



The Giving Garden Of Carrollton

Volume 11, Issue 1

January—March 2020

From the Board by Laura Margadonna

It seems like just yesterday we were rushing to finish our Christmas shopping. Now, finally, winter is grudgingly losing its grip, and spring is forcing its way in with warmer, sunny days. Don't let the warmer temps fool you, winter isn't over yet. Our last frost date is March 15th which coincidentally is one day after our first 3P meeting. So, hold off on buying and setting out your tomatoes for just a little while longer.

We had a great turnout for our Spring Orientation meeting on February 8th. Terri Barrett gave us an inspiring and informative presentation on Aldersgate UMC Food Share, which reinforced why it's important for us to grow organic and nutritious food, not only for ourselves, but also those in our community who are in need.

We socialized, picked up some information, bought cookbooks and T shirts, caught up with returning gardeners, and met new members. Thanks to 1 2 Tree, we had lots of free mulch to refresh our garden paths and make the garden look new again. Our nine Hebron High student volunteers were no slackers, and along with the garden members, made short work of the mountains of mulch. They enjoyed it so much they asked when they could come back and do it again.

We still have those bleak days with the cutting winds that make you think spring will never get here. On those days, I like to visit a nursery, like Calloways, and enjoy the fragrance and colors of all the blooming plants. I was also able to visit one of the Coppell community gardens on one of the pleasant days. More about that later. In this newsletter, we've got some "To Do" lists for the next couple of months, some seed starting tips, a recipe from our cookbook, introductions to a couple of our new gardeners, and much more. Enjoy!

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February 8th Spring Orientation



February 8th Workday



February 8th Workday (Continued)



TO DO LISTS

March

Plant: food crops

- Chard, cucumber, eggplant, endive, Malabar spinach, mustard, peppers, tomatillos (you need at least two!), tomatoes, beans, cantaloupe

Plant: herbs

- Nasturtiums, chives, catnip, fennel, horseradish, feverfew, oregano, thyme, rosemary, Mexican mint marigold, peppermint, lemongrass (after last freeze)

Fertilize

- Add compost to beds as you cut back dormant perennials. Fertilize with slow-release granular late in the month or as dormant perennials leaf out

Prep

- Add compost to vegetable gardens along with organic fertilizer in prep for more summer crops

Other tasks

- Keep floating row cover available; avoid covering plants with plastic

April

Plant: food crops

- Chard, cucumber, eggplant, endive, Malabar spinach, mustard, peppers, tomatillos (you need at least two!), tomatoes, beans, cantaloupe

Plant: herbs

- Basil, lemon balm, lemon verbena, bay laurel

Insects

- Watch for aphids and spider mites. It's easy to spray them off with a hard blast of water. Be sure to get the undersides of the leaves.
- Aphids and other insects can create sooty mold on plants, a fungus that develops from their secretions (honeydew). Wash off the culprits and the leaves. Remove damaged leaves to the trash (not the compost pile).
- Watch for tomato hornworms on tomatoes: squish or spray the plants with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a natural caterpillar control that won't harm you –only caterpillars!
- Walk the garden in early morning to pick off stink bugs and largus bugs from tomatoes. Check under the leaves for eggs.

Treat for grasshoppers while young. If you wait, you won't be able to deal with them. Effective baits include Nolo Bait or Semaspore.

Seed Priming Tips for Vegetable Gardeners January 31, 2020 by Barbara Pleasant

I had been a vegetable gardener for years when I discovered the difference seed priming can make with vegetable seeds that are slow or erratic sprouters. In my first try, I watched with amazement as parsnip seedlings from primed seeds popped up like little soldiers. A different technique resulted in beet seeds that emerged with the speed of radishes, while a third method gave me spinach seedlings less than a week after planting. Everyone should know these tricks!



A simple soak primes spinach seeds for fast, uniform germination

What is Seed Priming?

Seed priming involves procedures that initiate the germination process before the seeds are planted, resulting in higher germination rates and faster emergence of seedlings. For most seed priming methods, seeds are soaked in water for a few hours and then kept moist inside enclosed containers for varying time periods at room temperature.

Seeds of most vegetables don't require priming because they are fast and enthusiastic sprouters by nature. But while tomato seeds sprout fast, peppers and eggplant benefit from seed priming to hasten germination. Here are seed priming tips for 12 vegetables that benefit from these special procedures.

9 Vegetables That Respond to Seed Priming

Beet seeds have thick, wrinkled seed coats that soften when "washed" in several changes of water. Place seeds in a jar, cover them with room temperature water, and drain off and replace the water every 30 minutes. After six changes of water, many of the natural germination inhibitors present in the seed coats are removed. Drain the primed beet seeds on paper towels overnight and plant the next day. Primed beet seeds emerge in 4 to 5 days, compared to 7 to 12 days for dry seeds.

Carrot and celery seeds have immature embryos surrounded by hard seed coats, so dry-planted seeds often take two weeks to germinate. To speed things up, soak the seeds in room temperature water for 24 hours, drain on paper towels, and plant as soon as the seeds are dry enough to handle. Primed carrot seeds should be up and growing within 7 days.



Primed celery seeds grow into bigger, more robust seedlings

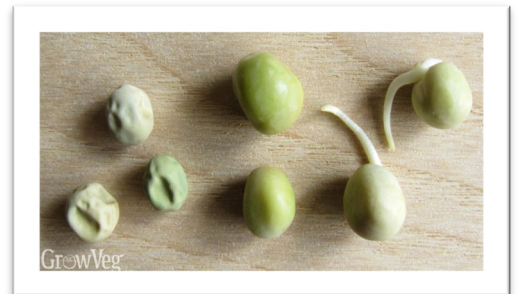
Eggplant and pepper germination time can be cut in half by making a tea from dried marigold blossoms, and soaking seeds in it for a few hours. Then arrange the seeds on a paper towel that has been thoroughly dampened with marigold tea, and keep in an airtight container for four days. Plant immediately and expect seedlings within 5 days. If you don't have marigold blossoms, use plain water.

Seed Priming Tips for Vegetable Gardeners (Continued)

Okra seeds can take two weeks to germinate unless you help them absorb water by cracking into their hard seed coats. Use a nail clipper to nick each seed on the opposite side from the little eye; you will hear the seed coat crack. Then soak the seeds in water for 24 hours. When promptly planted in warm, moist soil, primed okra seeds will be up and growing in only 5 to 7 days.

Parsley seeds sprout faster when primed with hot water. Place the seeds in a small dish, cover them with very warm (110°F/43°C) water, and let sit overnight. Pour off any seeds that float and strain the others onto a paper towel. Keep the seeds in an airtight container on a damp paper towel, and plant when the white radicles show.

Pea seeds that are soaked in water for 24 hours will germinate faster and grow into larger, more robust seedlings compared to dry-seeded peas. When held in a moist container at room temperature, soaked seeds will fully germinate in about five days, and should be promptly planted.



Soaking peas for 24 hours speeds up germination and produces heartier seedlings

Parsnip germination is hugely improved by soaking the seeds in water for 4 hours and then germinating them on damp paper towels until the radicles start to show, which often takes 5 days. When primed parsnip seeds are planted as soon as they germinate, seedlings are visible in about a week.

Note from Laura:

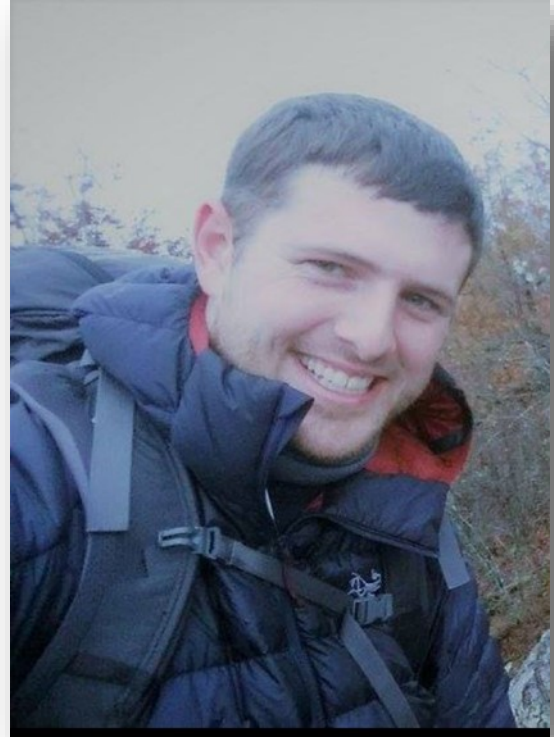
This article was found on <https://www.growveg.com/guides/seed-priming-tips-for-vegetable-gardeners/>, a website that contains articles by UK and US authors. My experience at the Giving Garden is that okra seeds germinate very quickly after soaking in lukewarm water overnight without nicking them. I have never tried soaking carrot seeds but I'm going to test their theory at home and see how that works. I'll plant soaked seed and see what the difference is in sprouting time.

A Shout Out

This is an e-mail from Debbie Fast, AUMC Food Share director, to one of our Board members, Terri Barrett after Terri informed her of a 21-pound harvest donation made to Food Share on January 25th.

"Hi Terri - That is wonderful!! It means so much to our recipients to receive the fruits of your labor. They love getting fresh produce! Please know we appreciate all of you that faithfully give of your time and cultivate such generous contributions to needy families in our community. Kudos to January's green thumbs! Thank you and have a blessed day!!"

Meet the Gardener ... Justin Hiss (Bed #24)



- Justin is single and lives in Carrollton.
- He works as a Datacenter Technician in the Dallas area for IBM Cloud.
- Justin joined The Giving Garden because he had initially aided in the creation of the Giving Garden as his official Eagle Scout project for Troop 753 and has always had a passion for gardening.
- His favorite hobby besides gardening is backpacking and exploring the outdoors.
- Justin's favorite thing about belonging to The Giving Garden is seeing the work we put in to help families in need.
- Three adjectives that friends and family use to describe him are: Dependable, organized, and considerate.
- His favorite vegetable is Okra.
- The last movie he saw was "Avengers: End Game".
- Justin is inspired to garden by a deep passion for the outdoors and feeling a connection to a hobby that was shared with his late grandparents.
- If he could travel anywhere, he would go to Sutherland Falls, New Zealand
- If he could meet any three people, living or dead, who would they be? Robert Baden-Powell, Theodore Roosevelt, and Bill Gates
- Justin wishes he knew how to: Predict winning Lottery numbers.

Meet the Gardeners ... Mia and Chaz Anderson (Bed #20)



- Mia & Chaz live in downtown Carrollton & joined the garden in December 2019
- They have three cats and a fish.
- They both work full-time in Driver Network Operations for Grubhub. They run their own business called "Hearth and Hovel" specializing in indoor plants and nature-inspired home décor.
- Mia's favorite past times are watching British gardening shows, cooking and drawing. Chaz' favorite hobbies, besides gardening, are making music, video games and reading science fiction.
- The three adjectives friends and family would use to describe them: Mia:
- Optimistic, creative and loving. Chaz: Goofy, curious and quick-witted.
- The last movie they saw was "Mary Poppins Returns".
- Their favorite vegetable is Brussels Sprouts.
- Their inspiration for gardening is the idea of being able to grow their own food, and both love being outside and spending time in nature.
- Their favorite thing about being a garden member is how passionate and excited everyone is!
- If they could travel anywhere it would be New Zealand
- If Mia could meet any three people, they would be: Monty Don, David Tennant, and

Last week, I decided to visit one of Coppel's community gardens. I have visited their two gardens several times over the years and got the idea for our information kiosk from them.

The Ground Delivery community garden is off Denton Tap Rd. by the post office and was established in July 1998. It was named Ground Delivery because of its proximity to the local Post Office. (Notice the mail trucks in background?) I learned that they recently opened a third garden with a greenhouse in the Old Town section. When the original Seed Committee was putting together plans to start The Giving Garden, the Coppel gardens provided a blueprint for how to go about it.

On the day I visited, Julia (no last name) was wheelbarrowing compost to top off beds for the spring planting. My experience is that most gardeners are friendly and usually eager to talk about gardening and share tips. They had bunching onions planted around the perimeter of some beds as a possible pest deterrent and Julia pulled up two big bunches to donate to The Giving Garden. We chatted awhile and here are some things she shared



- The City of Coppel purchases compost for them and pays for their water
- They mainly compost leaves which members pick up off the curbs of the streets
- They stopped composting food scraps as neighbors complained about smells and flies
- Their beds have been infected with Fusarium Wilt due to gardeners composting diseased plants. Now they are unable to grow cucumbers. We always caution members to NOT compost diseased plants, but after hearing this, maybe to be safe we shouldn't compost tomatoes or cucumber plants period.
- After hardening off her tomato seedlings, Julia plants them in early March and covers them with buckets with the bottoms cut out. She puts the covers on when the temps are too cold.
- Black 2-gallon pots, with bottoms cut out, are used to protect new sugar snap or English Peas until established.

A Visit to Ground Delivery Garden (Continued)



These are the same as the pickle buckets we get from Jason's Deli.



They do not have a fence around their garden, so the pots and buckets also protect the young plants from the rabbits.



These work for small transplants.

Okra Omelet Supreme

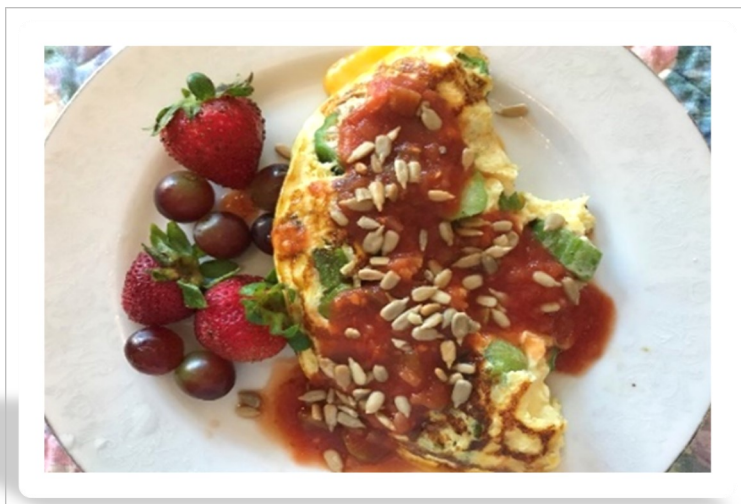
Submitted by Terri Barrett

INGREDIENTS

- ◇ 3-5 okra
- ◇ 2 eggs
- ◇ Milk or buttermilk (2 tablespoons)
- ◇ Olive oil spray
- ◇ Salt & pepper
- ◇ 2 – 3 tablespoons Picante sauce [You may substitute Herdez Salsa Verde for Picante sauce]
- ◇ 1 teaspoon of Sunflower Seeds
- ◇ Tillamook Sharp Cheddar Cheese (or whatever kind is your favorite)

PREPARATION

1. Slice 3-5 okras on the diagonal to make about a half cup.
2. Spray olive oil in omelet pan, turn on medium heat, and cook okra slices until tender.
3. Mix 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons of milk, salt and pepper to taste in bowl.
4. Pour mixture over cooked okra, cover pan with lid, and turn heat down to medium-low. Cook until egg is no longer runny – be patient.
5. Slice Tillamook Sharp Cheddar (or whatever is your favorite) cheese into thin, small pieces, lay pieces on top of cooked egg mixture and re-cover pan.
6. Let cook for about 2 minutes until cheese melts. Remove omelet from pan with spatula and fold over onto plate. Pour picante sauce and sprinkle sunflower seeds on top. Garnish plate with fresh fruit.



Harvest Update



Total Pounds Per Year

Did you know?

Planting a couple of radish seeds near your cucumber plants will protect against cucumber beetles. You won't eat these radishes, but rather let them grow, flower, and go to seed.

Marigolds make excellent pest-repellant companion plantings. Blanketing an area with French marigolds (*Tagetes patula*) suppresses nematodes. A more typical garden sprinkling of them provides trap plants (diverting pests and attracting their predators).

You should keep green beans away from: Beets or anything from the onion family. Onions impede the growth of bean plants.

Dill and carrots are both in the Umbelliferae family. If dill is allowed to flower, it can cross pollinate with carrots which is why the **two should not be planted together**. Dill can also cross-pollinate fennel so do not plant them next to each other.

Dill is a great companion plant for cucumbers.

Basil and tomatoes were made to go together, not only in sauces but in the garden. This herb helps tomatoes produce greater yields and it repels both flies and mosquitoes.

Tomatoes and potatoes are affected by the same blight, so keep these plants separate to prevent the spread of pests or disease.

Get more information on Companion planting at

<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/companion-planting-guide-31301> .

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

Laura Margadonna
Plots 14 & 15
lsm033@verizon.net

Doug Forbes
Plot 1
Doug1020@aol.com

Angela Torres
Plot 26
Nellyat59@gmail.com

About The Giving Garden of Carrollton

The Giving Garden of Carrollton is a non-profit community garden that was 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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

What: Citizen's Evening

When: Wednesday, March 4th, from 6:00 – 8:30 pm

Where: Carrollton Senior Center,
1720 Keller Springs Rd.

What: 3P Meeting/Plant sale

When: Saturday, March 14th, at 10:00am

Where: Giving Garden Pergola



1/9	Chaz Anderson
2/2	Eric Jones
2/27	Tina Mixon
3/18	Lyn Martin
4/4	Cindy Baxley
4/17	Bill Rich
4/26	Vicki Pippin
5/26	Nathan Murugesh
6/20	Janice Manous
6/24	Debbie Rich
6/26	Lisa Ingalls