



All Things Food  
& Linking Hands  
present...



# COMMUNITY LUNCH & LEARN

## "Container Gardening"

Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## Workshop Notes

Including:

- Why Grow Your Own Food?
- Container Gardening 101
- Recommended Varieties
- Quick Compost Recipe
- Resources...and more!

"BUILDING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS"

## Container Gardening Workshop Notes

### Why Grow Your Own Food? For many reasons, including...

- Tastier fruits, vegetables and herbs
- Fresh, ultimate in nutrients
- Saves us money
- Organic - free of pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers
- Reduces CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. Did you know that 1/3 of the world's emissions are from agriculture? Oil is used in farming equipment (19%), fertilizers (31%), irrigation (13%), transportation (16%), but also in processing and packaging.
- Connects us with nature
- Connects us with family and neighbours - fun and memorable experience for children, grandchildren
- Local food creates healthy, resilient communities

### Step-by Step Guide to Container Gardening

- 1. Choose your container site carefully.**
  - Does it get at least **6 hours of direct sun for heat-loving plants** such as tomatoes, and at least **3 hours for more tender plants** such as lettuces?
  - Is it **sheltered** or exposed to high winds and late afternoon sun, the hottest part of the day? Containers have limited space for root growth, and too much heat may stunt or kill the roots, while high winds may damage the plant or knock it over.
- 2. Pick a big container with adequate drainage.**
  - Bigger is always better with containers, but if you're planning to fill a large container with herbs and vegetables, make sure it's in the **right spot** before filling it with soil or you won't be able to move it. Make sure the container **is big enough to support the plant fully grown**, and that it has **adequate drainage**.
  - Make sure that the container has **never held products that are toxic** for plants or people.
- 3. Stay away from black pots.**
  - Just about anything can serve as a planter or container, but **avoid black** as it will absorb too much heat.
- 4. Never use garden soil in containers.**
  - Use **organic potting soil** specifically formulated for containers.
  - Monique's recommended soil mix (if you are making your own):
    - 1 part compost or peat moss
    - 1 part soil
    - 1 part vermiculite or perlite (helps lighten/aerate the soil)
- 5. Never let the soil dry out.**
  - **Water often** during hot weather. If you're going to be away for a few days, place the containers in large plastic pot liners filled with water.
- 6. Fertilize every two weeks.**
  - Vegetables are greedy feeders so during the height of the growing season, plant to **fertilize** every two weeks with an organic solution such as fish emulsion or liquid seaweed.

*Adapted from Alive! Magazine, April 2011 Issue.*

## Recommended Varieties for Container Gardening

### Small containers

Leafy greens: leaf lettuce, spinach, swiss chard, kale

### Medium containers

Cabbage

Cucumbers

Green beans

Cherry and patio tomatoes

### Large containers

Beets

Carrots

Eggplant

Peppers

Radishes

### Extra-large containers

Standard tomatoes

Herbs: basil, bay leaf, chives, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme



Container Gardening  
Inspiration!



## Natural Pest Control

Look out for pest warning signs, such as chewed leaves, ragged leaf edges, leaves that are rolled up, and holes in leaves. Check for culprits on the underside of leaves and at the juncture of stems and branches.

### Common Pests:

- aphids (found on peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers)
- cabbageworm (found on lettuce, spinach, kale)
- cucumber beetles
- mealybug (cottony-white, fluffy)
- slugs (found on various veggies)
- tomato hornworms (large green caterpillar)

### How to Deal with Pests:

- Simply pick off or cut off the offending part of the plant.
- The aloe vera plant contains a bitter-tasting gel that insects don't like. Mix the gel with water and spray it on plants.
- Home-made insecticidal soap: Mix 2 tbsp. of biodegradable soap (like Ivory) with 1L of water. Stir thoroughly and use in a plant sprayer.
- Repel pests by planting other plants/herbs nearby; e.g. the cabbageworm can be repelled with thyme or dill.
- Crushed egg shells around plants (particularly effective for eliminating slugs)
- Cinnamon is an effective, natural fungicide.

Only a **small percentage of the insects** in your garden **are actually pests**; many are **beneficial**, like ladybugs, the praying mantis, green lacewigs, and parasitic wasps.

*Tomato Hornworm*



*The Cucumber Beetle*



*Slug*



## Quick Compost Method/Recipe from Monique O'Brien

### Carbon/Nitrogen ratios of various materials

Food waste	15-1	
Wood	700-1	
Sawdust	500-1	
Paper	170-1	
Grass clippings	19-1	
Leaves	from 80-1 to 40-1	
Fruit wastes	35-1	
Rotted manure	20-1	
Corn stalks	60-1	
Straw	80-1	
Humus	10-1	→ An average of <u>30 carbon to 1 nitrogen</u> is needed.

### Quick Compost Recipe

Remove grass.

Layers: 15 cm (6") brown

5-10 cm (2-4") green

2.5 cm (1") black

Moisten in between layers.

### Materials

**BROWN:** (dry, carbon-rich)

Dry leaves or grass, newspaper, dead plant clippings, wood, branches, hay, straw, nut shells.

**GREEN:** (wet, nitrogen-rich)

Grass clippings, veggies and fruit, coffee grounds, manure, tea bags, fresh leaves.

**BLACK:** soil, finished compost



## **Resources**

### Books

*The All Seasons Gardener: Getting More from Your Canadian Garden*, Mark Cullen

*From Seed to Table: A Practical Guide to Eating and Growing Green*, Janette Haase

*The Vegetable Gardener's Bible*, Edward Smith

### Local Resources

Home Hardware, Winchester: plants, seeds, gardening tools, potting soil

Homestead Organics, Berwick: organic seeds, fish emulsion

Greta's Organic Gardens, Greely: organic seeds

Marlin's Orchards, Lancaster: plants, tools, organic seeds, mushroom compost, potting soils, sheep manure

### Websites

[www.seeds.ca](http://www.seeds.ca): Heritage Seed Sources

<http://vegvariety.cce.cornell.edu>: Gardeners Rate Vegetable Varieties

[www.allthingsfoodbouffe360.ca](http://www.allthingsfoodbouffe360.ca): All Things Food-related in SD&G

### Mail Order Seeds, Bulbs, Plants

William Dam Seeds

Greta's Organic Gardens

Seed Savers Exchange

Dominion Seed House

The Cottage Gardener