



The Giving Garden

Volume 7, Issue 2

April - June 2017

Vegetables 101 **Submitted by Laura Margadonna**

I attended the presentation at Marshall Grain on Saturday, February 25th, to see what the Espoma people had to say. It didn't go very smoothly for me due to the fact Highway 121 was closed and it took me a while to figure out how to get there using back roads. Therefore I was late and had to lean on a stack of bagged dried molasses and didn't have a very good view of the projector, but I made the best of it. No matter who presents, you can always learn something new. There was also a great Question & Answer session.

Unfortunately they didn't have printouts of their presentation because there was a chart showing plants grouped by whether they were light, moderate or heavy feeders, that I thought would be good to share. They did have a chart for diagnosing plant problems, which I will scan and put on our website. I am going to follow-up with Marshall's to see if they can get it for us, but I found some of the same info on the web. Espoma has several videos listed on their website that you might find informative. This link is for Fertilizer 101 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0UEIcxGJ2M>

Light, Medium and Heavy Feeders



Kale is a low demand vegetable
(but highly nutritious)

With experience, you will learn how to match fertilizer amounts with plants' needs for your climate and soil. Onions, tomatoes, sweet corn, and vegetables grown in containers respond to special fertilizing techniques, but most crops grow well if you simply mix a balanced fertilizer into the soil as you set out the plants. Use the list on Page 3 to help determine the best method for seeding your favorite vegetables.

I found this chart at http://www.bonide.com/assets/Uploads/Grow_Vegetables.pdf. I have never used Bonide fertilizers but it gives you an idea of the NPK ratio to use to fertilize moderate feeders versus heavy feeders. *Continues on Page 3.*

Inside this issue:

Orientation and Work Day	2
What to do with Bitter Cucumbers	4 - 5
Recipe	6
Harvest Update	7
Calendar Events	
Gardening Tips	8
Meet the Gardeners	9 - 10

The Giving Garden Orientation and first work day of the year was held on February 18th. Donated seeds and gardening tips were made available to fellow gardeners. Angela Glover (Bed 12), Doug Forbes (Bed 1), Vicki Pippin (Bed 26), and Carolyn Rice (Beds 20 and 28) were winners of tomato starter plants. After orientation, gardeners took advantage of a beautiful 78 degree sunny day and began preparing their beds for spring planting. Thanks to a host of volunteers for helping spread compost, manicure the berry patch, weed around the wildflower bed and pergola as well as clean out the herb bed. A very productive day!



Vegetables 101 Continue

Light feeders often benefit from a small amount of starter fertilizer but require no additional feeding when grown in soil that has been enriched with compost. Light feeders includes bush beans, squash, mustard greens, peas, peppers, rhubarb, squash, tomatoes, and watermelon.

Plant Type	Fertilizers	When	Gardening Tips & Timing
Transplants	· Root & Grow - Root Stimulator 4-10-3	Fertilize and mulch each transplant as you plant.	Always break up the root ball when transplanting.
Vegetables	<p><u>Light Feeders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hydrolyzed Fish Fertilizer 2-4-0 · Plant Starter 3-10-3 <p><u>Moderate feeders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Flower & Vegetable 5-10-5 · Triple Super Phosphate · Liquid Plant Food 10-10-10 <p><u>Heavy Feeders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All-Purpose 10-10-10 · Flower & Vegetable 5-10-5 · Liquid Plant Food 10-10-10 	<p><u>Light Feeders</u></p> <p>Once at planting</p> <p><u>Moderate Feeders</u></p> <p>At planting and mid-season.</p> <p><u>Heavy Feeders</u></p> <p>Every month</p>	<p><u>Light Feeders include:</u></p> <p>Bush Beans, Mustard Greens, Peas, Southern peas, Turnips.</p> <p><u>Moderate Feeders include;</u></p> <p>Beets, Broccoli, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Squash.</p> <p><u>Heavy Feeders include:</u></p> <p>Cabbage, Lettuce, Onions, and Tomatoes.</p>

Source: <http://www.growgreatvegetables.com/fertilizers/fertilizer-needs-of-vegetables/>

<https://bonnieplants.com/library/the-basics-of-fertilizing/>

Moderate feeders often need good drainage and moisture-holding mulch more than they need fertilizer. Avoid using organic fertilizers made primarily from processed manure when preparing the soil for beets, carrots, and other root crops. Manure can contribute to scabby patches on potato skins and forked roots in carrots and parsnips. Moderate feeders all respond well to liquid plant food. Moderate feeders includes beets, carrots, okra, pole beans, potatoes, and sweet potatoes.



Mixing fertilizer into the planting holes as you set out tomatoes and other heavy feeders helps ensure that the plants will find the nutrients they need at every stage of growth.

Heavy feeders are often highly productive plants, so a few minutes spent mixing in fertilizer before you set out plants is time well spent. Just don't go overboard by applying too much! Plants often grow slowly in cool spring weather, so you won't see the effects of feeding until the weather warms. Some heavy feeders also respond to second helpings later in the season (again, follow package directions), and all types will benefit from regular applications of liquid plant food. Heavy feeders includes broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, corn, cantaloupe, cauliflower, cucumbers, eggplant, kale, kohlrabi, and onion.

What to Do with Bitter Cucumbers

By Marie Ianotti submitted by Laura Margadonna



It's the rare gardener who hasn't experienced growing a bitter cucumber. Few things are as frustrating as tending your vegetables all season long, only to finally harvest them and find out they don't taste very good, when you get them to the table. Cucumbers are known for being prolific, sometimes to the extreme. But what good is a bounty of cukes if they aren't edible?

If you find yourself with bitter cucumbers, don't automatically reach for the compost bucket. Peeling the fruit should improve the flavor. Then try a slice toward the center of the cuke and see if it is sweeter. You should be able to salvage more than enough for a salad.

Unfortunately you can't tell if a cucumber is becoming bitter, while it is still growing and there's something you can do about it. That's why it is so important to take some preemptive steps to keep them from becoming bitter in the first place.

Preventing Bitter Cucumbers

Cultivated cucumbers all contain cucurbitacin B and cucurbitacin C, compounds that are supposed to make their leaves less tasty to munching animals. These compounds are usually confined to the leaves, stems and roots of the plants, where humans don't notice them. It's when they move into the fruits that we start detecting a bitter taste.

Usually it is not the whole fruit that turns bitter. More commonly, the bitterness will be concentrated at the stem end and the area right under the skin. There is still some disagreement about what causes the bitterness to spread into the fruits, but it seems to point to some type of stress while the cucumbers are growing. So although we cannot correct the problem after the fact, we can try and avoid the following 3 growing conditions that are potential culprits of bitter cucumbers.

Dry Conditions: Long periods of hot, dry weather can contribute to bitter cucumbers. There's not much you can do to control the heat, but keeping your cucumbers well watered will help offset the bitterness. Give them at least an inch of water per week, more during extreme dry spells, and mulch the area around the roots, at planting time.

Lean Soil: Another factor in bitter cucumbers is lean soil and a general lack of nutrients. Cucumbers are heavy feeders and a soil rich in organic matter will go a long way toward producing less stressed, better tasting cukes. If your soil is less than ideal, give your cucumbers a little fertilizer every 4-6 weeks.

Lack of Sun: Overcast areas, like the Pacific Northwest, have reported bitter cucumbers due to lack of sun. Again, you can't control the hours the sun will shine, but you can plant in a spot that gets as much sun as nature will allow. If it's cool and damp, as well as overcast, growing your cucumbers under cover, like a poly tunnel, will amplify the available heat and light.

So even though cucumber plants grow rather easily and you can get a prodigious harvest from a couple of plants, to get quality as well as quantity you still need to provide them with good growing conditions: plenty of sunshine, regular watering and rich soil.

Finally, look for varieties that are well suited to your area that are labeled 'non-bitter'. Some reliable varieties are: 'Armenian', 'Diva', 'Eversweet' (any variety with "sweet" in the name), 'Improved Long Green' and 'Lemon'.

Note from Laura: Varieties I have grown in the Giving Garden that have remained non-bitter even towards the end of the summer are "Summer Dance Hybrid" and "Telegraph" an heirloom English variety. Texas A&M also recommends "Diva" and "Sweet Success" which can be ordered from Park Seed Co.



Huge 14-inch fruits are flavorful and never bitter!

- **Variety:** Sweet Success Hybrid
- **Days to Maturity:** 54
- **Fruit Length:** 14 in
- **Spread:** 36 inches
- **Height:** 6-8 inches

<http://parkseed.com/cucumber/c/cucumber/>



Japanese burpless variety with high resistance to Downy and Powdery mildew.

- **Variety:** Summer Dance Hybrid
- **Days to Maturity:** 55
- **Fruit Length:** 9 in
- **Spread:** 18-22 in
- **Height:** 36-48 in
-

<http://www.burpee.com/vegetables/cucumbers/>

As with all plants, edible or otherwise, the real trick to healthy, productive plants is to research what growing conditions the plant prefers and doing your best to provide them. Even a few days of stress can cause a ripple effect of damage. Ornamental plants will probably recover, but you only get one chance to get it right with vegetables and other edible plants. That's why it is so important to put some thought into choosing both your growing site and your vegetable varieties. Here are some additional resources and FAQs for growing healthy cucumber plants.

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/vegetables/cucumber.html>

<https://www.klru.org/ctg/resource/cucumber-growing/>

Turkey Stuffed Peppers submitted by Martha Grizzel

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb 93% lean ground turkey
- 1 garlic, minced
- 1/4 onion, minced
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 3 large sweet red bell peppers, washed
- 1 cup fat free chicken broth
- 1/4 cup tomato sauce
- 1 1/2 cups cooked brown rice
- Olive oil spray
- 6 tbsp part skim shredded cheddar



5 Smart Points 221 calories 1 hour
Yield: 6 servings, Serving Size: 1/2 pepper

PREPARATION

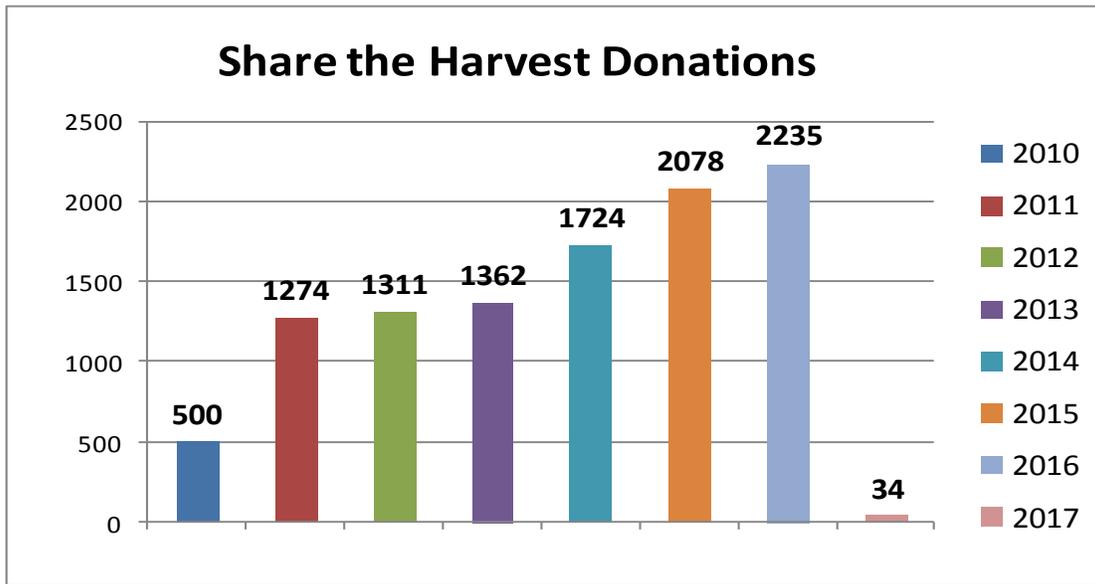
Heat oven to 400°F. Lightly spray olive oil spray in a medium nonstick skillet and heat on a medium heat. Add onion, garlic and cilantro and sauté about 2 minutes, add ground turkey, salt, garlic powder, cumin and cook meat for 4 to 5 minutes until meat is completely cooked through. Add 1/4 cup of tomato sauce and 1/2 cup of chicken broth, mix well and simmer on low for about 5 minutes. Combine cooked rice and meat together.

Cut the bell peppers in half lengthwise, and remove all seeds. Spoon 2/3 cup meat mixture into each pepper half and place in a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Top each with 1 tbsp cheese. Pour the remainder of the chicken broth on the bottom of the pan. Cover tight with aluminum foil and bake for about 45 minutes. Carefully remove the foil and serve right away.

Nutrition Information

- **Amount Per Serving:**
- Smart Points: 5
- Points +: 6
- Calories: 221
- Total Fat: 3g
- Saturated Fat: g
- Cholesterol: 61mg
- Sodium: 248mg
- Carbohydrates: 19g
- Fiber: 3g
- Sugar: 1g
- Protein: 18g

Harvest Update



Total Pounds Per Year

Mark Your Calendar

May 20, 2017

Propagation Presentation

by

*Denton County Master Gardener
at 10:30 am followed by catered
lunch under the pergola.*

Gardening Tips

Chigger Prevention and Relief submitted by Lisa Ingalls

The best remedy for chiggers is to avoid getting them! Some people have good luck with the natural products, including essential oils. We also have a sock of sulfur available to shake onto your legs and shoes. Many of us use traditional bug spray containing Deet. I used to get the Deep Woods Off but I've found that the Family Care Off with only 15% Deet seems to work ok, especially for the short trips to just water and do a quick harvest. If I'm staying at the garden for hours, I use the strong stuff! However, occasionally, I forget to apply or somehow don't apply it well enough (shoes, socks, pant legs, arms, around waist). I can feel them starting to settle in before I can make it home!

Here are my tips for getting them washed off well so they don't "settle in" for the night.

1. Shower when arriving home. I use a scrubby washcloth and scrub down starting at my neck and working my way to my toes. Pay particular attention to areas that they can hide. Chiggers enjoy warm, dark places.
2. After drying, I apply antiseptic mouthwash (generic Listerine - gold, because I don't want to be blue) to all the likely hiding places. I'm very liberal about pouring a tablespoon or two into my palm and splashing it around in all the likely places. I rub it in and let it dry. It stings a little but it works so well that I don't care!

Diatomaceous Earth is a great insecticide in the garden. But it is just as good inside the home also. I recently was plagued by ants "marching two by two" through my bathroom and around the pet bowls. I dusted Diatomaceous Earth (food grade - the kind for gardening, not pools) in the area near the baseboards. I made sure it was in the cracks of the baseboard and not all over the floor where my cats could lick it. And then I've left it there. The cats don't notice it and the ants have been gone for weeks! *Submitted by Lisa Ingalls*



Tips for Growing Heirloom Tomatoes – contains lots of homemade remedies for blight, calcium deficiencies, and a mixture for the planting holes: <http://www.underwoodgardens.com/heirloom-tomato-growing-tips/>

Tips on early planting of Tomatoes: <http://kxan.com/2017/02/11/weekend-gardener-planting-tomatoes/>

A downloadable Garden journal and other seed starting logs:
http://www.underwoodgardens.com/downloads/garden_journal.pdf

A new blog **Five Must Grow Tomatoes for Texas** : <http://masterofhort.com/2012/03/five-must-grow-tomatoes-by-william-d-adams/>

Meet the Gardener . . Martha Grizzel (Bed 10 & 11)



My most favorite thing about belonging to The Giving Garden is the camaraderie of like-minded people

- Lives in Carrollton, married and has 3 married daughters and 5 grandchildren.
- As a board member of the Giving Garden I'm responsible for tallying volunteer hours, proofreading outgoing materials, interviewing prospective gardeners and grant submissions.
- Executive Assistant at Allegiance Capital Corporation for 19 years.
- I joined the Giving Garden to be part of a group interested in giving back to our community.
- I am inspired about gardening because there is always something new to learn. For example, I just began growing my own seedlings and I'm having a blast watching my new babies. I also love the great group of people we call our Giving Garden community.
- The three adjectives family and friends would use to describe me are positive, caring and patient.
- My favorite vegetable is arugula - I love its spicy kick!
- The last movie I saw was "La La Land".
- Favorite hobby besides gardening is needlework.
- I wish I knew how to play the piano.
- If I could travel anywhere I would go to Hawaii - I've always wanted to stand behind the waterfalls.

Meet the Gardener . . . Elric Howard (Bed 32)



My most favorite thing about belonging to The Giving Garden is getting to meet and volunteer with a wonderful group of people with the same interest.

- Lives in Carrollton with wife Cecilia. We have one daughter, Dakota and two dogs Chocolate and Peanut.
- Retired owner of a nursery. In post retirement, I'm a driver for Bancroft and Sons Transportation.
- I was inspired to become a gardener because I find it relaxing and I enjoy watching how nature turns a seed into a plant.
- I joined the Giving Garden so I could have an opportunity to grow many vegetables.
- The three adjectives family and friends would use to describe me are dedicated, hard-working, and passionate about my interests.
- My favorite vegetable is corn.
- The last movie I saw was "Star Wars: The Force Awakens".
- Favorite hobby besides gardening is collecting baseball cards.
- I wish I knew how to fix anything; be a man of all trades.
- If I could travel anywhere I would go to Alaska

The Giving Garden Board Members

Terri Barrett
Plot 16
tyb1848@yahoo.com

Cindy Baxley
Plot 9
cindy8675309@msn.com

Martha Grizzel
Plots 10 & 11
mgrizzel@allcapcorp.com

Willie Lane
Plots 17 & 18
wgl1251@verizon.net

Laura Margadonna
Plots 14 & 15
lsm033@verizon.net

Angela Glover
Plots 22 & 29
Yeshua73@hotmail.com

Doug Forbes
Plots 1 & 2
Doug1020@aol.com

About The Giving Garden of Carrollton

The Giving Garden of Carrollton is a non-profit community garden that is jointly developed by Keep Carrollton Beautiful and Aldersgate United Methodist Church (AUMC). The goal for the community garden is to provide a sustainable community garden opportunity for the citizens of Carrollton, without regard to demographic or socioeconomic status.



Birthday Celebrations

Cindy Baxley - April 4

Kim Lester - April 15

Vicki Pippin - April 26

Elric Howard - June 6

Carolyn Rice - June 22

