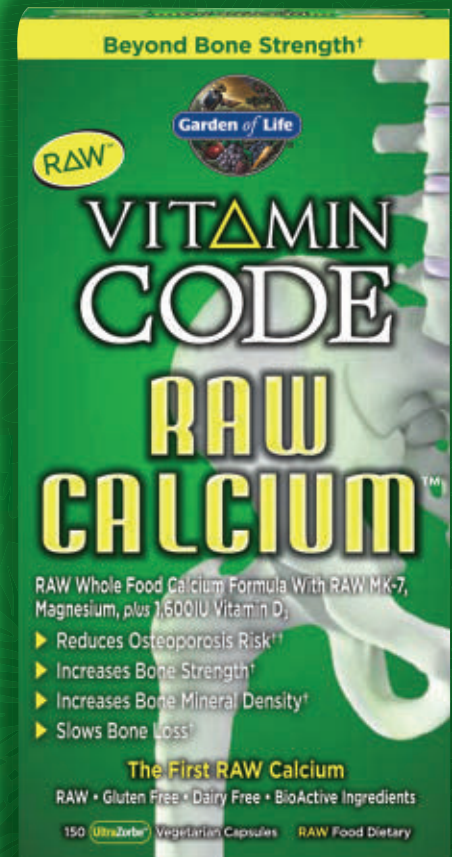
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## PROFILES

*“We have no history with this food supply.  
Is a Twinkie life-giving? Is an energy bar?”*

College, Columbia University, and has served on the Diet, Nutrition, and Cancer Panel of the National Academy of Sciences, as well as on the FDA’s Food Advisory Panel and most recently on the National Organic Standards Board. Her work from the beginning has focused on shaping the argument over what America eats and drinks; in a culture that has been suckled on the subsidized teat of processed fat and sugar, that’s no mean feat. The locavore movement really began as an effort to educate consumers about food: In order to understand what you’re eating, know the source.

Although she has been described as a “sustainable hedonist,” Gussow is by no means a food martyr. True, she doesn’t suffer the proliferation of “foodlike substances” that clog the world’s aisles and arteries, and can rail against industrial food production, synthetic additives, genetic engineering, and artificial price supports with the best of them. “The food supply is full of thousands of foodlike objects which several generations have been taught are what food is,” she says. “We know absolutely nothing about their healthfulness since we pay attention only to the nutrients we know and to known toxins. We have no history with this food supply. Is a Twinkie life-giving? Is an energy bar?” But she’s far from cynical: “I used to feel guilty about being happy when I had such a gloomy view of the world. The truth is, I’m basically a very optimistic person.”

Her own life-sustaining Piermont, New York, property is a place of magical, improbable beauty. Though the Hudson has tried on occasion to reclaim her land, the banks of this formidable river have yet to foreclose on her. Her 22 neatly ordered beds of organic root and leaf vegetables and fruit trees—including apple, peach, Asian pear, and a glorious ‘Brown Turkey’ fig that grows like an imposing sentinel along the river’s edge—are a testament to dogged persistence and grit. “Challenge is very exciting to me. Some people skydive and bungee-jump. I grow my own food.”

At 81, wearing a woven poncho and a pair of Crocs, she moves like an animated curator through her raised and abundant beds, marveling at the size and color of a Russian kale, or the year’s remarkable potato crop, realized at a time when the whole Northeast had suffered one of the coolest, wettest summers ever. Out of a narrow one-sixth acre, she manages to fill her larder for the year. “I eat Brussels sprouts in the dead of winter; I have a fantastic crop of winter carrots, and a great sweet potato crop. I love fresh kale cut up and massaged with olive oil, lemon juice, and salt.” She grows all the home garden staples, plus lemons and limes that overwinter inside. You can’t help but marvel at the almost transcendental joy Gussow experiences in her garden.

How, then, do the rest of us rally? Gussow’s advice is to keep the food politics local. “We need to eat meals together. Concentrate on the kids. Make lunch hours in schools longer. Get kids involved with school gardens and cooking. Perhaps,” she says, with the insight of a well-lived organic life, “they can reform their elders.”

—Matthew Benson

For more information, see *Find It Here*, p. 82.

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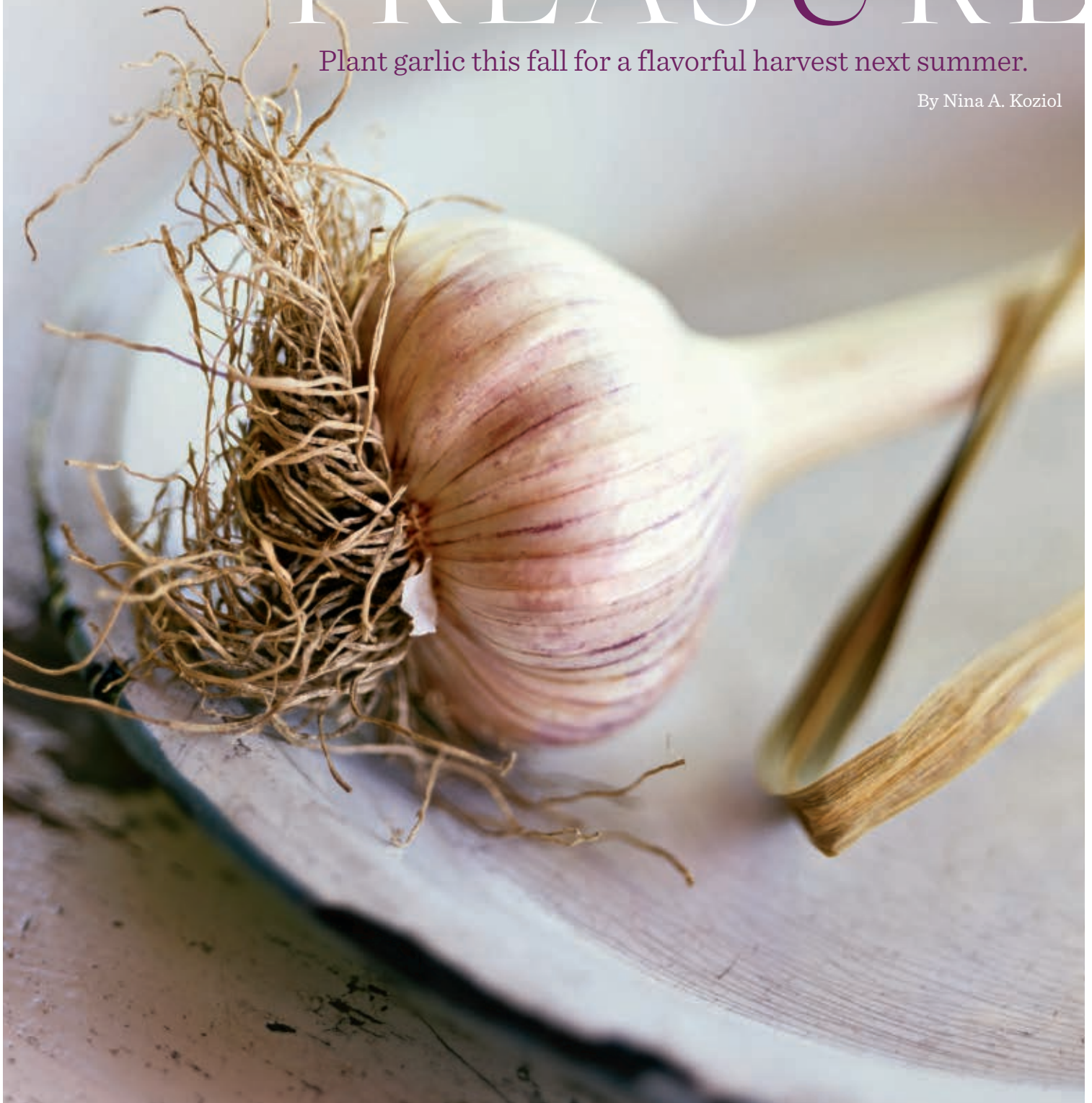
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# BURIED TREASURE

Plant garlic this fall for a flavorful harvest next summer.

By Nina A. Koziol







**Opposite:** Planting a single clove of garlic in the fall yields a full head the next summer.

**Left:** Garlic benefits from the improved drainage that a raised bed can provide.

## Potent Possibilities

A member of the genus *Allium*, which includes onions, shallots, leeks, and chives, as well as ornamental onions, garlic is an underground bulb (also called a head) made up of individual cloves; when you plant a clove, it matures into a bulb. Garlic is divided into two categories, hardneck and softneck, that differ in the size of the bulb, the number and size of cloves, color, hardness, and storage qualities. Elephant garlic, which is the sort most often used for roasting, is actually a type of leek that has a mild garlic flavor.

Hardneck garlic (*Allium sativum* ssp. *ophioscorodon*) produces a stiff flowering stalk, called a scape, topped with bulbils (tiny bulbs) instead of seeds. A single cluster of 5 to 10 large cloves surrounds the hard stalk. Hardnecks are tolerant of cold weather and offer a range of flavors from mild to strong and spicy.

Softneck garlic (*Allium sativum* ssp. *sativum*) rarely produces a flowering stalk; the cloves are smaller than hardnecks and are arranged in overlapping layers. A single head may have 6 to 18 cloves or more. The soft, pliable necks are easy to braid into garlic “ropes.” Softneck varieties are less cold-tolerant and therefore better suited to growing in regions with mild winters, but they do keep longer in storage than hardneck garlic.

“There are hundreds of variety names for garlic, but there are only 10 major types based on their genetic diversity,” says David Stern, an organic farmer and the director of the Garlic Seed Foundation in Rose, New York. “Garlic varieties have been renamed many times as they passed among growers and gardeners, and as a result, many may be identical genetically.” The 10 types or groups of garlic are rocambole, porcelain, purple stripe, marbled purple stripe, glazed purple stripe, Creole, Asiatic, and turban among the hardnecks; and silverskin and artichoke among the softnecks. The papery white garlic bulbs available in most grocery stores are artichoke-type softnecks.

Garlic is truly an international food, lending its flavor to a buffet of dishes from Szechuan stir-fries to Moroccan tagines, Argentinean chimichurri sauces, Italian pasta dishes, and more. The bulb owes its popularity to both its culinary uses and its health benefits—consuming garlic has been linked to reduced cancer risk and better cardiovascular health. Like so many foods, the garlic commonly found in the supermarket is sold not for its fine flavor but for its superior storage time. Growing garlic opens the door to a range of tempting possibilities, from bulbs wrapped in luminous pink-streaked wrappers (as the papery outer skins are known) to ones composed of mild, almost sweetly flavored cloves. Best of all, garlic is one of the easiest vegetables to grow. All one needs is a small measure of patience, waiting for the autumn-planted crop to ripen for a summer harvest.

Many garlic cultivars have names that indicate where they were traditionally grown or the color of their wrapper, including 'Oregon Blue', 'Chinese Pink', 'Chesnok Red', and 'Spanish Roja'. A study published in 2009 by David Stern with Gayle Volk, Ph.D., of the USDA's National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation in Fort Collins, Colorado, found that no matter what name a garlic cultivar had or which group it belonged to, the color of its papery wrapper and overall bulb size were highly dependent on where it was grown.

This fact helps to explain why so many different variety names exist for genetically identical garlic. It's also an argument for buying locally grown garlic, says Stern. If you buy garlic from a local farmers' market and plant the cloves, what you see at planting time is likely what you'll get when you harvest the bulbs.

### Care and Feeding

Fall planting—September or October—allows garlic cloves to develop a robust root system, though gardeners in southern states may have better results planting in late winter for summer harvest. After planting, a few leaves may sprout from the clove, but they stop growing when cold weather arrives.

Grow garlic in a spot that gets full sun and has loose, crumbly soil. Compacted soil produces irregularly shaped bulbs; soil that retains water, especially during the winter, will cause bulbs to rot. Improve the soil's fertility and texture by working in 1 to 2 inches of organic compost or aged manure before planting. To prepare garlic for planting, split the bulb into cloves, leaving their papery coverings intact. Choose only those that are firm and free of brown spots and damage. "The secret with garlic is to plant the biggest cloves," says nurseryman Ted Biernacki of Ted's Greenhouse in Tinley Park, Illinois, for the simple reason that big cloves develop into large heads of garlic. Plant each clove with the pointed growing tip up and the flat root end down. In areas with mild winters, set the cloves



about 1 to 2 inches deep. Where winters are severe, plant the cloves 2 to 4 inches deep. Space them 4 to 6 inches apart in the row with 12 inches between rows. Spread a 2-to-3-inch layer of straw over the planting area to help keep the soil moist and winter weeds in check. Keep the cloves watered for about 3 weeks after planting to aid root growth.

Longer spring days and warm weather help initiate bulb and top growth. Each green leaf represents one layer of the bulb's papery outer wrapper. The leaves will grow a foot or more, and it is critical to keep the soil evenly moist during this period of active growth, because dry soil will inhibit bulb enlargement. In early spring, spray the foliage with dilute liquid fish emulsion.

*Harvested garlic that has been cured for several weeks until the outer wrapper is dry and papery, at which point it is ready to be braided.*



*Each green leaf of garlic topgrowth represents an outer layer of the bulb's papery wrapper. Keep weeds down and the soil moist by mulching with straw.*



## The Garlic Roll Call

Garlic sold in grocery stores is often imported from China and treated with a chemical to prevent sprouting, so be sure to buy untreated heads, usually from a local farmers' market or from a nursery. Many heirloom and new varieties are also available via mail order. Of the several hundred garlic cultivars grown in the United States, as many as half are genetically similar, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*. Despite the possibility of duplication, these varieties are worth trying.

### **HARDNECK** **'Asian Tempest'**

Produces 6 or 7 cloves per bulb. Raw, this Asiatic-type garlic is quite hot, but it becomes sweeter and milder when cooked.

**'Persian Star'**. A purple stripe that produces 8 to 10 moderately spicy cloves and is suited for warmer climates.

**'Creole Red'**. A Creole-type garlic with 6 to 9 cloves that have a robust flavor.

**'Music'**. A porcelain variety with 4 to 6 large cloves per bulb and pretty pinkish white wrappers. Perfect for roasting.

**'Spanish Roja'**. A rocambole with 7 or 8 purple-streaked cloves

per bulb and superior flavor when cooked.

**'Xian'**. This turban variety matures very early and produces 8 to 12 large, plump cloves.

**SOFTNECK**  
**'Inchelium Red'**. An artichoke variety with 9 to 18 cloves per bulb; this garlic has a mild lingering flavor

that grows stronger in storage.

**'California White'**. Large bulbs with 10 to 20 mild-flavored cloves. This silverskin variety stores well and is perfect for braiding.

**'Chilean Silver'**. A pure white silverskin variety with 15 to 18 cloves per bulb.



*Hardneck garlic sends up an edible flowering stalk called a scape. A delicacy, scapes can substitute in recipes calling for chives or scallions.*

There is no need to fertilize after May, because the extra nutrients will encourage leaf production at the expense of bulb size. When the leaves begin to yellow in summer, hold off on watering to prevent rot.

### **Happy Harvesting**

Cut off the hardneck flower scapes when the looping stems begin to straighten; use raw or stir-fried. Harvesting a leaf or two from each plant to use in place of chives is fine, but don't cut too many, because they supply energy to the growing bulbs. Bulbs are ready to harvest when about half the leaves turn yellow and fall over or when only three or four green leaves remain on the plant. Avoid damaging the bulbs by using a garden fork to lift them rather than pulling them out.

Harvested bulbs must dry thoroughly (a process called curing), or they will rot in storage. Carefully brush away soil, leaving the roots and leaves intact. Lay the garlic out in a single layer in a shaded, well-ventilated spot for 2 to 3 weeks. Once the outer wrapper layers of the bulb feel dry and papery, either braid the stems together (see "How to Braid Onions and Garlic," August–October 2009, page 42) or cut them off (leave a ½-inch stub) and store the bulbs in a mesh bag. In general, hardnecks last 6 to 10 months in storage, while softnecks can last up to a year, but homegrown garlic usually disappears into soups, salad dressings, and stir-fries well before then. ●

*For more information, see Find It Here on page 82.*

# home vintage

By Sue Carter  
Photographs by Jack Coyier





*Shin-deep in the vineyard's first harvest, Elizabeth Krumwiede stomps grapes to extract juice for making wine.*

## DETERMINED TO CRAFT THEIR OWN HOUSE WINE, A CALIFORNIA COUPLE GROWS GRAPES.

We live in a do-it-yourself world. We are our own travel agents, bank tellers, and critics (doesn't everyone have a blog?); the list of things we have learned to do for ourselves grows daily. Some folks take self-reliance further by growing their own food, raising livestock, and even making beer and wine. Southern Californians Richard and Elizabeth Krumwiede fall into the wine-making category, though it was less of a fall than a headlong rush.

Both children of the '60s—Elizabeth confesses to catching the occasional whiff of patchouli around Richard—they were enthusiastic about living close to the land. When they bought a home in Crestline, California, it came with an apple orchard, the remnants of a larger apple farm. The Krumwiedes' 3½-acre property abuts the San Bernardino National Forest at an elevation of 5,000 feet. In the past 10 years, Richard and Elizabeth have added another 50 trees to the orchard and learned to make fresh apple juice and hard (alcoholic) cider, both sparkling and still. What the family can't consume goes to lucky friends who help in the harvesting and pressing.

Richard, who is president of a landscape-architecture firm, is a gardener at heart. After pine bark beetles killed 1½ acres of ponderosa pines, he decided to replace the trees with grapevines—as much for their visual appeal and association with the California vernacular as for the harvest of fruit. He knew that grapes stood a chance of surviving the wildly divergent seasonal conditions of cold, snowbound winters and hot, dry summers, as well as the poor soils. So in 2006, he and Elizabeth planted 65 vines sourced from a commercial nursery in Sonoma: mostly 'Zinfandel', a vine that seems to love the stresses of having to dig its roots deep into rock and shale, and a small amount of 'Syrah' for blending. "We really like big, bold wines like Zin and Syrah," Elizabeth says, and both varieties are proven successes in the area's commercial vineyards. Richard adds, somewhat modestly, "I'd been making apple wine, so I figured I'd have a go at making grape wine."

With that inspiration and a strong belief in organic, sustainable gardening, the Krumwiedes have adopted organic practices in the vineyard. Organic grapes are a challenge even for the most skilled growers, because the vines are susceptible to a host of pests and diseases. "I've been farming the apples using an integrated pest management approach, using certified-organic pesticides and fungicides," Richard says. "So it was easy to adopt the same





## Recommended Grape Varieties for Wine Making

The following grape cultivars, arranged by region and fruit color, are proven performers.

### Southwest

Red: 'Pinot Noir', 'Catawba', 'Chancellor'  
White: 'Chardonnay', 'Seyval Blanc'  
Pink: 'Delaware'

### Midwest, Great Plains

Red: 'Swenson Red'  
White: 'Kay Gray'

Blue: 'St. Croix', 'Van Buren'

### Southeast

Bronze: 'Carlos', 'Scuppernong'  
Blue: 'Norton'

### Northwest

Red: 'Merlot', 'Pinot Noir', 'Mourvèdre', 'Cabernet Sauvignon', 'Cabernet Franc', 'Syrah', 'Zinfandel'  
White: 'Chardonnay',

'Pinot Gris', 'Riesling', 'Gewürztraminer', 'Viognier'

### Northeast

Red: 'Chancellor', 'Cabernet Severny', 'Catawba', 'Pinot Noir'  
Pink: 'Delaware'  
White: 'Chardonnay', 'Gewürztraminer', 'Seyval Blanc', 'Vidal Blanc', 'Diamond', 'Ravat 51' —Jeff Cox



approach for the vineyard.” The Organic Materials Review Institute approves a number of natural pesticides and fungicides that Richard can use if other control tactics are insufficient. The list includes Kumulus DF, a sulfur preparation for the prevention of powdery mildew, and Pyganic, a pyrethrum-based insecticide. Trapping and bird nets deal with larger pests. Additionally, he uses a program of mulching and composting to control weeds and promote growth, while drip irrigation fed by the property’s well systems supplements the somewhat scant rainfall during the growing season.

Typically, a grapevine isn’t considered mature until it is 4 or 5 years old. Most commercial winemakers won’t make wine from younger vines, but Richard couldn’t resist allowing the most vigorous of his young vines to bear fruit. So in 2009, just 3 years after planting, they made their first vintage. Family and friends helped pick and crush the grapes—all done by hand and foot with Elizabeth and friend Carol Luther stomping the grapes, channeling Lucy Ricardo and her sidekick Ethel Mertz. “*I Love Lucy* made it look easy, but it is hard work,” Elizabeth laughs. “Everyone should try it once.”

In learning about wine making, Richard has relied on books such as *From Vines to Wines*, by Jeff Cox, as well as the website More Wine! ([morewinemaking.com](http://morewinemaking.com)), which he cites as an excellent resource for tools and equipment for the home winemaker.

These references also supply the necessary technical savvy: Yeasts, acid levels, temperatures, and specific gravity are all part of the controlled process of wine making, and they are all critical to the first 2 weeks of fermentation.

From grape to wine took about 12 days. Fermentation transforms sugar into alcohol, but it’s the grape skins that turn white juice into red wine, and these have to be stirred back into the juice regularly for maximum extraction. Richard removed the skins before transferring the wine into two 5-gallon carboys, or storage vessels, then added French oak chips to impart the character of barrel-aged wines. He bottled the wine in spring 2010, ending up with about four cases. That’s a small return for the work invested, but as the vines grow, they should yield about 10 times that amount of juice. By then, Richard hopes to have the wine press he covets.

For the time being, Richard is happy to keep this as a hobby; his landscape-architecture company demands a significant chunk of his time. “However, my goal is to retire early and go into viticulture and wine making as a second career,” he says. For now, it’s enough to know that at the end of the day, when he and Elizabeth share a glass of wine overlooking their small vineyard, it will be one made by their own hands—and feet. ●

For more information, see *Find It Here*, page 82.

**Opposite:** Grape harvest at Richard and Elizabeth’s home vineyard became an event shared with friends. **Above:** Richard makes a toast to the new vintage, while Elizabeth (with lowered glass) takes a break from stomping.

## Garage Wine

The term *garagistes* (ga-rah-ZHEEST) was coined in the 1990s to refer to winemakers who make wine, literally, in the garage. The first *garagistes* were young winemakers in the Bordeaux region of France who, without vineyards or wineries, bought fruit and made commercially viable wines—often expansive, fruity wines that could be drunk young. In the process, the *garagistes* woke up the sleepy world of Bordeaux wine making.

Today’s *garagistes* are typically young, enthusiastic, and landless. They source fruit wherever they can find it and make wine wherever they find space, whether in a garage or piggybacked within an existing winery or custom crush facility. They are the underground heroes of the wine world who prove that even those without a famous label can make good wine.



*Containers filled with perennials and annuals cascade from walls and railings at the back of the house.*

# this garden

By Shirley Remes ~ Photographs by Lee Anne White

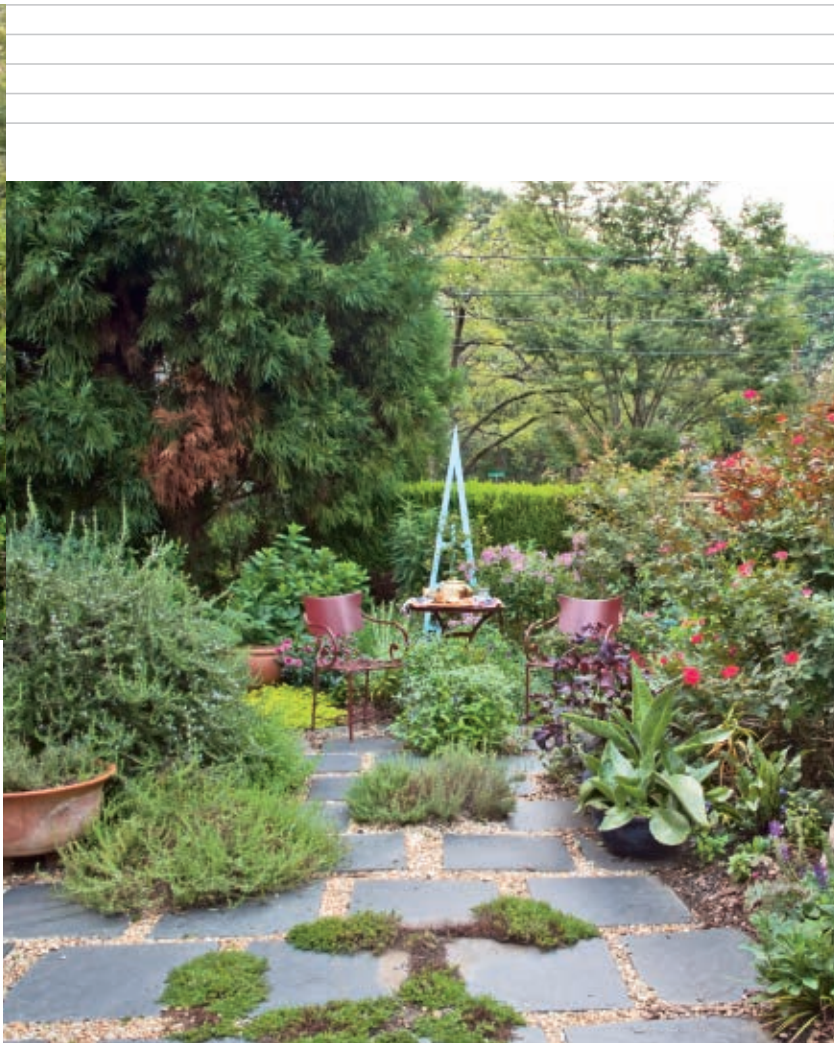
**Anne Sheldon's Atlanta garden is a visual symphony:** an orchestration of the movements and rhythmic qualities of plants into an arrangement that celebrates her musical and horticultural talent. A cellist who taught music and played professionally for more than 20 years, Sheldon believes that all art forms are interrelated. "Gardening and music are both creative endeavors," she says. "They both require skill and knowledge, and they employ the same elements."

For instance, a piece of music and a garden often flow in similar ways. A song's introduction corresponds to the path leading into a garden. A musical bridge takes a listener to the next section of a piece just as a gate or arbor is the transition between garden spaces. Like a refrain, repetition in the garden unites different elements into a whole, and a melody makes a song memorable just as the style of a garden creates its noteworthiness.

*These raised stone beds, home to a lush chorus of foliage, are built directly atop a concrete driveway.*

# has rhythm

and harmonizes plants for sun and shade.



**Left to right:** The door, pavers, and other blue accents add a cool note to the entryway. A container overflows with creeping Jenny. Drought-tolerant herbs such as thyme, catmint, and rosemary thrive in the full sun of the front garden.

### **Movement of the Geographical Sort**

Twenty-three years ago, when she went looking for a house in Atlanta, Sheldon emphasized that she wanted a home that had good views of the property from all the windows. She found the perfect house with lots of windows, but the landscape was completely barren. The site also had quite a grade change from the front to the back. But full sun bathed the front yard and large oaks shaded the back: the differing light conditions that Sheldon also had on her wish list.

Sheldon grew up on the Monterey Bay in California, where the summers were dry and the humidity low, so gardening in the Southeast was quite a shock, she says.

“I really had to learn about gardening here—coping with humid heat in the summer, when the nights do not cool down; constant issues with diseases and pests; and working in compacted clay.”

She studied the vagaries of her new climate, went on garden tours for inspiration, and cultivated landscape-designer mentors, whom she met through the Georgia Perennial Plant Association, of which she is now president. She also volunteers at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, as well as in the gardens of the Atlanta History Center. “And I learned from my mistakes. I killed a lot of plants, but you can’t be intimidated by that, you just have to budget,” she says with a laugh.

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“And I learned from my mistakes.

I killed a lot of plants, but you can't be intimidated by that.”

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As if practicing a piece of music, going over and over some passages until they are effortless, Sheldon works in her yard, continually trying new plants or techniques until everything works together harmoniously. “You have to be fearless,” she advises.

### **Syncopated Harmony**

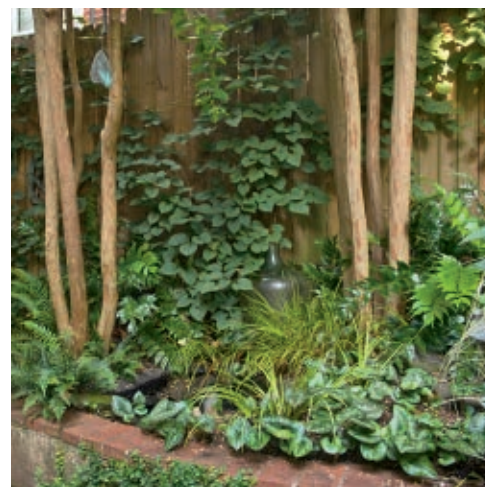
The first thing Sheldon did, with the help of her husband, Andy, was replace the lawn with flowerbeds and plant a Korean boxwood hedge at the front sidewalk. The hedge enclosed the front yard and created a garden room as a welcoming entry. Brick pavers and bluestone set in gravel replaced a narrow sidewalk.

“This front garden is so hot that I can grow all my Mediterranean herbs here, such as thyme, oregano, rosemary, and marjoram,” Sheldon says. Atlanta sits reliably in Zone 7b, but she believes her site's conditions steer it more toward Zone 8. The garden retains heat into the night from warmth radiated by

the pavers and captured by the enclosed space. For this garden, Sheldon selects plants that are heat- and drought-tolerant plus disease-resistant, such as a Knock Out rose, daylilies, bearded and Siberian irises, and ‘Annabelle’ hydrangeas.

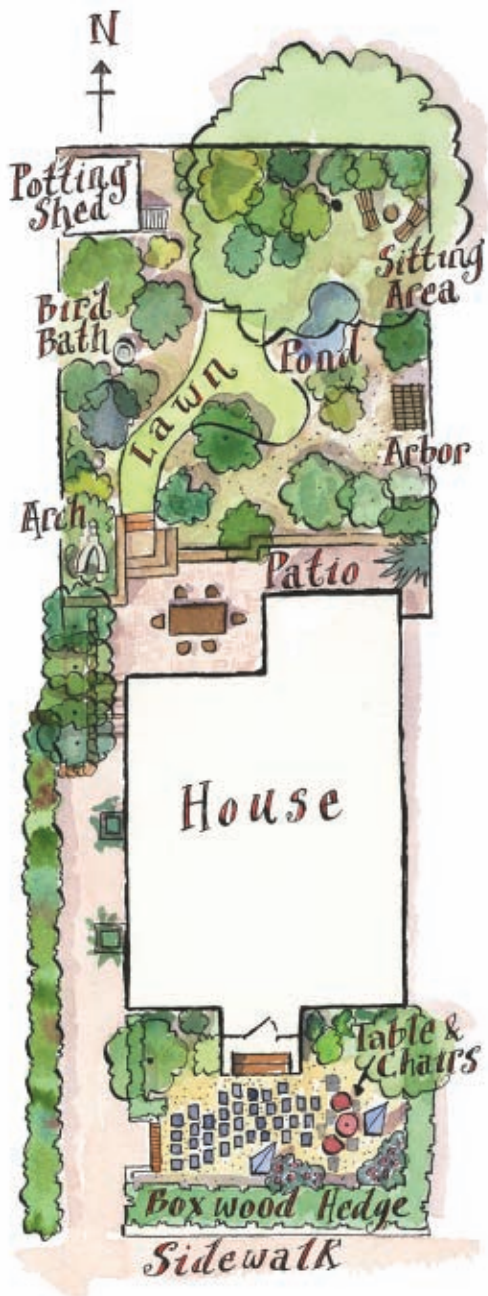
The house was originally white, but Sheldon felt that was too harsh for the ovenlike summer climate. She painted it an earthy peach color, reflective of her western roots, with accents of blue on the doors and shutters. Most of the containers are clay, repeating the terra-cotta refrain. Blue obelisks play as staccato notes against the cooling green foliage of the front yard.

Along one side of the house, Sheldon converted an unused concrete driveway into a lush tropical passageway to the back yard. Instead of breaking up the slab, she built a raised bed of stacked stone directly atop one section. The remaining narrow expanse of concrete became the path. The former driveway edges are planted heavily, with timbers recycled from the back



*Left: Smoke bush, Japanese maple, and grasses surround the cozy dining area.*

*Above: Repeating shapes, such as the trunks of crape myrtles, creates rhythm, essential to music and gardens.*



**Below:** Granite steps and brick pavers softened with creeping fig vine lead to the back garden's upper level. **Right:** Anne Sheldon relaxes in her front garden, which is hidden from the street by a boxwood hedge.



## Composing a Landscape

Anne Sheldon's tips for perfect pitch in the garden:

- Entry spaces, to the garden and to the home, should be clearly visible.
- Use fragrance, sound, and visual cues to entice visitors to move through the yard.
- When buying a home, be sure to check the views from inside the house.

- In a small garden, give the illusion of tucked-away larger spaces through the use of paths, framed views, and entry points.
- Mistakes can be serendipitous. Something new will happen in the garden tomorrow, so don't worry about today's mistakes.
- Color in the garden is influenced by the available light. Hot sun

- demands hot colors; shade prefers cooler, subdued tones.
- A plant color palette should relate to the color of the house. Be consistent in choosing colors for accents. Sheldon uses chartreuse, red, and blue.
- Fill planters primarily with perennials for easy care, then add annuals as seasonal accents.



yard corralling plantings along the side nearest the house. “As you progress down this path, you’re going from hot sun to the coolness of the back yard. By the time you get to the back, the air temperature feels as if it has dropped at least 10 degrees,” says Sheldon.

### **A Quiet Concert**

The walkway passes under a lattice arch and into a dining courtyard. Here is where the levels begin to change, like graduated tempos, in the yard. A granite wall holds back the slope, creating a sunken enclosure.

“I wanted the feeling of an amphitheater, that you are surrounded by plants, with the illusion of privacy and no sense of neighbors,” says Sheldon. Morning sun and evening shade allow for wake-up breakfasts and relaxing dinners. A medley of plants—Japanese maples, variegated grasses, and smoke tree—get enough sun from half-day rays but don’t have to tolerate the heat of the front yard. On the side of the

courtyard, a small water feature under crape myrtles muffles intruding sounds and cools the air.

Stone steps in one corner lead to the upper back yard, a shady enclave. Beyond a curved patch of lawn lies a kidney-shaped pond rimmed with stones the homeowners collected while traveling. In this hot-weather retreat, the soothing colors and textures of ferns, carex, coralbells, and hostas sound the quietest notes in the garden.

To establish a sense of rhythm in the garden, you must have movement and repetition of plants, says Sheldon. “You have to garden in layers, to have some vertical elements and contrasting shapes: rounded, conical, spikes, to name a few.”

Most of all, a garden must be in tune with the gardener, says Sheldon. “You have to learn your sense of self and place. Your garden is a strong definition of who you are. It has to be appropriate to you and to where you live.” ●

**Above left:** Set in the shadiest and highest point of the yard, these Adirondack chairs afford a panoramic view of the back garden.

**Top:** ‘Annabelle’ hydrangeas.

**Above:** Sheldon layers plants with different foliage and flower colors and shapes, creating a harmonious whole.



# THE FRESH CHIEF

What makes Emeril Lagasse cook

By Nancy Rutman ~ Photographs by Steven Freeman



**E**meril Lagasse seldom lacks for words, but ask him to name the food that most reminds him of home, and he hesitates. For him, the answer is not so much a food as a feeling—the feeling of anticipation, of looking forward to the flavors that each time of year will bring. “Seasonally grown produce means home to me,” he says, finally.

In his new book, *Farm to Fork: Cooking Local, Cooking Fresh*, the iconic chef captures that seasonal enthusiasm. Its roots run deep into his childhood in Fall River, Massachusetts, where he learned to stir up a vegetable stew under the watchful eye of

his mother, Hilda, and tended a large backyard garden with his father, Emeril Jr. On visits to his Uncle Oliver’s farm in nearby Westport, he spent many happy hours harvesting fruits and vegetables, milking cows, and gathering eggs. These visits gave him a lifelong appreciation for the people who bring us our food. “All of the chefs... in each of my restaurants,” he writes, “carry on the tradition of using the freshest ingredients and of maintaining long-lasting connections with local farmers.”

Emeril regularly shares his passion for regional, organic food in his cookbooks and on his TV shows, including the newest, *Fresh Food Fast*, on the Cooking Channel. He is perhaps most serious, though, about igniting the same passion in the next generation. His own children tag along when he shops for family meals: “Not only is it fun for them to help Dad pick out the produce,” he says, “but they also get a lesson in forging a relationship with the people who provide it.” And since 2002, the Emeril Lagasse Foundation has supported programs for youth in the communities that host his restaurants, including Edible Schoolyard New Orleans, based on the Berkeley, California, original.

Emeril recently gave *Organic Gardening* some of his thoughts on seasonal food—and oh, yes, a few mouth-watering recipes highlighting the fruits of summer, too.





*We're accustomed to seeing Emeril behind the cooktop, but he is just as comfortable working in the garden or visiting a farm.*

**How much of what you do in the kitchen and garden can be traced to your family's love of good, fresh food?**

Making the connection between food and the people who grow it has always stuck with me. Being exposed at an early age to growing and harvesting food from my dad's garden and my Uncle Oliver's farm gave me an appreciation of how farming works and the fresh ingredients that come from that. It's at the root of who I am as a chef.

**Is your work with the Emeril Lagasse Foundation a way of "paying forward" the encouragement you received from your family and community?**

I was very fortunate to have some incredible mentors growing up. My mom, Miss Hilda, inspired me and helped me learn something new every day, as did everyone I worked with along the way. If we can inspire one child, we've achieved our goal of making the communities that we live in, work in, and eat in a little bit better.

**What have you learned from the kids involved with the Edible Schoolyard?**

Whenever I visit, I'm amazed at how they recognize all of the different herbs, our native plants, okra, greens, lettuces, and Creole tomatoes. They are learning about the importance of fresh, local foods and can finally relate to the stories that their parents or grandparents tell at home about how they used to have backyard gardens. It's all about reconnecting them with our rich culture and with the soil.

**We assume that kids today would rather not work in a garden. Do we underestimate them?**

I think we do. Many of the kids involved in the foundation are incredibly interested in the whole process of gardening. They understand that it requires patience and hard work. Their instructors do a beautiful job of integrating the garden into everything they do, from mathematics to science to nutrition. At lunch, they get to enjoy the fruits of their labor each day by eating some of what they grow, with real plates and forks on reusable trays. It's a great outlet, and I know that they have *(continued on page 59)*

*Lavender flowers, honey, and soft cheese add layers of sweetness and creaminess to one of summer's simple pleasures: fresh figs.*





## 'Black Mission' Figs Stuffed with Blue Cheese and Lavender Honey

Fresh figs are the ultimate local fruit. They don't travel well. If you're fortunate enough to get your hands on a few pints, embellish them as below. Though we suggest 'Black Mission' figs here, you can certainly use any variety that's available.

*¼ cup honey*  
*2 tablespoons dried lavender flowers, plus more for garnish*  
*2 ounces creamy blue cheese (such as Valdeón, Gorgonzola dolce, or any Rogue Creamery blue cheese)*  
*½ cup mascarpone cheese*  
*12 fresh firm-ripe 'Black Mission' figs, stem ends trimmed*

1. Combine the honey and lavender flowers in a small saucepan, and warm over low heat. Remove from the heat and steep the lavender in the honey for at least 10 minutes. Strain the honey into a small bowl and discard the solids.
2. In a small bowl, combine the blue cheese with the mascarpone and half of the lavender honey. Stir until almost smooth (slightly chunky is okay). Place the mixture in a pastry bag fitted with a plain tip and set aside until ready to serve. (Refrigerate the bag briefly if the mixture becomes too soft.)
3. Using a paring knife, cut downward lengthwise into each fig as if you were preparing to cut the fig in half, but cut only about halfway through the fig. Turn the fig 90 degrees and make a second cut perpendicular to the first. Using your fingers, gently pry open the top portions of the fig to create space for the cheese mixture. Pipe the cheese mixture from the pastry bag into the figs. Arrange the figs on a serving plate and garnish with lavender flowers. Drizzle the figs with the remaining lavender honey and serve at room temperature.

*Makes 6 servings*





## Nectarine and Mascarpone Tart in a Sugar Cookie Crust

The nectarines and mascarpone here play on the quintessential flavor combo of peaches and cream, and work extremely well together. The result is a simpler and lighter version of cheesecake that will impress even the most hard-core cheesecake aficionados.

The uncooked nectarines give this tart a cool, fresh quality.

- 25 sugar cookies, coarsely broken (about 6 ounces or 2¼ cups pieces)
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 (8-ounce) container mascarpone cheese
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, at room temperature
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ⅛ teaspoon almond extract
- 4 or 5 small firm-ripe nectarines, halved, pitted, and thinly sliced
- ¼ cup peach jam, warmed

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

2. Finely grind the sugar cookies in a food processor. Add the melted butter

and blend until the crumbs are evenly moistened. Press the mixture over the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom. Bake until the color darkens, pressing the sides with the back of a spoon if they begin to slide, about 8 minutes. Remove from the oven, set aside on a wire rack, and let cool completely.

3. In a medium bowl, combine the mascarpone, cream cheese, sour cream, sugar, vanilla extract, and almond extract, and beat with a handheld electric mixer on low speed until smooth. Spread this filling in the cooled crust. Cover loosely and refrigerate until the filling is set, for at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.

4. Carefully arrange the nectarine slices on the chilled filling, fanning them in concentric circles to cover as much of the tart as possible. Brush with the warm jam.

5. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for up to 6 hours before serving.

*Makes 8 servings*







## Watermelon Limeade

This flavor-packed limeade is a real thirst-quencher during the dog days of summer, when watermelon is at its best. Should a festive occasion arise, it also makes a wonderful margarita mixer when paired with premium white tequila.


*8 cups cubed watermelon  
(seeds removed), or 1 quart  
watermelon juice  
1 cup freshly squeezed lime juice  
½ cup sugar, or more to taste  
Lime slices, for garnish (optional)  
Mint sprigs, for garnish (optional)*

1. Place half of the watermelon cubes in a blender and process until smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve set over a large bowl; discard the solids. Repeat with the remaining watermelon cubes. (You should end up with about 1 quart of watermelon juice.)

2. Add the lime juice and sugar to the watermelon juice, and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Taste, and add more sugar if necessary. Transfer the limeade to a nonreactive pitcher and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled.

3. Serve over ice in tumblers, with lime slices and sprigs of mint for garnish if desired.

*Makes 5 cups (4 to 6 servings)*



## “When you have great ingredients, I don’t think you need to do a lot to the food. Great ingredients mean great food.”

fun and learn so much. They then take this message home and share it with Mom and Dad, and maybe want to start a small garden in their own back yard!

**Are diners in your restaurants more curious about where their food comes from than they were when you first became a chef?**

Absolutely. Today’s consumer is so much more educated. If you aren’t cooking with the freshest and best ingredients, you aren’t in the game. I’ve been doing this in my restaurants and at home for more than 30 years. We’ve always listed the farm where our pork is raised, or our greens, because it really helps guests understand our commitment.

**How important is it to you that food served in your restaurants be organic?**

Very. We serve seasonal, organic, sustainable, and locally sourced products whenever they’re available. We are constantly in touch with our purveyors and visit the local farmers’ markets searching for organic produce, whether it’s really amazing citrus or strawberries, or fresh spring peas. If it’s organic, it’s usually the best quality. And when you have great ingredients, I don’t think you need to do a lot to the food. Great ingredients mean great food.

**When we buy produce straight from the grower, we instinctively feel good about it. What benefits do you think the grower receives in exchange?**

The commitment to go organic requires a lot of resources. Anything we can do to support our local farmers directly puts more resources in their pocket so they can maintain their equipment and manage their fields, protect their health, and still earn a living. If they have our support, maybe they will dedicate even more land to organic crops. With this book, we were able to really highlight the source—the

farmers, fishermen, and ranchers—and feature all of their products.

**Your book is dedicated to “all the farmers and fishermen (and women) who keep on keepin’ on.” Can you recall a case of one of these producers going beyond the call of duty?**

If you look at the Gulf Coast fishers, it’s easy to understand going beyond the call of duty. They brave the waters as part of their daily lives and have endured really hard times recently—first with hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and now with the oil spill—to keep on providing us with wonderful seafood.

**What would you say to a shopper who doesn’t see why she should pay more for locally caught shrimp when Chinese shrimp “tastes just as good”?**

You gotta buy American whenever you can—and stay local. Louisiana’s hard-working fishermen, shrimpers, and seafood purveyors are the heart and soul of our community. The prices they charge may be higher, but the seafood is top quality and super fresh, and they’re barely covering their operating costs. The way I see it, we must make different choices about where we purchase our seafood. Simple as that.

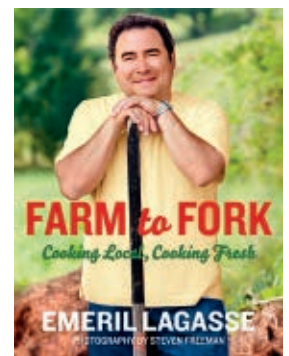
**You considered a career as a musician before deciding on culinary school, and music is often an important part of your TV shows. How do you think music and cooking complement each other?**

I think music and food go hand in hand in making people happy. I grew up doing both, and I still love both.

**If you hadn’t become a chef, would you have become a musician or a farmer?**

Ah, good question. I’d probably be a musician that lives on a farm. ●

*For more information, see Find It Here, page 82.*



*Recipes adapted from Farm to Fork: Cooking Local, Cooking Fresh, by Emeril Lagasse. Copyright 2010 by Emeril/MSLO Acquisition Sub, LLC. Reprinted courtesy of Harper-Collins Publishers.*

# Feeding Healthy Soil

How to meet your soil's nutritional needs so it meets yours.

**I**n the organic system, soil is a living organism that provides nutritional support for people but also has nutritional needs of its own. For those who think of soil as nothing more than dirt, it may take an attitude adjustment to view soil as a living collection of creatures, along with minerals and bits of living material: iron oxides, unicellular bacteria, actinomycete filaments, flagellated protozoans, ciliated protozoans, amoebae, nematodes, root hairs, fine roots, elongate springtails, and mites.

All of these substances have an essential role in organic soil health and the quantity and quality of an organic garden's glory. They break down the huge, unwieldy proteins and lignins in straw, leaves, and the wastes and remains of living creatures into simple, accessible compounds, like nitrate and ammonium, that plants transform back into spicy peppers and mellow watermelons. One organic tomato grower summed it up like this: "The soil is like a farmer's bank. You've got to keep making deposits into it all the time. If you withdraw from it until it's empty, you'll be out of business."

When it comes to firing up a garden's resident soil microbes, the organic shed is filled with practical, adoptable soil-building tools, which for ease can be grouped by the benefits they provide.

## Soil Fertility and Regeneration

Key tools in organic soil fertility and regeneration include cover crops, crop



rotation, compost, soil aeration, and mulch. Legume cover crops, such as winter peas or clovers, and edible legumes, such as beans, have the ability to transform nitrogen from the air into nitrogen in the soil. Legumes can provide the main serving of nitrogen for heavy-feeding crops like corn, melons, and tomatoes. After the crops are harvested, buckwheat or cereal rye cover crops can be sown to capture leftover nitrogen, saving it in a stable form to make it available for the next rotation.

Microbes require certain working conditions to furnish the nutrients necessary for healthy harvests. Fresh air and a steady supply of food and water, plus protection from temperature extremes, will ensure productive soil. Covering the soil with biodegradable mulches, regularly incorporating fluffy composts, and minimizing compaction with good bed design are great ways to make sure the microbes stay munching and the plants producing.

Keeping the beds planted with crops or cover crops or piled with mulch encourages roots and earthworms that will work to make the soil airy and loose. If the soil already suffers from compaction problems, try growing a cover crop with a big taproot, such as the tillage radish (also known as oilseed or daikon radish), to break up the hard subsurface soil layers. These crops are

also great at bringing up minerals and micronutrients from the subsoil that shallow-rooted crops have a harder time reaching.

## Pest Management

Minimizing soil disturbance also helps control weeds. A soil can have all the nutrients in the world, but weeds can destroy its productive capacity by outcompeting tender crop plants for nutrients and other resources. Frequent disturbance by digging or hoeing perpetuates the problem by dragging weed seed reservoirs from the deeper soil layers to repopulate the surface.

By reducing or eliminating surface disturbance, organic growers can exhaust the seed bank in the surface layer and create a more productive soil environment. Mulch, key to reducing temperature and moisture extremes in the soil, can also improve soil quality by shading the soil surface and putting surface seeds into dormancy until they can be decomposed by the well-fed soil fauna.

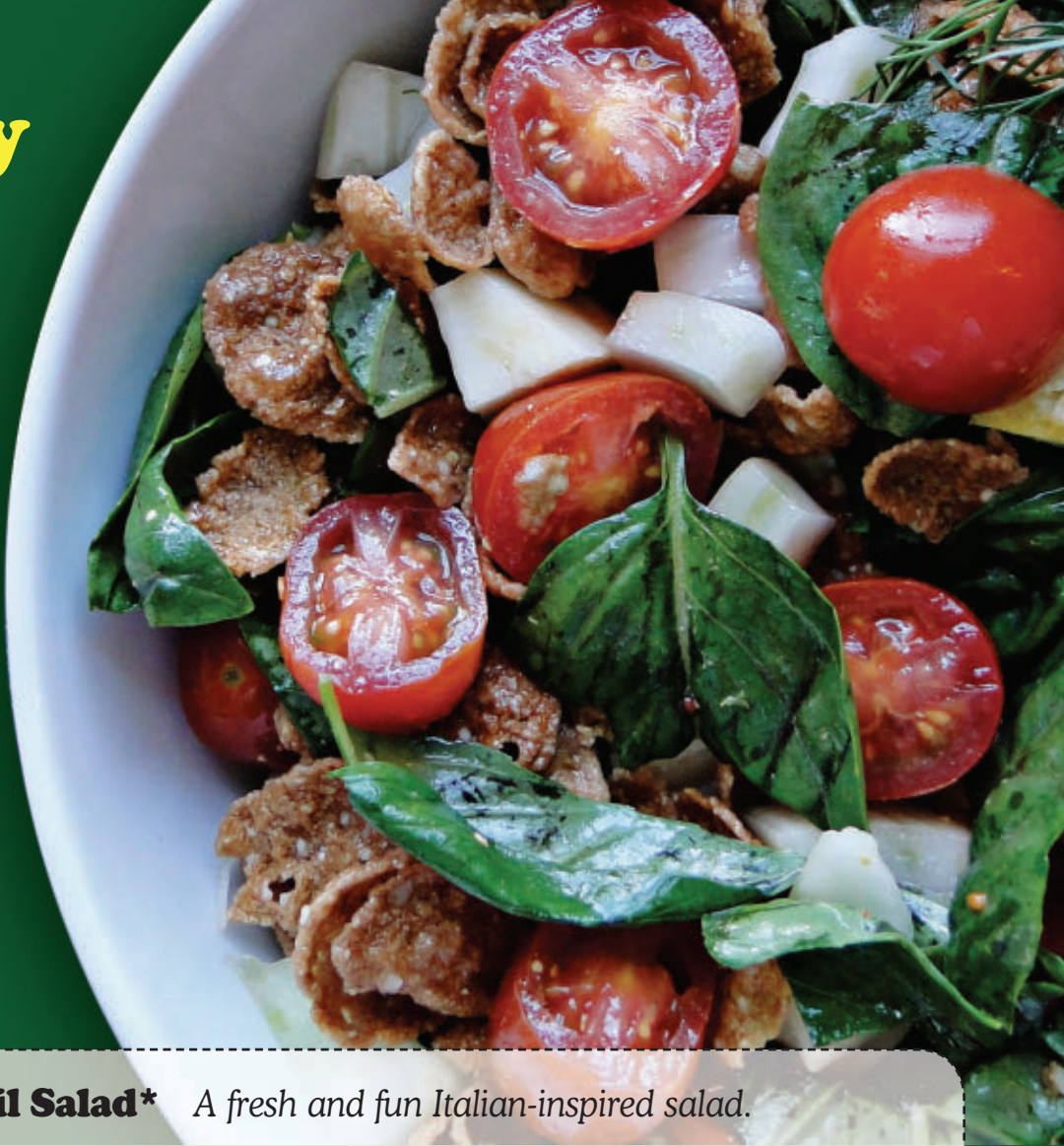
Crop rotation is the practice of growing a sequence of different types of crops on the same field or garden bed over several years. While the prime reason to follow broccoli with bell peppers might be to control cabbage moths, crop rotation also helps maintain an appropriate balance of nutrients. The result is healthy plants that can better resist disease. For example, too much soil nitrogen makes tomatoes more vulnerable to late blight than those growing with more appropriate nitrogen levels. Rotation also aids in cleaning out diseases like fusarium wilt, which can live in soil for up to 7 years. To reduce pathogens in the soil and maintain optimum soil health, Cornell University plant pathologist Margaret Tuttle McGrath, Ph.D., recommends a rotation that is longer than 7 years.

Organic soil health is complex, but the tools used to implement or restore it are simple. —*Alison M. Grantham, Research Manager, Rodale Institute*



**A deliciously  
crunchy  
salad and  
wholegrains  
and fiber?**

**Bravissimo!**



**Heritage Tomato and Basil Salad\***

*A fresh and fun Italian-inspired salad.*

- |          |                              |         |                                       |
|----------|------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 cups   | Cherry or grape tomatoes     | 1 bunch | Fresh Basil                           |
| 3 tbs.   | Olive oil                    | 2 cups  | Diced Fennel (or substitute celery)   |
| 3 tbs.   | Freshly squeezed lemon juice | 2 cups  | <b>Nature's Path Heritage Flakes</b>  |
| 1 tsp.   | Dijon mustard                |         | Fennel fronds, for garnish (optional) |
| 1/4 tsp. | Salt, or to taste            |         |                                       |

1. In a food processor, blend 1 cup cherry tomatoes with olive oil, lemon juice, mustard, and salt. Transfer mixture to a large salad bowl.
2. Cut remaining tomatoes in halves or quarters. Stir into bowl.
3. Pull basil leaves from stems until you have two tightly packed cups. Rinse well, drain, and pat dry in a clean kitchen towel. Tear basil leaves into bits and stir into bowl along with diced fennel and **Nature's Path Heritage Flakes**.
4. Let salad sit for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add more salt, if needed.
5. Divide among 4 salad bowls. Garnish with fennel fronds, if you wish.

**Makes 4 side-dish portions**



This recipe is based on the classic Italian bread salad called panzanella. Instead of using day-old white bread cubes as Italian cooks do, we substituted Nature's Path crunchy Heritage flakes with delicious, wholegrain results. It's fun to use heirloom cherry tomatoes of various colors, or you can substitute plum or beefsteak tomatoes for a moister salad. Turn this side-dish into a vegetarian main dish by adding cubes of vegan cheese, mozzarella, provolone, or crumbled feta.

**Nature's Path Organic.  
Eat well. Do good.**

[www.naturespath.com](http://www.naturespath.com)

*\*This recipe was created especially for Nature's Path® by Lorna Sass. For more product info and great recipes, check out [www.naturespath.com](http://www.naturespath.com). We recommend using organic ingredients whenever possible.*





*Let peony foliage stand through summer and fall, but cut it back after the first frost to help prevent peony botrytis blight.*

## Cutting Back Peonies

**Q.** When can peony foliage be cut back?

*Gregg Conrad  
Burbank, South Dakota*

**A.** Herbaceous peonies produce lovely, fragrant flowers in late spring and early summer. Many varieties put on a second show in autumn when their attractive, upright foliage turns a beautiful shade of russet red. Leaving a peony's foliage intact through fall adds interest to the garden and allows the plant to photosynthesize and send carbohydrate reserves to its roots, which helps to ensure plenty of flowers the following year.

Peony foliage should be removed before winter, however, because peony botrytis blight—a fungal disease that causes new shoots to mold and disfigures the flowers—overwinters on foliage left in the garden. “Cut the foliage off after the first frost,” recommends Rod Burke, head of horticulture at the Idaho Botanical Garden in Boise. Use sharp pruners to clip the stems at the soil line and toss them into a waste bin, not the compost pile. Tree peonies (*Paeonia suffruticosa*), which are small woody shrubs, can be pruned in the spring if necessary, notes Burke.

### Drying Peppers

**Q.** We have more hot peppers than we can eat. What is the best way to dry them?

*Henry Wright  
Las Vegas, New Mexico*

**A.** “Peppers with thin flesh, like ‘Anaheim’, cayennes, and habaneros, dry best,” says Danise Coon, the program coordinator of the Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. “You won’t have good luck trying to dry jalapeños and other peppers with thicker flesh.” In the Southwest, chile peppers are traditionally dried outdoors in the sun, but oven drying provides more consistent results.

Begin by preheating an oven to 150°F. Spread clean, ripe peppers in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Place the sheet on the middle rack in the oven. “Stir the peppers occasionally to ensure that they dry evenly,” recommends Coon. Drying usually takes several hours; the time can vary widely depending on the size and type of pepper. Fully dried peppers will feel light, crumble readily, and have stems that pop off easily.

Remove the dry peppers from the oven and allow them to cool. To make crushed red pepper flakes, put the peppers into a resealable plastic bag. Zip the bag shut and roll over the pods with a rolling pin. For chili powder, Coon suggests grinding the dry peppers in a coffee grinder reserved exclusively for the purpose. When working with hot peppers, protect your hands with latex gloves and be careful not to rub your eyes or face. Consider wearing a dust mask when crushing or grinding especially hot varieties.



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The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Kellogg Conservation Center in Berkshire County, MA will serve as the site of the Eco4 the Planet™ project, which began with a mass clearing of two-acres of land using ECHO chain saws, pole saws, brush cutters, and an ECHO Bear Cat chipper. Future phases of the Eco4 the Planet™ program will include the development of a Tree as a Crop™ site and a farm that offers a community-supported agriculture program, as well as the development of public outreach programs to educate visitors to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

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## ASK ORGANIC GARDENING



**Left to right:** Pink turtlehead, 'Hella Lacy' New England aster (with smoke bush behind it), and blue mist shrub are all outstanding and out-of-the-ordinary fall-flowering perennials.

### Fall Flower Combinations

**Q.** I'm bored with mums and asters. Any suggestions for other fall-blooming flowers?

Lauren Zlott  
Bloomington, Indiana

**A.** There are several perennial flowers that bloom late in the growing season. "Lemon Queen' perennial sunflower (*Helianthus*) is a 5-to-7-foot-tall plant with yellow daisies that blooms from late summer into fall," says Nancy Ondra, author of *Fallscaping: Extending Your Garden Season into Autumn* (Storey, 2007). Ondra also favors turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.), a handsome plant with deep green leaves and pink or white tubular flowers that bloom until midautumn, and blue mist shrub (*Caryopteris* spp.), a compact, 3-foot plant with clusters of blue flowers and gray-green or yellow foliage.

Ondra notes that not all mums and asters are boring. "Tatarian aster (*Aster tataricus*) has light purple flowers atop 6-to-8-foot stems in mid to late fall. 'Hella Lacy' New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*) has rich purple flowers that combine well with 'Lemon Queen' sunflower and 'Dallas Blues' switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)," she says. For a more unusual mum, Ondra recommends *Chrysanthemum* 'Sheffield Pink', an elegant, free-flowering plant with large, single, apricot-pink daisies in midfall.

### Frustrating Fruit Flies

**Q.** My kitchen-waste composter has fruit flies. How do I get rid of them?

J. Stover  
North Berwick, Maine

**A.** In a well-managed compost system, fruit flies, including their eggs and larvae, cannot survive the heat generated in the composting process. To heat up, a compost pile must contain at least 3 cubic feet of material, with a 3-to-1 ratio of "browns" (carbon-rich ingredients, such as dry leaves or newspaper) to "greens" (nitrogen-rich, moist ingredients, such as vegetable scraps).

"Fruit flies are a problem in kitchen compost bins because people mainly toss food waste into them, so there isn't enough carbon. Plus, the bins don't have enough volume to retain the heat generated by microbial activity," says Mark Hutchinson, a compost educator at the University of Maine. "Add a dry carbon source to the mix to improve the carbon-to-nitrogen ratio and lower the moisture content," says Hutchinson.

For more information, see *Find It Here*, page 82.

Ask Organic Gardening is edited by Willi Evans Galloway. Have a question for our experts? See "How to Reach Us" on page 10.



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# Angels & Demons

Cats in the garden

**F**orget politics or religion; if you want to see the fur fly, bring up the subject of cats in the garden. Everyone has an opinion: Some believe cats are destructive troublemakers, while others see the outdoors as the cat's birthright. But even hard-core cat lovers must acknowledge that outdoor cats hunt and kill, spray, fight, and yowl. They can catch diseases and parasites, including rabies, and spread them. The world is their litter box.

Invited or not—and whether the cats are yours, the neighbor's, or feral (unsocialized)—if you till it, they will come. The only way to keep a cat out is to surround the garden with a fence that is too high to jump over and buried deep so it can't be slipped or burrowed under.

Where a fence is not practical, try other deterrents. In vegetable beds, stretch row covers or chicken wire over young seedlings. Cats are particular about where they step, so lay down materials with a sharp or bristly texture, such as pinecones or gravel. Stick twigs or brush into newly sown beds; arrange rocks to discourage digging. Keep the soil moist, and cats will look for a drier place to do their business.

A scent that makes cats recoil is one we find pleasant: citrus, particularly oranges and lemons. Scatter their peels around plants and spray with orange oil to send cats elsewhere. Cats also dislike the odors of lavender and rosemary. Do not use mothballs, which are toxic to animals and humans, and don't use animal urine as a deterrent; many cats will spray to



*Relative to their size, cats' eyes are the largest of any mammal, but it's their sense of smell that guides their behavior.*

overmark the odor of the "intruder" and replace it with their own.

A surprising number of common plants are toxic to cats. While exceptions occur, outdoor cats seem to know which plants to avoid; indoor cats are more at risk. Unless supplied with oat or wheat grass, indoor cats graze on what's available, and that means houseplants, many toxic enough to do real damage. For lists of poisonous garden and houseplants, check the website

of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, [aspc.org](http://aspc.org).

Inviting cats into your garden has its merits—deterring rodents and rabbits, for example. A cat-friendly garden includes plants to nibble, places to lounge, and most important, a latrine. Frame an outdoor litter box using 2-by-6 lumber, fill it with sand, and keep it scooped. Given a place of their own, cats may leave the rest of the garden alone. —*Therese Ciesinski*

---

## Kitty Crack

No talk of cats and plants would be complete without mention of a cat's recreational drug of choice: catnip (*Nepeta cataria*). Other plants that appeal to cats include ornamental catmint

(*Nepeta × faassenii*), cat thyme (*Teucrium marum*), sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), and valerian (*Valeriana officianalis*), though not all cats respond to all of these herbs, even catnip.

Sow oat grass and wheat grass for cats to snack on. Protect the young plants with row covers to give them a chance to bulk up, or they'll be turned to slush by ecstatic felines.

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*Oil from the BP spill coats marsh grass and a dragonfly on Louisiana's Gulf Coast in May.*



## Time for an Oil Change

**T**he blowout and spill from BP's *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico is already the worst ecological tragedy in American history. As of this writing, 11 lives had been lost and little progress had been made in stemming the pollution.

I spent 9 days observing the spill from the air and from the water, traveling to the spill site with local fishermen. I was reminded of when the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground and dumped oil into Prince William Sound 21 years ago. Oil still contaminates Alaska's affected beaches, and about two-thirds of the fish and wildlife species monitored for the past 2 decades have not completely recovered, including orca whales and the once-abundant herring population. The local herring fishery once supported several canneries and many fishing operations; today it is history.

BP's accident has spewed more crude than was spilled by the *Exxon Valdez*. In contrast to the sudden impact of the Exxon spill, this is a slow-motion catastrophe, gushing oil from the depths of the ocean floor and spreading it in a vast, toxic underwater plume.

*One of America's greatest marine ecosystems has been turned into a chemistry experiment.*

The spill is spreading rapidly, robbing life-giving oxygen from one of the world's most abundant fisheries and contaminating the home of an amazing array of marine life; yet Tony Hayward, chief executive of BP, claimed: "The overall environmental impact of this will be very, very modest." I believe Mr. Hayward's grasp of the truth is very, very modest. He is choosing sound bites over sound science.

BP initially refused to do proper testing to determine the size and underwater spread of the spill, and has used more than 600,000 gallons of chemical dispersants that commingle with the oil. The toxic mixture of oil and chemicals is spreading to expose every organism in the food chain to contamination, from plankton



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## EARTH MATTERS

*America is taking greater and greater ecological risks every day to get less and less oil.*

to predators such as fish-eating birds. Some laboratory studies have shown that dispersed oil is more dangerous to marine life than the untreated oil. The National Academy of Sciences warned 5 years ago that we don't know the impact of mixing oil with chemical dispersants on a wide scale; now one of America's greatest marine ecosystems has been turned into a chemistry experiment. Of the creatures found in the Gulf, five species of sea turtles alone are federally listed as endangered or threatened, and the oil imperils them at every stage of their lives.

Gulf Coast communities will be impacted for years to come. Seafood is worth \$2.4 billion a year in the Gulf Coast economy. Already, federal authorities have temporarily banned commercial and recreational fishing in 19 percent of the Gulf waters most

affected by the spill, citing health concerns. In Hopedale, Louisiana, and elsewhere, people who typically make their living from the bounty of the sea are now standing in unemployment lines.

Even before this spill, BP had a bad performance record, with a culture of incompetence and neglect. They have compensated for this by adding lobbyists and lawyers in Washington and by running millions of dollars' worth of television and print ads that suggest they are moving beyond petroleum. Through their lobbying efforts, BP convinced the U.S. Minerals Management Service to bypass a thorough environmental-impact study on each of the oil-rig sites in the Gulf. And they failed to develop adequate plans for a spill: Two weeks after the explosion, BP was training

fishermen how to use booms to collect surface oil, as if organizing a fire department after the house has caught on fire.

The National Wildlife Federation joined with 10 other conservation groups in writing President Obama to urge that the federal government immediately take over environmental monitoring, testing, and public safety protection from BP. One month into the spill, the EPA ordered BP to use less-toxic, more-effective dispersants, and Congress too must now act. By capping liabilities in 1990, Congress allowed companies like BP to realize the profits but allowed the liabilities for their corporate decisions to be borne by the public. The government must now ensure that BP and other liable parties fulfill their legal and financial obligations to the ecosystem and the communities damaged by the spill.

The BP spill jeopardizes a region already on the brink of collapse. The 3.4 million acres of marsh, swamp, forests, and barrier islands in the Mississippi River Delta area of coastal Louisiana constitute the largest wetland complex in the continental United States. Neglect and poor management by the federal government, and channels dug for oil and gas extraction, have devastated the delta region. We must invest in the restoration of the Mississippi River Delta to rebuild resilience to this damaged fishery.

America is taking greater and greater ecological risks every day to get less and less oil. This disaster should make it clear to every American that Congress must pass real energy reform now.

—Larry J. Schweiger, president and CEO, National Wildlife Federation

*The author wrote this column as the crisis was unfolding in May. For more information and updates on National Wildlife Federation's oil spill response activities, go to [nwf.org/oilspill](http://nwf.org/oilspill).*

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# Grasshopper

Many species in the order *Orthoptera*

**G**rasshoppers made it onto the top-10 list of biblical plagues for good reason. During serious outbreaks, says entomologist Whitney Cranshaw, author of *Garden Insects of North America*, “they’ll eat anything. Beans. Roses. Berries. Anything.”

Unpredictable, grasshoppers can appear 2 or 3 years in a row or disappear for a decade. In large numbers, they can defoliate entire fields. Much more rarely, they’ll form into clouds and migrate in search of food. “That’s when people call them locusts,” Cranshaw explains. “Think of them as grasshoppers gone berserk.”

*In years of minor outbreaks, grasshopper damage to vegetables and flowers is often insignificant. When their population soars, however, they move beyond the tall grass they prefer and begin to eat anything—this coneflower included.*

There are hundreds of grasshopper species. Many, but not all, are garden pests. Most grasshoppers lay eggs in the soil in early autumn; they prefer areas of dry, untilled ground. Nymphs, which look like adults but are smaller, emerge the following spring to feed on young, green growth. They gain size and strength through each progressive molting—the shedding of an exoskeleton. Forty to sixty days after hatching, grasshoppers become adults with functioning wings.

Minor to moderate grasshopper invasions can be handled with organic methods. The key to control is to start early, during the insects’ nymph stage, because adults are harder to kill. Some strategies:

- Encourage predators. Larks, bluebirds, and kestrels eat grasshoppers. So do chickens and guinea hens, which can eat as many as 2 pounds of the insects per day.
- A healthy, biologically active soil encourages blister beetles and the numerous microscopic predators known to cause diseases in grasshoppers.
- *Nosema locustae*—living spores of a microbial pathogen sold as NOLO Bait or Semaspore—infect and kill some grasshopper species, if applied early.
- Fabric and aluminum-screen row covers will protect young plants, though grasshoppers have been known to chew through both.
- Lush, green weeds and tall grasses attract ’hoppers, so keep weeds under control. But mowing vegetation *after* grasshoppers appear may prompt the insects to migrate to your crops.
- Finally, till in autumn to expose overwintering eggs, and again in spring to kill young weed seedlings. —Robin Chotzinoff

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# Goodbye Grass, Hello Garden

The best way to convert a lawn into a garden does not employ a shovel or a sod cutter and will save wear and tear on back muscles. Sheet mulching—a simple technique that involves layering cardboard, compost, and other organic material right over the turf—kills the grass and leaves behind beds with rich soil. A considerable amount of organic debris goes into the bed construction, so stockpile plenty of autumn leaves, composted manure, and garden waste before beginning. Beds that are sheet-mulched this fall will be ready to plant next spring.

1. Use spray paint or powdered lime to mark the perimeter of the new bed. Scalp the grass within the outline with a lawn mower.

2. Spread a 2-inch layer of compost or composted manure over the bed. This helps encourage microbial activity in the soil and speeds decomposition. Moisten the compost well.

3. Cover the compost with overlapping pieces of cardboard to smother the underlying vegetation and prevent light from reaching any weed seeds. Soak the cardboard with water.

4. Spread a 2-inch layer of compost over the cardboard and top it with up to 18 inches of mixed organic material (grass clippings, leaves, straw, seaweed, garden debris, farmyard manure).

5. Include vegetable and fruit scraps and coffee grounds from the kitchen in the layers of organic matter. Moisten these layers.

6. For vegetable beds, finish with 2 to 3 inches of straw or compost. Top ornamental beds with 4 inches of wood chips. In arid climates, water the bed occasionally. Soil microbes and earthworms will toil through the winter to decompose the organic material, cardboard, and sod. —*Willi Evans Galloway*



## What Is Deadheading?

Deadheading is the process of pinching or cutting off flowers after their petals drop or turn brown. This practice improves the appearance of a plant and prevents the formation of seed, which in many plants (especially roses and annuals, such as the geranium at left) encourages the production of more flowers. But don't just decapitate the flowers, leaving stubs; cut back to where leaves or flower buds join the stem. —*W.E.G.*

DEADHEADING: CHRISTA NEU; SHEET MULCHING: MITCH MANDEL

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was J. I. Rodale in 1969 who started the *Environmental Action Bulletin*, a forum for activists to network. It was J. I. Rodale and later his son Robert who championed worldwide the causes of land preservation, energy efficiency, and recycling on many different levels.



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## SKILLS & ABILITIES

### Plan for Fall Veggies

Tomatoes and beans are going strong in summer gardens. But there may also be gaping holes where the lettuce bolted and the spring peas succumbed to heat. Take advantage of those empty spots to plant for a fall harvest of cool-season crops like cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and salad greens. Here's how:

**Learn your frost date.** A local Cooperative Extension agent can provide the date when the first frost of the season is likely. Think of that date as the harvest deadline and choose what to plant accordingly. Keep in mind that growth slows as the weather cools, so some crops take longer to mature in fall than in spring.

**Prepare the ground.** Remove spent plants, roots and all, to the compost pile. Then add some compost to the planting bed.

**Plant the fall crops.** Keeping the first-frost date in mind, look for varieties that either mature in the amount of time left in the growing season or that tolerate cool nights or a little light frost.

- Leaf lettuce (matures in 40 to 60 days but can be eaten when small and tender) survives when the air temperature has dropped to freezing but the ground temperature hasn't.
- Spinach (35 to 45 days, or less for baby greens) tolerates light frost and sometimes overwinters.



*Savoy cabbages, which can be riddled with cabbage worms in spring, are relatively bug-free when grown for fall harvest.*

- Kale (40 to 65 days) survives temperatures down to 20°F.

- Basil (30 to 60 days) and cilantro (60 to 70 days) are fast-growing herbs that can beat the frost.

- Peas (60 to 80 days), which can generally withstand temperatures in the high 20s, are not as reliable in fall as in spring, because they cannot handle hot soil temperatures. One way to provide some cooling shade to the emerging peas is to sow the seeds around the perimeter of tomato cages 8 to 10 weeks before the first-frost date. The tomatoes will shade the seedlings and prevent them from “cooking” in the hot soil, while the cages support the growing vines.

- Cole crops, such as cabbage (50 to 90 days), broccoli (50 to 70 days), and Brussels sprouts (90 to 100 days), are often sold as transplants at garden centers and big-box stores in late summer.

- Radishes (30 to 60 days) can be harvested until the ground freezes.

**Keep them growing.** Water regularly to give transplants a chance to settle in and seeds a chance to sprout. Use floating row covers to shade the ground for seeds such as lettuce that need cool soil to germinate. Row covers or coldframes can also protect tender plants if frost comes early; frost dates are averages, after all, and not written in stone. —Denise Foley

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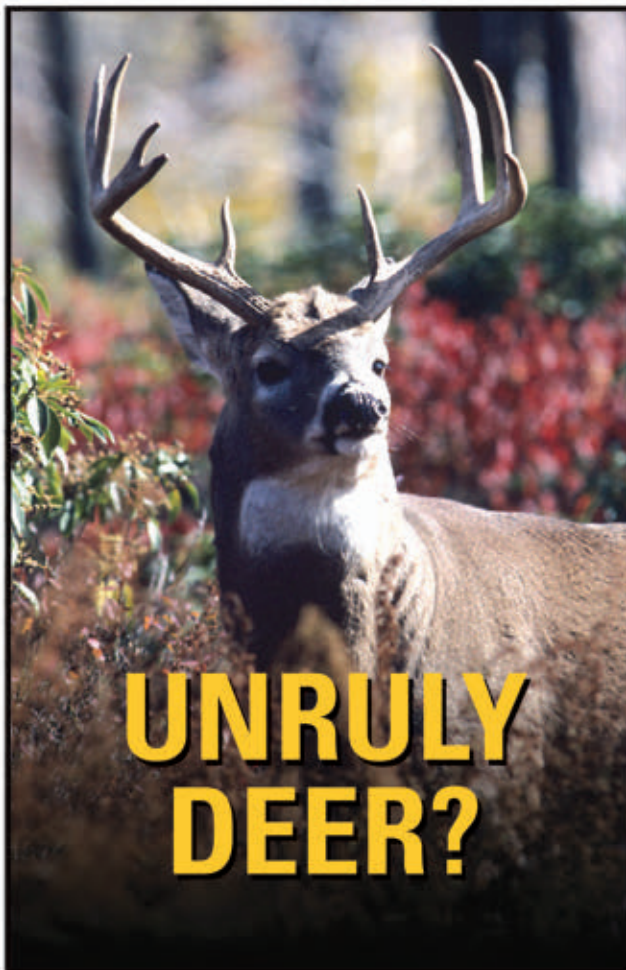
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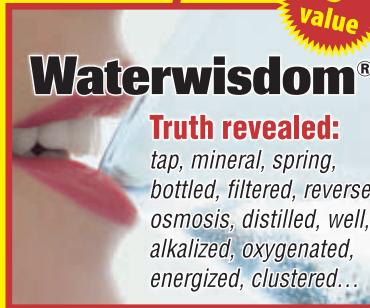
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### Profiles: La Vida Locavore, p. 32

**This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader**, by Joan Dye Gussow (Chelsea Green, 2001; \$19.95/paperback)

### Buried Treasure, p. 36

Information: **Garlic Seed Foundation**, [garlicseedfoundation.info](http://garlicseedfoundation.info) (no phone). Garlic: **Abundant Life Seeds**, 541-767-9606, [abundantlifeseeds.com](http://abundantlifeseeds.com); **Filaree Farm**, 509-422-6940, [filareefarm.com](http://filareefarm.com); **John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds**, 860-567-6086, [kitchengardenseeds.com](http://kitchengardenseeds.com); **The Garlic Store**, 800-854-7219, [thegarlicstore.com](http://thegarlicstore.com)

### Home Vintage, p. 42

Books on wine making: **From Vines to Wines: The Complete Guide to Growing Grapes and Making Your Own Wine**, by Jeff Cox (Storey, 1999; \$18.95); **Grapes into Wine**, by Philip M. Wagner (Knopf, 1976; \$18). Other resources: **University of California, Davis Extension** (<http://extension.ucdavis.edu>). Wine-making tools, equipment, etc.: **More Wine!**, 800-600-0033, [morewinemaking.com](http://morewinemaking.com). Approved pesticides and fungicides: **Organic Materials Review Institute** (information): [omri.org](http://omri.org); **Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply** (Kumulus DF and Pyganic), 888-784-1722, [groworganic.com](http://groworganic.com)

### The Fresh Chef, p. 52

**Farm to Fork**, by Emeril Lagasse (HarperStudio, 2010; \$24.99). **Emeril Lagasse** (restaurants, recipes, and videos): [emerils.com](http://emerils.com). **Emeril Lagasse Foundation**: [emeril.org](http://emeril.org). Valdeón cheese: **Artisanal Premium Cheese**, 877-797-1200, [artisanalcheese.com](http://artisanalcheese.com). Rogue Creamery blue cheese: **Rogue Creamery**, 866-396-4704, [roguecreamery.com](http://roguecreamery.com)

### Ask Organic Gardening:

#### Fall Flower Combinations, p. 62

**Fallscaping: Extending Your Garden Season into Autumn**, by Nancy J. Ondra (Storey, 2007; \$22.95).

### We Like This! Spades and Forks, p. 72

Spades: **Brook & Hunter** spade, 888-827-6658, [brookandhunter.com](http://brookandhunter.com); **Clarrington Forge** spade from Garden Tool Company, 970-631-8801, [gardentoolcompany.com](http://gardentoolcompany.com); **Spear & Jackson** E-series border spade from Garden.com, 888-314-2733, [garden.com](http://garden.com). Forks: **Ames True Temper** digging fork sold at Home Depot stores nationwide (not available online); **DeWit** spork from Lee Valley Tools, 800-871-8158, [leevalley.com](http://leevalley.com); **Radius Pro-Lite** digging fork from Radius Garden, 734-222-8044, [radiusgarden.com](http://radiusgarden.com)

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# Overcoming Cooking Fears

I don't fear much anymore about food. But I remember all the different phases of fear I've been through during my lifetime of gardening, entertaining, feeding a family, and just plain cooking.

The first phase was a fear of somehow poisoning my family and myself by serving something I shouldn't. For instance, I knew rhubarb leaves were toxic, but what about eggplant skins? I'm still not sure whether or not you can eat the skin on ginger. What about beet leaves? Which berries are edible and which ones aren't? Experienced gardeners and cooks often take their knowledge for granted, but I do remember being young and afraid. In fact, the only time I ever ended up in the emergency room was when I was little and had eaten a berry from a yew bush (even though my cousin begged me not to!). I survived, and so does the memory of hunching over a stainless-steel bowl in the hospital's emergency room after being dosed with syrup of ipecac.

Then there is the fear of people not being impressed by my efforts. Is my cooking or my garden good enough to share with others? Do they like it? Do they really, *really* like it? I started cooking at about the same time Martha Stewart was rising in popularity, and it all seemed so damned hard! Consequently, I went for more than a decade without throwing a dinner party just because I felt I wasn't good enough. (It didn't help that I became so distracted around guests that I more than once set the kitchen on fire. Stopping drinking helped my kitchen concentration skills.)

Only in the past 10 years or so have I vanquished most of my fears and come into my own as a cook. To do this, I developed and perfected a technique I call Extreme Simplicity.

It basically stems from the fact that when you start with fresh, seasonal, organic ingredients, you really don't need to do much to make them taste good. A little salt, a little olive oil, and shazam! You've got yummifal food. When I cook now, I try to get to the essence of a recipe and cut out all the complicated steps and unnecessary flavors... especially the bitter and toxic taste of pretension.

I know it works because my family devours my food. (In fact, my teenage daughter told me it's what she would miss most about me if I died—high praise indeed.) For her sake, I've started writing down my recipes so that even after I'm gone, she and her children can share the pleasure of my extreme simplicity. You can find the recipes I'm in favor of on my blog and at the Rodale Recipe Finder (just type "Maria's farm country kitchen" in the search bar).

I still have a few fears—eating organ meats, for instance. But, truthfully, not every fear in life needs to be overcome. What makes me happiest is that my family and I love sharing good food together.

And that's extremely simple.

—Maria Rodale





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