

THE EDIBLE GARDEN

March 2014



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DID YOU KNOW?

The bacteria causing Tetanus (lock jaw) lives in the soil. Put the odds in your favour by keeping your immunizations up-to-date. The Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine should be renewed every 10 years.

The clippings generated when shaping potted **rosemary** plants can be used fresh; or frozen or dried for future use. Drying in a brown paper bag will help preserve the colour of the leaves

Keeping digging and cutting tools sharp reduces the effort required to use them and reduces the risk of injury. Spades, hoes and edging tools can be sharpened with a metal file; cutting tools should be professionally sharpened.

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

- Attend Ottawa Home & Garden Show
March 20-23 at
The Ernst & Young Centre,
4899 Uplands Drive,
Ottawa
- Remove winter protection from shrubs. Pick an overcast day to prevent sun scorch.
- Prune fruit trees and grape vines.
- To control overwintering insects apply dormant oil spray to fruit trees and shrubs on a warm day (between 4°C&32°C) when the temperature has been above freezing for 24 hours, just before the buds start to break,.
Read the label carefully before applying as some plants may be damaged by dormant oil.

BOOK REVIEW

Nancy McDonald, Ottawa Carleton Master Gardeners

Grow Great Grub: Organic Food from Small Spaces by Gayla Trail

Clarkson Potter/ Publishers New York 2010, ISBN 978-0-307-45201-6, Trade paperback \$16.49 Indigo, available at Ottawa Public Library

Gayla's ability and enthusiasm to turn limitations into gardening opportunities is apparent and catching! You may think you do not have the space or knowledge to begin gardening but Gayla challenges you to begin as both success and failures are part of being a gardener. She emphasizes organic gardening which "treats the soil as a living entity that must be supported and fed". This will lead to healthy plants up to the challenge of fending off pests and

diseases. All the basics from soil, sowing to harvesting the bounty are covered. Planting tips with catchy phrases such as "living with the relatives" to explain crop rotation add to the enjoyment of reading this book. For both in-ground and container growing the author provides helpful plant information including special requirements, pests, common plant diseases and strategies to deal with these problems. Gayla's practical DIY projects like a self-

watering system and no-till raised-bed veggie plot offer the reader many cost saving ideas. Gayla emphasizes using what you have and recycling. The young girl who was inspired by her grandmother growing potatoes in a bucket on a Canadian concrete patio has become Gayla Trail the gardener who inspires the rest of us to 'Grow Great Grub'.

JUMP START

EARLY PLANTING

Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Gardening tradition in our part of the world tells us to plant everything out on the long weekend in May, and many folk do not realize that a great deal of planting and growing can happen in April! That is correct! April!! Green garlic, salad greens, spinach, lettuce, green onions, radishes and peas prefer the cooler temperatures and they will all tolerate frost and even a late snowfall.

As soon as the ground can be worked, begin digging and planting. Dig the area you have set aside for April planting thoroughly; to the depths of your garden fork tines. If you have a low lying wet garden area or one that is heavy with clay, it is best to prepare this area in the fall to avoid soil compaction caused by walking on the soil. In my garden, I plant my early vegetables close to the edge to avoid any further compaction. Remove any weeds and break up clumps of soil.

Green Garlic is the green shoot of the garlic clove. It has a delicious garlic flavour and is good both cooked and fresh. If your stored garlic from last year has started to sprout or get soft, separate the cloves and push the flat end about 2" (5 cm) into the ground, about 3" (7.5 cm) apart. Harvest when the shoots are 8-12" (20-30 cm) tall. Sometimes you will find garlic for sale in the spring at the garden centre. While it may not produce cloves for storage, it is excellent early spring eating.

Salad Greens are planted by broadcasting the seeds directly onto the soil. Use about one

teaspoon of seed for every 4-6 square feet (0.4 -0.6 m²) of garden. You want to distribute the seeds evenly over the soil. When you have sown all your greens, lightly cover the seeds by passing your hand over the soil once. Remember that you are only planting what you will eat over the next month or so and will be planting another patch of greens in a few weeks. Typical salad greens include Kale, Tatsoi, Arugula and Lettuce. You can purchase packages of Mesclun which contain a mix of salad greens. You can start to eat this in about 30 days. Cut the leaves off and leave the roots to grow more edible leaves.

Spinach, Lettuce and Green Onions do well when planted in April. If you started any of these vegetables indoors in March, they should be ready to go in the ground about the middle of April. Lettuce and spinach can be directly seeded outside in April. Plant the seeds at 3" (7.5 cm) intervals 8" (20 cm) apart. If you have planted too thickly, thin your plants by pulling the extra seedlings; use the thinned plants in your salad. Green Onions can be directly seeded outside but the seeds and plants are small, so it is better to broadcast your seeds. Again, pinching off the leaves of the spinach and lettuce will cause the roots to produce more leaves.

Radishes are another excellent spring crop that should be directly planted. Plant in rows 6" (15 cm) apart with seeds about 1" (2.5 cm) apart. Thin to 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) intervals. The whole of thinned radish plant makes an excellent

addition to your salad. Plant a small number of radishes every couple of weeks until the end of June and start up again mid-August.

Peas are another excellent cool weather crop and should be planted as soon as possible. The traditional method for planting is to dig a 2-4" (5-10 cm) trench and place the seeds in the bottom at 2-3" (5-7.5cm) intervals and cover. Once this is done, dig a second trench, 6-8" (15-20 cm) from it, parallel to the first and plant the same way. Regular varieties of peas will need staking or a trellis to grow up.



A floating row cover is a big help to the April gardener. It captures the sun's warmth and adds a few degrees of heat to the soil. The cover allows 80% of light through and all the rain. It is light enough that you can lay it directly on the soil and the plants will still grow. Hold the row cover down with rocks or pieces of wood. Leave the cover in place until sometime in May when the weather has warmed. Floating Row Covers also provide protection for your plants from many kinds of insects and are useful at the other end of the season to extend your garden's production.

WHEN TO START TRANSPLANTS

Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Vegetable	Start Transplant	Direct Seeding
Basil	Start May & June. Transplant out June & July	Plant June & July
Bush Beans	No need to start indoors	Plant late May to Mid-July, every 2 weeks. Plant for Thanksgiving late August
Dried Beans		Plant Late May
Pole Beans		Plant Late May
Beets	April to June. Transplant out April-July	May & June
Broccoli	April to June. Transplant out May to early June	May & June
Cabbage	May. Transplant early June	May
Carrots		Direct Seed in May
Cauliflower	April to June. Transplant out May to early June	May & June
Coriander		April to August
Corn		Mid May to June
Cucumber	Early May, transplant in June	Late May
Eggplant	March, transplant in June	
Garlic		October
Green Onions	March to July	April to July
Kale	June and July	June and July
Lettuce	March to July. Transplant April to August.	April and May and then Late July
Melons	Early May, transplant early June	
Onions	February to early March. Transplant Mid April	Onion sets in April
Peas		April and May
Peppers	Start early March, transplant June	
Potatoes		May and June
Radish		April and May and then August
Rutabaga	Mid May, transplant early June	Plant in May
Salad Greens		April to September
Spinach	Start March, April and July. Plant in April, May and August	Plant April, May and August
Swiss Chard	April, transplant May	Plant in May
Tomatoes	Late March, transplant in June	
Turnip		April, May and August
Winter Squash	Early May, transplant in June	Plant Late May or early June.
Zucchini	Start May, transplant in June	Late May

Watch for **Trowel Talk** the Master Gardeners of Ottawa Carleton electronic monthly gardening newsletter available on the 15th at <http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca/>

The Edible Garden logo was created by [Jon Last](mailto:jonlast13@rogers.com) (jonlast13@rogers.com)

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton is a member group of Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc., a registered charity with the mission of providing gardening advice to homeowners