What happened this week?

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

A Weekly Newsletter

brought to you by

Hello!

I am a military spouse, originally from Columbus, OH. My degree is in Business Management, but being outdoors and working with and learning about plants has always been my passion. When I'm not talking to my potted plants, I'm hiking, riding my electric bicycle, ballroom dancing, looking at potential investment properties to purchase, or planning day trips/mini vacations.

Working with the Master Gardeners in the Edible Garden has been a privilege and a wealth of information! They are a valuable resource who are happy to answer questions anytime. Send them an email at FairfaxCommunityGardens@gmail.com if you have questions of your own!

Alissa Knapp

Assistant Garden Plot Coordinator

What happened this week? *11/30/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Mulched beds in the orchard

Wrapping Up!

The Extension Master Gardeners mulched some trees in the orchard and put their tools away for the season.

A successful growing season it was! 2,455 lbs. of produce were donated to a local food pantry.

The cover crop mix from 10/26 took root well and will remain in place until spring.

What frost?!

November 12 was the first frost date this fall and there have been subsequent frost days since, however, the crops bounced back from them all! These will continue to overwinter and be pulled and composted in the spring.

From left to bottom right: Collards (planted 8/3), Kale (planted 9/14), and Rutabaga (planted 9/28).

What happened this week? ***11/16/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Swiss Chard and Kale
2. Planted allium and tulips bulbs, and a blueberry bush

The Final Harvest

The Master Gardeners have completed their final harvest for the year! As with many things, gardening is trial and error. The EMGs are going to see which crops will overwinter. Some may die and return in the spring; some may die completely, but that is alright too! The decomposition of the crops will enrich the soil with nitrogen. The following crops are going to be left in place: Kale, Swiss Chard, Rutabaga, Peas, and Garlic.

Today's Harvest!

Swiss Chard – planted 9/28

Kale – planted 9/14

Planting for Spring!

Blueberry bush

Allium and Tulip bulbs

11/16/23

How the Master Gardeners plant bulbs

1. Position where desired
2. Dig a hole about 6” deep. The EMGs used a combination of a trowel, a bulb digging tool, and a drill with a spiral stirring bit attached.

3. They sprayed each bulb with deer and rabbit repellant. This makes the bulbs taste undesirable, and also prevents squirrels from wanting to dig them up for a snack!

4. The dirt was then backfilled, and the EMGs finished with sprinkling Deer Scram granular repellant on top of the soil for additional protection.

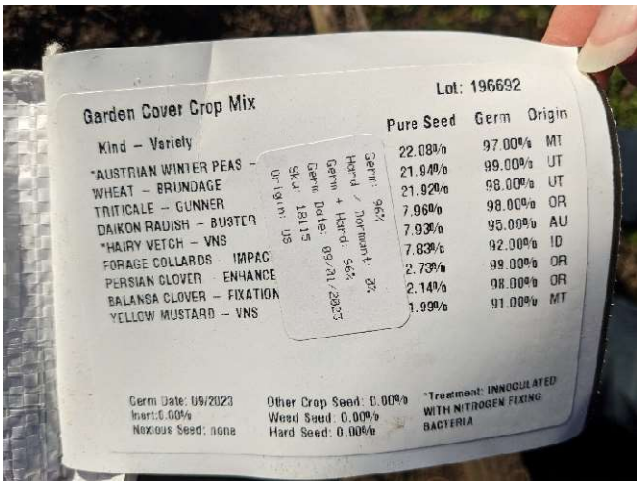
What happened this week? *10/26/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Swiss Chard, Bok Choy, and Napa Cabbage
2. Weeded the empty beds
3. Planted 2 new apple trees and cover crop
4. Spread a layer of leaf mulch on the empty beds

Harvest!

Bok Choy – planted 10/5 | Swiss Chard – planted 9/28 | Napa Cabbage – planted 9/28



Prep & Plant

In the empty beds, the Master Gardeners pulled weeds, spread a winter cover crop, and spread leaf mulch to prepare for the winter season. Each step is important to ensure the soil is rich, nutrient dense, and free of most weeds come springtime.

Apple Trees!

10/26/23

Two brand-new additions were added to the orchard adjacent to the Edible Garden: two semi-dwarf varieties of apple trees, one named ‘Enterprise’, and another named ‘Liberty’. Like these, most apple trees are grafted. Grafting involves taking two different types of plant material and permitting them to grow together.

In the photo to the left, the scarring you see on the trunk is where the *scion* and the *rootstock* are grown together. The scion is one piece of plant material used for the fruit it will provide. The rootstock is a different piece of plant material that’s roots are used because of their disease resistance.

Because Green Spring Gardens has many cedar trees, there is the chance that cedar apple rust could affect a newly planted apple tree that isn’t resistant to the disease.

First, a hole is dug that is twice the size of the pot. This is to ensure that the young tree roots can easily spread unimpeded.

Next, the tree is removed from the pot, and any roots that have wound around the inside of the pot are stretched out.

To ensure the soil is thoroughly saturated, it is watered both before and after putting the tree in.

Last, the soil is added back to the hole, being sure not to tamp down too hard, as this could close any much-needed air pockets. A layer of mulch is added around the truck, keeping a 4” distance. These trees will be watered almost daily for a few weeks, and then weekly thereafter.

What happened this week? *10/19/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Red Russian Kale, Swiss Chard, Collards, Radishes, Bok Choy, and Sweet Potatoes
2. Removed old blueberry bushes and added new
3. Added leaf mulch to empty beds
4. Cleaned up the beds containing sweet potatoes
5. Turned the compost pile

Harvest!

Sweet Potatoes – planted 6/8
Bok Choy – planted 10/5
Swiss Chard – planted 9/28
Collards – planted 9/14
Red Russian Kale – planted 9/14
Radishes – direct-sown 9/21

10/19/23

Tools of the Trade

While there are dozens of tools used in the world of gardening, one of our Master Gardeners mentioned this foldable handsaw. She loves that she can both harvest squashes and saw down thick woody bushes with the same tool!

Blueberries

The old variety 'Pink Lemonade' blueberries weren't performing very well. They were removed and two new Highbush blueberry bushes were planted.

How do the Extension Master Gardeners decide what to plant in the Edible Garden?

Beginning their first season in 2019, the Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) had ideas of what they wanted to plant – peppers, tomatoes, leafy greens, cucumbers, etc. So, they began by trying all these crops in various beds throughout the Edible Garden. As the season progressed, they were able to take notice of what grew well.

In subsequent years, the EMGs used their growing knowledge to try different tactics. Environmental factors came into play: sunlight, water requirements, wind, soil composition, heat, and pests and diseases were all considered.

By keeping a written record of what was planted in each bed, they avoided planting crops from the same family in the same bed. They also determined which varieties perform the best by the records they keep of the germination rate of their seeds and the yield of each harvest.

Fast-forward to today, the EMGs use their well-established knowledge to plan the Edible Garden each season. They use their records to choose the best-performing varieties of crops. They calculate the timing for starting seeds, transplanting seedlings, and planting relative to frost dates, and they can determine the appropriate quantity of seeds or plants to put in each garden bed based on the bed's dimensions.

What happened this week? *10/12/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, Bibb lettuce, Red Russian Kale, Swiss chard, bush beans, acorn and butternut squash and tomatoes

2. Cleaned up the beds containing bush beans, tomatoes, Bibb lettuce, peppers, and squashes

This week the Master Gardeners cleaned out the beds of crops that were spent or at the end of their season and harvested any remaining veggies.

Bush Beans

Direct-sown 7/20

Peppers

Planted 5/18

Tomatoes

Planted 5/11

Bibb Lettuce

Planted 8/31

*Radishes had been planted in between the lettuce. The stumps/roots of the lettuce were left in the bed so as not to disturb the soil of the young radishes.

What happened this week? ***10/5/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, eggplant, Bibb lettuce, Red Russian Kale, and tomatoes
2. Cleaned up the bed containing eggplant
3. Planted Bok choy and peas

Harvest!

Red Russian Kale – planted 9/14
Bibb Lettuce – planted 8/31
Tomatoes – planted 5/11
Peppers – planted 5/18

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

10/5/23

Plant!

Bok choy (started indoors on 8/17 by the Master Gardener propagation team) and peas (from seed) were planted today.

To the Rescue!

The Diatomaceous Earth helped! The Collards have filled out and grown new leaves.

While sprinkling Diatomaceous Earth isn't 100% guaranteed to keep away pests, it definitely gives the crop a fighting chance.

What happened this week? *9/28/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, eggplant, bush beans, okra, butternut squash, basil, and tomatoes
2. Cleaned up the beds containing zucchini and okra
3. Picked Harlequin bugs from and scattered Diatomaceous Earth on the collards
4. Planted Rutabaga, Swiss Chard, and Napa Cabbage

Harvest!

Bush Beans – direct-sown 7/20

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

Peppers – planted 5/18

Butternut Squash – planted 6/1

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

9/28/23

The collards are under attack!

The Master Gardeners hand-picked Harlequin bugs off the collards and put them in a cup of soapy water to kill them. They are pests that eat through the collards' leaves, sometimes to the stem! A sprinkling of Diatomaceous Earth is put on the collards afterward to help discourage further pests.

Clean up!

The beds that contained zucchini and okra were cleaned up in preparation for something else next week. See how extensive the root system is for okra? The roots spread sideways to help stabilize the plant. Although they look difficult to remove, just put a shovel near the base of the plant and they will pry up!

Plant!

On the left, additional Napa cabbage was planted beside some that was previously planted. Although, these were all started from seed at the same time (8/17), not all of them grew well enough to be transplanted outside. It's perfectly acceptable to stagger planting time, and sometimes preferred. In often cases, the Master Gardeners will start from seed the same plant days or weeks apart. This practice encourages that the harvest will also be staggered.

On the right, rutabaga seeds are being planted. Having adequate spacing between plants ensures the healthiest growth. Plants that are too cramped together compete for resources – sunlight, water, and nutrients from the soil.

What happened this week? *9/21/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, eggplant, bush beans, figs, okra, and tomatoes
2. Cleaned up the bed containing Lima beans
3. Scattered Diatomaceous Earth on the collards
4. Gave a garden tour to a field trip group

Harvest!

Eggplant – direct-sown 3/9

Peppers – planted 5/18

Lima beans - planted 6/1

Bush Beans – direct-sown 7/20

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

Pests!

The collards were eaten by pests! The Master Gardeners used Diatomaceous Earth today to help prevent this from happening further. Diatomaceous Earth is comprised of fossilized remains of a type of phytoplankton called diatoms. When slugs and other pests crawl/walk over it, the jagged pieces pierce their exoskeleton and eventually cause the insects to dry out.

9/21/23

Growth

Left – Radishes direct-sown 9/14

Right – Bibb Lettuce young plants were planted on 8/31, they were originally started from seed on 8/18.

Master Gardeners in Action!

Left – Harvesting bush beans

Bottom Left – Harvesting Lima beans and cleaning out the bed

Below – Giving an Edible Garden tour to a field trip

What happened this week? *9/7/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, eggplant, Kentucky Wonder beans, lima beans, NZ Spinach, figs, Thai Basil, and tomatoes

2. Cleaned up bed that contained lima beans

Harvest!

Squashes – direct-sown 5/18

Eggplant – from seed 3/9

Peppers – planted 5/18

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

Lima Beans – direct-sown 6/1

Figs – onside Orchard

Thai Basil – adjacent herb garden

New Zealand Spinach – direct-sown 4/20

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

9/7/23

Growth

Left – Bok Choy from seed by the Master Gardener propagation Team. The foreground seedlings were planted 8/31, the background 8/17

Right – Lettuce seedlings planted directly in the Edible Garden on 8/31

Clean-Up

The season has come to an end for the lima beans. The Master Gardeners are harvesting the last of the lima beans and cleaning out the bed. The scraps are put into the compost bin to break down for next spring!

Don't do this!!!

This Master Gardener was playing a joke about wasting water. And that's exactly what he's doing! It is best to water lower to the soil level and below the leaves of the plants. Firstly, the closer the watering occurs to the soil, the less water that can be lost to evaporation. Secondly, many plants don't like wet leaves, as it may cause mildew. Also, water on leaves followed by extreme sunlight and hot temperatures can fry the leaves. Think of what happens when you place a magnifying glass in direct sunlight over an insect.

What happened this week? *8/31/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, patty pan squash, eggplant, okra, Kentucky Wonder beans, arugula, and tomatoes

2. Potted up Bibb Lettuce, Swiss Chard, and Bok Choy seedlings

Harvest!

Squashes – direct-sown 5/18

Arugula – direct-sown 6/1

Eggplant – from seed 3/9

Peppers – planted 5/18

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

Okra – direct-sown 4/27

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

The season isn't over yet!

Although some things like bush beans and zucchini are done producing for the season, some veggies like the peppers (Figure 1) and eggplant are still producing and will continue to do so until the first frost. Actually, the pinto beans (Figure 3) aren't even ripe yet. The pods will turn brown and shrivel, and the beans will turn brown and spotted. The Master Gardeners cleaned up the beds containing zucchini, bush beans (Figure 4), and arugula (Figure 2).

Figure 1 – Peppers (planted 5/18)

Figure 2 – Arugula harvested & cleaned up (direct-sown 6/1)

Figure 3 -Unripe pinto bean pod (direct-sown 4/27)

Figure 4 – Cleaning up bed containing Bush Beans (planted 7/13)

What happened this week? *8/24/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, patty pan squash, zucchini, eggplant, New Zealand spinach, carrots, okra, Kentucky Wonder beans, bush beans, and tomatoes

2. Potted up Bibb Lettuce, Swiss Chard, and Bok Choy seedlings

Harvest!

Eggplant – from seed 3/9

Carrots – direct-sown 6/1

Peppers – planted 5/18

Squashes – direct-sown 5/18

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

Potting up!

The Master Gardeners on the propagation team potted up new seedlings of Bok Choy, Bibb Lettuce, and Swiss Chard that were started 1 week ago. This means to separate each individual seedling into its own pot. This is a good practice because as each seedling grows, its roots will wrap around the other seedlings, potentially killing them. Additionally, the more established the roots are, the more difficult they will be to pull apart without severely damaging the roots.

What happened this week? *8/17/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, patty pan squash, zucchini, eggplant, cucumber, New Zealand spinach, lima beans, Kentucky Wonder beans, Italian flat beans, and tomatoes
2. Started Bok Choi and Chinese Cabbage from seed
3. Potted up Red Russian Kale, Bibb Lettuce, and Creole Collard seedlings

Harvest!

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

Lima Beans – direct-sown 6/1

Squashes – direct-sown 5/18

Kentucky Wonder beans – direct-sown 4/27

Eggplant – from seed 3/9

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

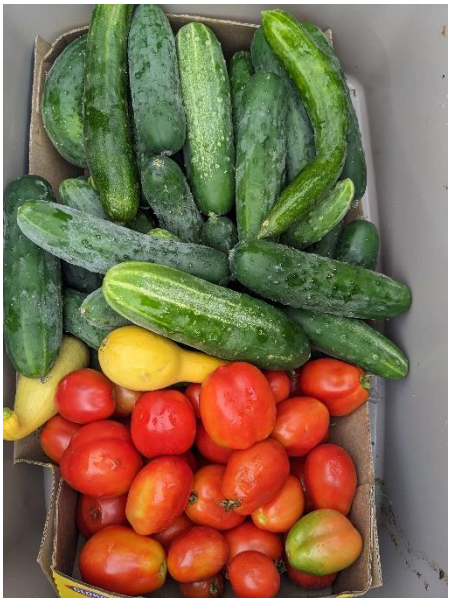
What happened this week? ***8/10/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, patty pan squash, zucchini, eggplant, cucumber, New Zealand spinach, okra, and tomatoes

2. Started Red Russian Kale and Bibb Lettuce from seed

Harvest!



Eggplant – from seed 3/9
Zucchini – direct-sown 4/27
Cucumber – direct-sown 4/13
Summer Squash – direct-sown 5/18
Tomatoes – planted 5/11
Peppers – planted 5/18

(Not everything harvested is pictured)

Growth!

Kale, Lettuce and Collards planted from seed on 8/3.
1 week old seedlings

Butternut Squash (planted 6/8)

Acron Squash (planted 6/8)

8/10/23

Invasives and Itches

Today, this vine (Figure 1) was found growing on the fence of the Edible Garden. My first thought, "Is this poison ivy?!"

Luckily, after asking a Master Gardener, I learned this was only Virginia Creeper. A hardy vine native to North America, this plant will grow just about anywhere and in any condition. Be careful to keep it off trees, bushes, or plants that you do want, as it will wrap its tendrils around and shade them out.

Figure 1 - Virginia Creeper vine

While Virginia Creeper can be invasive, it is not as much so as Oriental Bittersweet (Figure 2). This vine has been known to completely choke out and kill trees. In addition to spreading underground via roots, the plant has berries which are delectable to birds who will consume them and drop them far from the original source. The seeds have a 95% germination rate.

Figure 2 – Oriental Bittersweet vine

The best identifier of Oriental Bittersweet are its orange roots. Mature plants will develop woody stems, sometimes up to 4" in diameter.

Try to consistently cut back and/or dig up these. The more established, the more difficult it may be to dig up or cut off trees.

There is a desirable and somewhat rare variety called American Bittersweet. Go to this site by the U.S. Forest Service to help identify which variety you have.

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsbdev3_017307.pdf

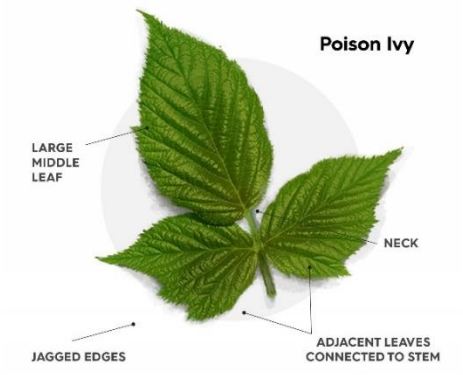


Figure 3 – Poison Ivy Identifiers

So, what does poison ivy look like? You may have heard the adage, "leaves of 3, let it be." Three leaves, an enlarged top leaf, and jagged edges are other key identifiers. Refer to Figure 3 for more information and Figure 4 for some common look-alikes that are frequently mistaken for poison ivy.

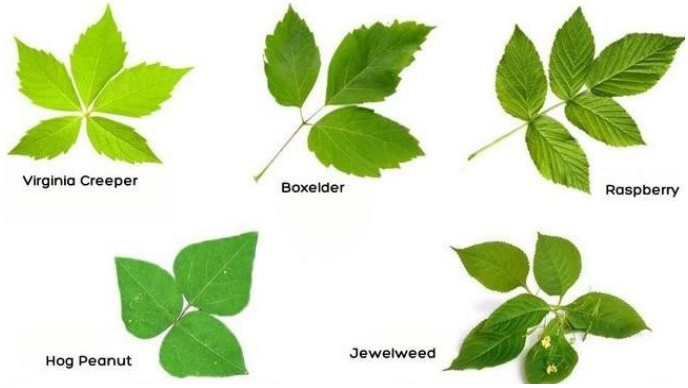


Figure 4 – Poison Ivy Look-alikes

What happened this week? ***8/3/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, patty pan squash, zucchini, eggplant, cucumber, basil, arugula, New Zealand spinach, potatoes, carrots, okra, and tomatoes

2. Started collards, cabbage, kale, Bok choi, lettuce, and Swiss chard from seed

Harvest!

Carrots – direct-sown 6/1

Cucumber – direct-sown 4/13

Eggplant – from seed 3/9

N. Zealand Spinach – direct-sown 4/6

Okra – direct-sown 5/18

Patty Pan Squash – direct-sown 5/18

Peppers – planted 5/18

Potatoes – planted 4/20

Summer Squash – direct-sown 5/18

Tomatoes – planted 5/11

Zucchini – direct-sown 4/27

Plant!

The propagation team is back! They are starting from seed Collards, Cabbage, Kale, Bok Choi, Lettuce, and Swiss Chard.

What happened this week? ***7/27/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Patty Pan Squash, Eggplant, and Okra
2. Performed maintenance like weeding, removing spent plants, and fencing in crops

Harvest!

Figure 1 – Okra (direct-sown 4/27)

Figure 2 – Eggplant (3/9), Zucchini (4/27), Yellow and Patty Pan Squashes (5/18)

Growth!

Figure 3 – Blue Lake Bush Beans (direct-sewn 7/20)

Tomatoes

A summertime favorite, tomatoes are on the top of almost every gardener's list. Although relatively easy to grow, they aren't without their problems. This week the Master Gardeners found some of their almost-ripe tomatoes sitting on the ground; they had been chewed by bunnies. A quick fix is a little bit of fencing around the tomato plants. Because bunnies can typically jump up to 2 ft high, a 3-4 ft fence is preferable. And be sure it's snug to the ground so they don't try to crawl under.

Figure 4 – Blight on Tomato Leaf

Another common issue is blight. See figure 4 to the left. This is a fungus in the form of spores that can be carried by the wind and live in the soil. The ideal breeding environment for blight is heat and humidity. The best practices for helping to avoid blight infections are to keep the leaves dry. When watering, always do so at the soil level, not overhead. One Master Gardener said that he uses straw at the base of the tomato plants because it absorbs any "bounce" of water droplets that might occur when watering.

Also, on the issue of blight, 'suckers' (new growth occurring in between two other established stems) should be removed to ensure the plant doesn't get too crowded with foliage. When there's crowding, it reduces the airflow, shades out other foliage, and ultimately puts stress on the plant. See figure 5 to the right.

Figure 5 – A 'sucker' sprouting between 2 stems

What happened this week? ***7/20/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Red Russian Kale, Creole Collards, Zucchini, Bell Peppers, Jalapeno Peppers, Banana Peppers, New Zealand Spinach, Patty Pan Squash, Cucumbers, Eggplant, and Green Beans
2. Performed maintenance like weeding and removing spent plants
3. Planted Bush Blue Lake Beans

Growth!

Figure 1 – Eggplant (direct-sown 3/9)

Figure 2 – Tomatoes (planted 5/11)

Harlequin Bug – Not a Character You Want to See

Harlequin bugs (Murgantia histrionica) are a form of stinkbug with a black and red pattern. These pests most prefer crucifers like cabbage, broccoli, and mustard, but will go to squash, beans, asparagus, corn, okra, or tomatoes when none are available. They injure host plants by sucking the fluids from plant tissue, causing the plants to wilt, brown and die

The adults winter under fallen leaves and debris and emerge in early spring. Females lay clusters of 10-13 white barrel-shaped eggs neatly in double rows. The hatched nymphs are small, round, yellowish in color with red eyes. The best defense is to drop any found adults and eggs in a bucket of soapy water, and plow all plants and rake fallen debris at the end of each gardening season.

Figure 3 – Okra (direct-sown 4/27)

Figure 4 – Harlequin Bug

What happened this week? ***7/13/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Swiss Chard, Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale, Creole Collards, Zucchini, Bell Peppers, Jalapeno Peppers, Banana Peppers, New Zealand Spinach, Summer Squash, Patty Pan Squash, Cucumbers, and Green Beans
2. Performed maintenance like weeding and removing spent plants
3. Planted Green Bush Beans

Harvest!

Figure 1 – Creole Collards and Red Russian Kale

Figure 2 – Summer Squash, Patty Pan Squash, New Zealand Spinach & Green Beans

Figure 3 – Scarlet Kale and Cucumbers

Figure 4 – Zucchini

Figure 5 – Peppers (Jalapeno, Banana and Bell)

Figure 6 – Bountiful Harvest!

Growth!

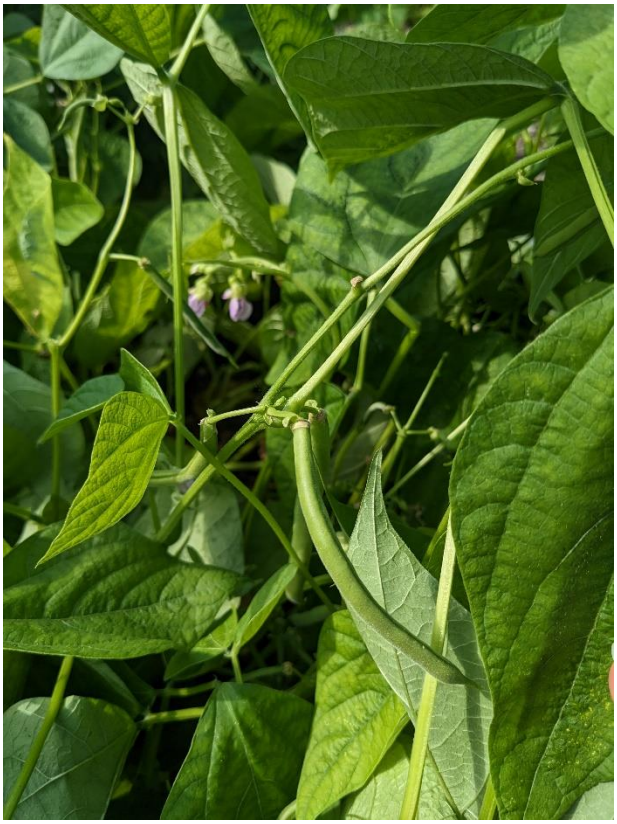


Figure 7 – Green Bush Beans (planted 5/18)

Figure 8 – Bell Peppers (planted 5/18)

Blossom End Rot

Caused by a calcium deficiency in the fruit, blossom end rot begins as a bruise on the developing fruit and eventually manifests into rot. Irregular watering and extreme heat can worsen the problem. To combat this issue, ensure there is regular watering, provide some afternoon shade on especially hot days, and add a little lime around the base of the plant to help add calcium to the soil.

Figure 9 – Zucchini with Blossom End Rot

What happened this week? ***6/29/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested Swiss Chard, Red Russian Kale, Beets, Zucchini, Savoy Cabbage, Bell Peppers, Jalapeno Peppers, Banana Peppers, New Zealand Spinach, and Arugula
2. Performed maintenance like deadheading and pruning
3. Sprinkled Bone Meal at the base of many plants

Figure 1 – Beets (planted 5/4)

Harvest!

Figure 2 – Bountiful Harvest!

Figure 3 – Jalapeno Peppers (planted 5/18)

Figure 4 – Banana Peppers (planted 5/18)

Figure 5 – Bell Peppers (planted 5/18)

Figure 6 – Yellow Leaves on Tomato Plant

Basil

Basil is a sun-loving and fragrant herb that loves to be trimmed. When harvesting/trimming your basil plant, cut the stalk at the top where the largest leaves are. Cutting off the top is doubly helpful; 1) Encouraged bushier growth, 2) Preventing flowers from forming. In Figure 7 to the right, a flower is beginning to form in the center. When a flower is permitted to form, more energy is given to reproduction of the plant, and less to growing foliage.

Figure 8 – Zucchini (planted 5/18)

Quick Tip – Tomatoes

If your tomatoes have yellowing leaves near the ground, just like these shown in Figure 6 to the left, be sure to remove them. Especially because they're close to the ground, these unhealthy leaves are the perfect gateway for pests to come to your otherwise healthy tomato plant!

Figure 7 – Basil with the start of a flower forming

Where's the Zucchini?

The Master Gardeners sprinkled Bone Meal at the base of these huge zucchini plants because they were trying to encourage less foliage growth, and more fruit growth. Bone Meal has larger relative amounts of phosphorus which are key for flowering, fruiting. and rooting.

What happened this week? ***6/22/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested New Zealand Spinach, Scarlet & Red Russian Kale, Creole Collards, Arugula, Rainbow Chard, & Garlic
2. Weeded
3. Cured Garlic

Harvest!

Figure 1 – Garlic

Figure 2 – Arugula

Did you know that the Master Gardeners donate everything they harvest from the Edible Garden? As of 6/22/23, there have been 452 pounds of fresh produce!

Figure 3 – Red Russian Kale

Figure 3 – Today's Harvest! (6/22)

Figure 4 – Rainbow Chard

Growth!

6/22/23

Figure 5 – Bell Pepper (planted 5/18)

Figure 6 – Tomatoes (planted 5/11)

Figure 7 – Zucchini (planted 5/18)

Look at the growth! A bell pepper, some tomatoes, and a zucchini are all emerging!

While the photo to the right may look like an exotic fruit, it is unfortunately from a pear tree that has succumb to Hawthorn Rust. Caused by the fungus Gymnosporangium, bright orange-red spots will occur on the leaves and/or orange fungal tubes will encompass the fruit. The fungus can complete its lifecycle if plants from both the Rosaceae (apple, pear, hawthorn, and serviceberry) and Cupressaceae (eastern red cedar and other junipers) families are within 100 yards of each other. To manage these fungal rusts, be sure not to plant susceptible Rosaceae plants within close proximity to eastern red cedar and junipers. Trim and remove infected twigs or branches on Rosaceae plants if they occur.

Figure 8 – Pear infected with Hawthorn Rust

What happened this week? ***6/15/23***

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Harvested New Zealand Spinach, Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale, and Creole Collards
2. Mulched beds
3. Watered

Harvest!

Figure 1 – Today's Harvest! (6/15)

In figure 1, see today's harvest. From top left clockwise: Rainbow Kale, Creole Collards, and New Zealand Spinach, Scarlet Kale and Red Russian Kale

Growth!

Figure 2 – Patty Pan Squash (planted 5/18)

In the hottest summer months, it is imperative that our gardens get supplemental water, so the plants don't dry out. There are many methods for watering; handheld watering cans, sprinklers (overhead or close to the ground), and drip irrigation. While drip irrigation cannot be used at any rented Fairfax County Garden Plot, sprinklers can be used if closely monitored. Be sure to know what type of watering your plants prefer, and how frequently. For example, some do not like their leaves to be watered because it can cause rot or mold growth.

Figure 4 – Master Gardeners learning about sprinklers

Figure 3 – Peppers (planted 5/18)

What happened this week? *6/8/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted Butternut and Acorn Squashes, Dark Green Zucchini, & Sweet Potatoes

2. Harvested Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale, Sugar Snap Peas, Creole Collards, Bok Choy, New Zealand Spinach & Rainbow Chard

Planted Today (6/1/23) – see Figure 1 below	
• Butternut & Acorn Squash (young plants) – Bed #6	• Sweet Potatoes (young plant) – Bed #8
• Dark Green Zucchini (young plant) – Bed #7	

Plant!

Figure 1 – Beds 6-8 were newly planted today (6/8)

Harvest!

Figure 2 – Harvesting New Zealand Spinach

In figure 1 above Butternut Squash and Acorn Squash were planted in Bed 6, Dark Green Zucchini in Bed 7, and Sweet Potatoes in Bed 8.

Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale, Sugar Snap Peas, Creole Collards, Bok Choy, New Zealand Spinach & Rainbow Chard were harvested. See figure 3 to the right. As the season progresses and it gets warmer, there won't be as many harvests left of the cool-weather crops like kale and collards.

Figure 3 – Today's Harvest! (6/8)

Growth!

In a few weeks to about a month, the Master Gardeners are already seeing beautiful growth! Flowers and buds are beginning to appear, and even some fruit!

Figure 4 – Peppers (planted 5/18)

Figure 5 – Beets (planted 5/4)

Figure 6 – Tomatoes (planted 5/11)

Figure 7 – Cucumbers (direct seeded 4/13)

Figure 8 – Lima Beans (direct seeded 6/1)

Figure 9 – Potatoes (planted 4/20)

Figure 10 – Eggplant (direct seeded 3/9)

Figure 11 – Zucchini (planted 5/18)

What happened this week? *6/1/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted Lima Beans, Squash, and Arugula
2. Harvested Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale, Sugar Snap Peas, and Rainbow Chard

Planted Today (6/1/23)	
• Patty Pan Squash (direct sown) – Bed #13	• Lima Beans (direct sown) – Bed #12
• Arugula (direct sown) – Raised Bed	

Look at the Growth!

Figure 1 – Gooseberries

Figure 2 – 'Pink Lemonade' Blueberries

Figure 3 - Peppers

Harvest!

Figure 4 – Sugar Snap Peas

Figure 5 – Red Russian and Scarlet Kale

Figure 6 – Rainbow Chard

High Stakes!

The pepper plants pictured to the left are being staked so the weight of the fruit (peppers) doesn't cause the whole plant to fall over. As the plant grows taller, more string/twine will be added to ensure the plant has support.

What happened this week? *5/18/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted Eggplant, Peppers, Bok Choi, Squash, and Bush Beans

2. Harvested Creole Collards, Red Russian Kale, and Arugula

Planted Today (5/18/23) – (Figures 1-3 below)	
• Eggplant – (grown from seed 3/9) – Bed #1	• Bush Beans (direct sown) – Bed #2
• Bok Choi (grown from seed 4/20) – Bed #8	• Merlot Sweet, Pepperoncini Peppers – (grown from seed 3/9) – Bed #9
• Patty Pan Squash (direct sown) – Bed #13	• Jalapeno, Big Red Sweet, & California Sweet Peppers – (grown from seed 3/9) – Bed #17

Figure 1 – Eggplant – Bed #1

Figure 2 – Peppers – Bed #17

Figure 3 – Peppers – Bed #8

Look at the Growth!

Figure 4 – Cucumber (direct-sown 4/13)

Figure 5 – Pinto Beans (direct-sown 4/27) – Bed #12

5/18/23

Harvest!

Figure 6 - Arugula

Figure 7 – Creole Collards

Figure 8 – Red Russian Kale

Potatoes

Potatoes are unique because the part we eat is underground, not above ground. The Master Gardeners start with seed potatoes – an organic potato that has not been sprayed or altered to prevent the growth of "eyes". They are cut into smaller pieces, and then allowed to dry or callus over. If a piece hasn't been allowed to dry out, it will rot when planted underground. Trenches are then dug, and the potato pieces are planted. As the plant emerges above ground, soil is then piled up around the stem. Because the part we eat grows from the roots underground, the deeper the soil, the more space for potatoes to grow!

Figure 9 – Potatoes – direct-sown 4/20

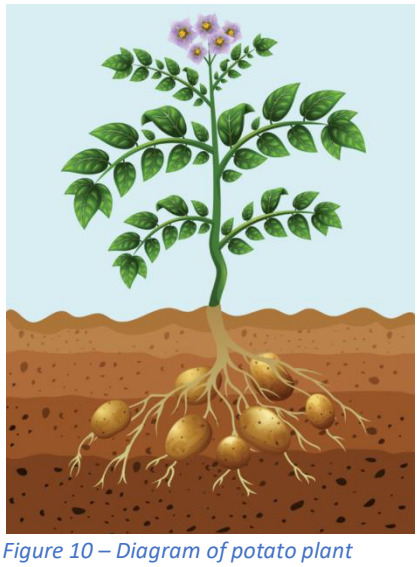


Figure 10 – Diagram of potato plant
Source: www.myrecipes.com/how-to/how-to-grow-potatoes

What happened this week? *5/11/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted numerous herbs, companion perennials, Swiss Chard, and many tomato varieties

2. Harvested Creole Collards, Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale, Chinese Cabbage, Dino Kale, Arugula, and Cilantro

Planted Today (5/11/23) – (figures 1-4 below)	
• Tithonia	• Marigold
• Zinnia	• Lavender
• Cardinal Basil	• Purple Basil
• Swiss Chard	• Sumer Savory
• Brandywine Tomato	• Better Boy Tomato
• Supersweet Tomato	• Roma Tomato

Figure 1 (photographed on 5/11)


Figure 2 (photographed on 5/11)


Figure 3 (photographed on 5/11)


Figure 4 (photographed on 5/11)

Figure 1 Tithonia, Marigold, Zinnia, Purple Basil to be planted

Figure 2 Cardinal Basil, Lavender, Summer Savory, Tithonia to be planted

Figure 3 Swiss Chard planted in between Garlic

Figure 4 Tomatoes being planted

5/11/23

Harvest!

Figure 4 (photographed on 5/11) Creole Collards, Scarlet Kale, Red Russian Kale

Figure 5 (photographed on 5/11) Chinese Cabbage

Figure 6 (photographed on 5/11) Cilantro

Figure 7 (photographed on 5/11) Arugula

Wire Worms and Click Beetles

Source: www.epicgardening.com/wireworm/

This destructive insect feeds on many of our garden plants. Carrots, potatoes, beets, melons, sweet potatoes, beans, lettuce, corn, onions, peas, and strawberries to name a few. In the larval stage as a wire worm, they feed primarily on roots, the adult Click Beetles feed on nectar and pollen, and the occasional flower petal. The Master Gardeners recommend introducing beneficial nematodes. They will consume these pests while in their larval or pupal stages. Tilling your soil will bring these pests to the surface and turn them into bird food!

What happened this week? *5/4/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Transplanted seedlings into larger pots
2. Harvested Red Russian Kale, Creole Collards, and Savoy Cabbage
3. Weeded Garden beds and cut back overgrowth

Seedlings Transplanted into larger pots	
• Pennington Bok Choy (originally planted 4/27)	• Rainbow Swiss Chard (originally planted 4/6)

*The Master Gardeners will no longer be starting their seeds indoors. The weather has warmed up enough for direct seeding outside in the garden beds.

Edible Garden Growth

Figure 1 (photographed on 5/4) New Zealand Spinach in Bed #3 – grown from seed 4/6, planted 5/4

Figure 2 (photographed on 5/4) In Bed #4; Rainbow Swiss Chard (grown from seed indoors on 4/6 – planted in the Edible Garden 5/4. Kentucky Wonder Beans were direct-sown 4/27 at the base of the trelisses

Figure 3 (photographed on 5/4) Chinese Cabbage in Bed #17 - grown from seed 2/23, planted 4/20

Figure 4 (photographed on 5/4) Along the back fence are Persian Cucumbers – direct-seeded on 4/13

Figure 5 (photographed on 5/4) Scarlet Kale in Bed #18 – grown from seed 2/23, planted 4/20

Figure 6 (photographed on 5/4) Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce in Bed #6 – grown from seed 3/16, planted 4/20

Harvest!

This week The Master Gardeners harvested Red Russian Kale, Creole Collards, and Savoy Cabbage. Note how they only cut the leaves and stems from the outer-most parts of the plants. The new growth begins in the center of the plants and will fall to the outside as time progresses.

Figure 7 (photographed on 5/4) Savoy Cabbage in Bed #20 - grown from seed indoors 2/23, planted 4/20, first harvest 5/4

Figure 8 (photographed on 5/4) Creole Collards in Bed #21 - grown from seed indoors 2/23, planted 4/20, first harvest 5/4

Figure 9 (photographed on 5/4) Red Russian Kale in Bed #19 - grown from seed indoors 2/23, planted 4/20, first harvest 5/4

Figure 10 (photographed on 4/13) Common Milkweed pulled from the Herb Garden

Rhizomes

Common Milkweed is one of many types of plants that spread by rhizomes. Below the soil surface a bud is formed on the side of the stalk. From this bud, a stem begins to grow horizontally. This subterranean stem will eventually send roots downward and shoots upwards to form another Common Milkweed stalk that we see above the surface. Over time, a very extensive 'web' of these stems will develop making it difficult to completely remove the plant. Use a barrier to contain the plant if spreading is not desired.

What happened this week? *4/27/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Transplanted seedlings into larger pots
2. Directly Sowed seeds into the Edible Garden

Seedlings Transplanted into larger pots – see figures 1-3 below	
• Roma Tomato (originally planted 3/30)	• Rainbow Swiss Chard (originally planted 4/6)
• Yellow Pear Tomato (originally planted 3/30)	• Pennington Bok Choy (originally planted 4/13)

Seedlings Update!

Figure 1 (photographed on 4/27) Bok Choy

Figure 2 (photographed on 4/27) Rainbow Swiss Chard

Figure 3 (photographed on 4/27) Roma and Yellow Pear Tomatoes

Wash Those Pots!

While it's environmentally friendly to reuse plastic pots, to give any new plant a fighting chance, those pots should be washed first. This master gardener is scrubbing the pots in a tub of bleach water (vinegar water would work as well) and rinsing in a tub of soapy water. Contaminants, plant viruses, diseases such as wilt, and pest eggs and casings can all be transmitted via a dirty pot.

Figure 4 (photographed on 4/20) Master Gardener washing plastic pots to be used for transplanting seedlings into

Groundcover Alternatives

Sometimes the Master Gardeners have excess of something, in this case Thyme. Instead of composting it, they relocated it to another garden bed to use as a groundcover. While being fragrant and edible, it also helps to keep the soil in place after rain, as well as creating competition for weeds.

Figure 5 (photographed on 4/6) Master Gardener relocating thyme to another garden bed

4/27/23

Plants in the Edible Garden (by garden bed number) – see figures 6-9 below	
1. Sugar Pod Peas (direct-sown 4/13)	12. Pinto Beans (direct-sown 4/27)
2. Empty	13. Empty
3. New Zealand Spinach (direct-sown 4/20)	14. Empty
4. Kentucky Wonder Bean (direct-sown 4/27)	15. Touchstone Gold, Early Wonder, and Ruby Queen Beets (direct-sown 4/27)
5. Hakurei Turnips (direct-sown 4/13)	16. Duganski Garlic (planted in Autumn 2022)
6. Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce (from seed 3/16, planted 4/20)	17. Chinese Cabbage (from seed 2/23, planted 4/20)
7.Boy Choy (from seed 4/13, planted 4/20)	18. Scarlet Kale (from seed 2/23, planted 4/20)
8.Empty	19. Red Russian Kale (from seed 2/23, planted 4/20)
9. Romaine Lettuce (from seed 3/16, planted 4/20)	20. Savoy Cabbage (from seed 2/23, planted 4/20)
10. Clemson Spineless Okra (direct-down 4/27)	21. Creole Collards (from seed 2/23, planted 4/20)
11. Dark Green Zucchini (direct-sown 4/27)	

Figure 6 (photographed on 4/27) Bed numbers 5-9

Figure 7 (photographed on 4/27) Master Gardener planting 3 different varieties of Beets in Bed #15

Figure 8 (photographed on 4/27) Bed numbers 17-21

Figure 9 (photographed on 4/27) Master Gardener building a fence to go around the newly-seeded Pinto Beans

What happened this week? *4/20/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Transplanted seedlings into larger pots
2. Washed plastic pots
3. Harvested Radishes

Seedlings Transplanted into larger pots – see figures 1 & 2 below	
• Sweetie Cherry Tomato (originally planted 3/30)	• Bok Choy (originally planted 4/13)
• Supersweet Tomato (originally planted 3/30)	• Zinnia State Fair (originally planted 4/13)
• Brandywine Tomato (originally planted 3/30)	• Zinnia Giant (originally planted 4/13)
• Better Boy Tomato (originally planted 3/30)	• Rainbow Swiss Chard (originally planted 4/6)

Seedlings Update!

Figure 1 (photographed on 4/20) Supersweet Tomatoes, Brandywine Tomatoes, and Sweetie Cherry Tomatoes transplanted into larger pots

Figure 2 (photographed on 4/20) Rainbow Swiss Chard and Bok Choy to be transplanted into larger pots

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figures 3-8 (photographed on 4/20)

Top left to bottom right:
3. Creole Collards & Savoy Cabbage
4. Scarlet Kale and Red Russian Kale
5. Chinese Cabbage
6. Bok Choy
7. Sugar Snap Peas
8. Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce

4/20/23

The First Harvest!

The Master Gardeners have harvested the first crops for 2023, a large Rubbermaid tub FULL of radishes. These began as seeds directly planted into the outdoor Edible Garden bed on 3/23.

Figure 9 (photographed on 4/20) Radishes direct-sown in Edible Garden Bed #2 on 3/23

Figure 10 (photographed on 4/13) A Master Gardener tilling sulfur pellets into the soil at the base of blueberry bushes

pH: Acidity vs Alkalinity

Just as pH can be tested in water to ensure plants and fish can survive, soil pH can be tested for the plants in our garden. The pH scale is a range from 0-14. 0 means highly acidic and 14 means highly alkaline. In simple terms, pH is the concentration of acid protons (in the form of hydrogen) in a substance. When ions are introduced into the substance that absorb those acid protons, the substance becomes more alkaline. Blueberry bushes are one example of a plant who enjoys more acidic soil. In Figure 10, a Master Gardener is tilling sulfur pellets into the soil at the base of the bush to help increase the acidity. See below some common substances and their pH rating. At the Master Gardener Veggie Garden Plant Clinics and at Green Spring Gardens, you can pick up a soil test of your own.

0 (most acidic)	Hydrochloric acid (HCI)
1	Stomach acid
2	Lemon juice
3	Cola, beer, vinegar
4	Tomatoes
4.5	Fish die if water is this acidic
5	Coffee
5.5	Normal Rainwater
6	Urine
6.5	Saliva
7 (neutral)	Water, tears
7.5	Human blood
8	Seawater
9	Baking soda, antacids
10	Great Salt Lake
11	Ammonia
12	Bicarbonate of soda
13	Oven cleaner
14 (most alkaline)	Sodium hydroxide (NaOH)

What happened this week? *4/13/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted new seeds in cups
2. Transplanted seedlings into larger pots
3. Planted muscadine bushes
4. Pruned Coleus and Geraniums
5. Added acidifier to Blueberry bush soil
6. Removed Common Milkweed from Herb Garden

Seeds Planted in Cups (4/13)	Seedlings Transplanted into larger pots
• Bok Choy	• Yellow Pear Tomato (originally planted 3/30)
• Zinnia	• Better Boy Tomato (originally planted 3/30)
• Pineapple Tomato	• Sweetie Tomato (originally planted 3/30)
• Zucchini	
• Yellow Squash	
• Patty Pan Squash	
• Roma Tomato	

Seedlings Update!

Figure 1 (photographed on 4/13) Chinese Cabbage planted in Bed #17 on 4/6

Figure 2 (photographed on 4/13) Scarlet Kale planted in Bed #18 on 4/6

Figure 3 (photographed on 4/13) Red Russian Kale planted in Bed #19 on 4/6

Figure 4 (photographed on 4/13) Savoy Cabbage planted in Bed #20 on 4/6

Figures 1-5 were all grown from seed by the Master Gardener propogation team.
Figures 6-7 were directly sown into the garden bed.

Figure 5 (photographed on 4/13) Creole Cabbage planted in Bed #21 on 4/6

Figure 6 (photographed on 4/13) Sugar Snap Peas planted in Bed #1 on 3/23

Figure 7 (photographed on 4/13) Radishes planted in Bed #2 on 3/23

4/13/23

Pruning & Propagating

While Coleus are ornamental, not edible, this is an excellent example of how to prune and propagate a wide variety of plants.

1. With clean scissors, cut just above a node or set of leaves. The desired final size of the plant will help to determine in between which two nodes you'll be cutting.

It's a good rule of thumb to cut above where you see ample new growth, this new growth will become the new top of the plant

2. If you intend to propagate the cut piece, remove the lower set of leaves to allow for a smooth stem, of ample length, to eventually fit down into the soil.

3. Place the cutting in a cup of water and wait for the roots to appear! While it depends on the plant, typically 1-2 weeks is average. Every couple of days, be sure to replace the dirty water with clean water.

What happened this week? *4/6/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted new seeds in cups
2. Transplanted seedlings
3. Planted veggies (that were grown from seed) into the Edible Garden
4. Relocated thyme from the Herb Garden
5. Removed loganberry and tayberry bushes
6. Sifted and turned the compost pile

Seeds Planted in Cups (4/6)	Seedlings Transplanted into larger pots– see figure 2
• Rainbow Swiss Chard	• Scarlet Kale (originally planted 2/23)
• Ruby Red Swiss Chard	• Strawberry Cabbage Lettuce (originally planted 3/16
• Better Boy Hybrid Tomato	• Jalapeno Pepper (originally planted 3/9)
• Supersweet 100 VF Hybrid Tomato	• Creole Collards (originally planted 2/23)
• Sweetie Tomato	• Pak Choi (originally planted 3/16)
• Yellow Pear Tomato	
• Roma Tomato	

Seedlings Update!

Figure 1 (photographed on 4/6) - Five different varieties of tomatoes planted on 3/30; These did not have success germinating, because they dried out. The same varieties were planted again on 4/6. Trial and Error!

Figure 2 (photographed on 4/6) – Seedlings that are to be transplanted into larger pots. Top left to bottom right: Pak Choi, Creole Collards, Scarlet Kale, Strawberry Cabbage Lettuce, Jalapeno Pepper

Figure 3 (photographed on 4/6) – Bed #1 in the Edible Garden. Sugar Snap Peas (originally direct-sown on 3/16)

Figure 4 (photographed on 4/6) – Bed #2 in the Edible Garden. Radishes (originally direct-sown on 3/16)

Grown from Seed & Planted on 4/6 *4/6/23*

Figure 5 (photographed on 4/6)

Figure 6 (photographed on 4/6)

Figure 7 (photographed on 4/6)

Figure 8 (photographed on 4/6)

Figure 9 (photographed on 4/6)

Figure 5 – Chinese Cabbage planted in Bed #17

Figure 6 – Scarlet Kale to be planted in Bed #18

Figure 7 – Red Russian Kale planted in Bed #19

Figure 8 – Savoy Cabbage planed in Bed #20

Figure 9 – Creole Collards planted in Bed #21

Staggered planting or in rows?

Did you notice how the Red Russian Kale is planted in straight rows in Figure 7, whereas the Savoy Cabbage is planted in a staggered pattern in Figure 8? The Kale will continuously be harvested throughout the growing season and the rows are visually easier to work through, as well as kneel between. The Savoy Cabbage grows outward in a round pattern, so the staggered planting allows adequate spacing between each plant without sacrificing space in the garden bed.

Figure 10 (photographed on 4/6) – Turning and sifting compost

Composting

The Master Gardeners maintain a compost pile by mixing in “wet” or “green” plant-based food scraps, such as coffee grounds, apple cores, banana peels, and even weeds. These are countered by adding “dry” or “brown” dried materials like leaves, sticks and twigs. They want to ensure the pile isn’t too dry so decomposition doesn’t occur, or too wet where rot starts to happen - and the bad smell associated with it. The ideal temperature of the center of the compost pile is least 90 degrees, but preferably 130 to kill weed seeds and bacteria.

What happened this week? *3/30/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted new seeds
2. Transplanted seedlings and older established plants
3. Removed older seedings from the poly house (greenhouse) to "harden off" outside

Seeds Planted in Cups (3/30)	Seedlings Transplanted into larger pots– see figure 3 below
• Better Boy Hybrid Tomato	• Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce
• Supersweet 100 VF Hybrid Tomato	• Pak Choi
• Sweetie Tomato	• Bok Choi
• Yellow Pear Tomato	• Vanilla Cream Marigold
• Roma Tomato	• Passion Basil

Seedlings Update!

Figure 1 – Bed 1 in the Edible Garden – Sugar Snap Peas (seeds were planted on 3/23)

Figure 2 – Bed 2 in the Edible Garden – Radishes (Seeds were planted on 3/23)

Figure 3 - Pak Choi, Bok Choi, Alumia Vanilla Cream Marigold, and Romaine Lettuce prior to being transplanted on 3/30 (seeds were planted on 3/16)

Figure 4 – A Master Gardener transplanting lettuce into a larger pot on 3/30 (seeds were planted on 3/16)

3/30/23

Figure 5 – Young plants hardening off outdoors under Remay cloth

Making the move!

The little seedlings are growing up so fast! The Master Gardeners moved them out of the poly house today to the outdoors so they can "harden off" under a white fabric covering called Remay. The young plants will acclimate to the harsher outdoor elements – sunlight, temperature, and wind, while the cloth lessens the harshness of the elements. As a bonus, the Remay cloth will help to keep out unwanted critters!

Where in Green Spring Gardens do all these seedlings end up?

Plants in our Poly House waiting to be planted outdoors

The Master Gardeners move the plants through their life cycle from seed to a healthy adult plant so they can be planted onsite at Green Spring Gardens! While the vegetables and herbs go to the Edible Garden, there is also a Children's Garden, multiple Demonstration Gardens, and gardens specifically designed for encouraging wildlife, gardens near our pond with water-friendly plants, and gardens showcasing native plants, among many other types of gardens! In the interim before it's warm enough outside to be planted in the ground, the plants grow and thrive in our poly houses (greenhouses).

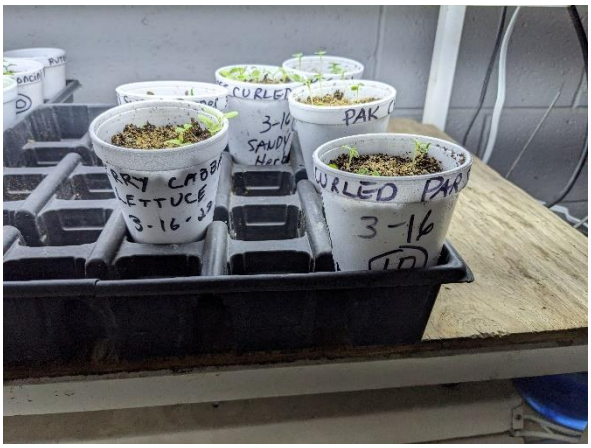
What happened this week? *3/23/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted new seeds
2. Weeded and mulched in the Edible Garden and Orchard
3. Cleaned up propagated plants in the poly house (greenhouse)

Seeds Planted in Cups (3/23)
• Zinnia Envy
• Zinnia Cactus Mix
• Mixed Colours Kangaroo Paw
• Nasturtium Alaska Mix
• Alumia Vanilla Cream Marigold

Seedlings Update!

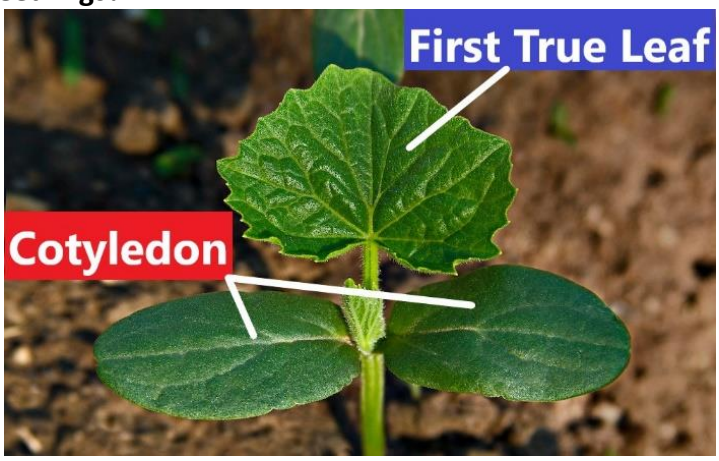


Planted on 3/16/23 – Photos on 3/23/23
-Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce (1/4”-1/2” tall)
-Bok Choi (1”-1 ½” tall)
-Pak Choi (3/4”-1” tall)
-Strawberry Cabbage Lettuce (1/4”-1/2” tall)
-Paris Isle Romaine Lettuce (1/4”-1/2” tall)

Direct Sown on 3/16/23 – Photos on 3/23/23
Bed 1 – Sugar Snap Peas *Bed 2 - Radishes*

3/23/23

How do I know when to transplant my seedlings?



A seed begins with a hard outer coating called the seed coat. Inside is a plant embryo that is surrounded by the endosperm – the food source for the embryo. Depending on what type of seed is planted, will determine how long it takes to germinate/sprout. (Refer to your seed packet for a time estimate). Over time, the first set of leaves, called cotyledons, will emerge. Cotyledons provide nutrients for the new plant until its true leaves appear. When the young seedling has about 3-4 true leaves, it is strong enough to support itself via photosynthesis. At this point it can be transplanted!

White mildew growing on Coleus leaves.

What is growing on my plant's leaves?

This week in our polyhouse, a Coleus was found to have a white mildew growing on its leaves. This is a fungus that can be caused by overly wet leaves. The best way to avoid this is to water susceptible plants at the soil level, not over their leaves.

What happened this week? *3/16/23*

At Green Spring Gardens with the Extension Master Gardeners

1. Planted new seeds
2. Transplanted seedlings
3. Weeded and Mulched in the Edible Garden and Orchard
4. Turned the compost pile and layered the compost onto the Edible Garden beds

Seeds Planted in Cups (3/16)	Seeds Directly Sown into the Edible Garden (3/16)
• Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce	• Bed 1 – Sugar Snap Peas
• Bok Choi	• Bed 2 – Radishes
• Pak Choi	
• Strawberry Cabbage Lettuce	
• Paris Isle Romaine Lettuce	

When planting new seeds, the Master Gardeners start with cups labeled with the plant name, date planted, and number of seeds to be planted. This information is good for identifying large quantities of seed cups, as well as determining how long it took the seed to germinate. They use a seed starting mix in the cups. This is different from other potting soils because it does not contain fertilizers (fertilizers promote growth too quickly). They pay attention to the planting depth of the seeds; some should not be buried at all, as they will need ample exposure to sunlight! The cups are finished off with a sprinkle of seed topping mix (or vermiculite in a pinch) to prevent the seeds and new sprouts from rotting in surface water. The cups are then placed in a tray filled with water to encourage the roots to grow downwards towards the water source. They place clear plastic over the trays to create a greenhouse effect and hold in moisture. The plastic covers will be removed after the sprouts are evident. This will avoid excess moisture and prevent the rotting of new stems.

Newly planted pak choi, bok choi, and lettuce seeds in labeled cups.

While there are a hundred ways to pull weeds, the Master Gardeners like to break the weed stalk at the ground because pulling out the roots would disturb the soil. The weed stalks are then tossed into the compost pile and the buried roots are left in place.

Weeding and Mulching in the orchard - Before and After