



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



June 2020

This year may be a good year to think about growing your own vegetables. That doesn't mean you have to grow everything you eat, but think about the vegetables you really like. Is it tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, and cucumbers to make nice big green salads every night, or are you more adventurous and willing to try growing beets, kale, Swiss chard, onions, and broccoli too? This month's helpful hints will deal exclusively with growing vegetables.

Stop cutting asparagus when the yield decreases and the spears diminish in size. Top-dress the bed with compost, well-rotted manure or fertilizer (10-10-10 formulation) and let the fronds form for the rest of the growing season.

Thin crowded plantings of lettuce, carrots, beets, and herbs, and give them a good watering when the job is finished to help the roots of remaining plants recover from any damage your pulling may have inflicted. Instead of pulling as this can disturb other plants, simply cut the crowded plant with a pair of scissors.

Look at your basil plantings and remove all the clusters of flower buds that form at the stem ends the minute you see them forming. This will encourage nice bushy plants and a continuing supply of leaves.

Pull soil up against potato plants when they are 9 to 12 inches tall. Keep the compost of newly planted container potatoes moist, but take care not to overwater, as this will compact the soil, squeeze out the oxygen, and prevent the developing tuber from swelling. Harvest early potatoes as they are normally ready about 10 weeks after planting.

Sow more beans, carrots, and beets for a continuous harvest.

Start seedlings of broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage now so they can be transplanted in the fall.

Tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers can use some nutrients now, so scratch some granular fertilizer into the soil around each plant or in a shallow trench alongside a row.

Protect ripening strawberries from birds. Remove blossoms from newly established strawberry plants to promote stronger plants. Remove runners to keep energy focused on the fruit.

The fruiting of tomatoes and peppers is improved by applying Epson salts, which contains sulfur and magnesium. Apply one tablespoon of granules around each transplant, or spray a solution of one tablespoon Epson salts per gallon of water at transplanting, first flowering, and fruit set.

Prune tomato plants to open the canopy of the plant which will allow for better air circulation to avoid disease. Also pinch out any side shoots from your tomato plants.

Consider planting sweet corn in the garden every other week until early July to extend the harvest.

Harvest salad crops and sow every two weeks for a constant supply.

Keep an eye on your onion and garlic. When the leaves start to yellow and die back, they are ready to harvest.

Think container vegetable gardening if you live in a condo with a deck.

You can mulch around your vegetables to prevent weed competition and to retain moisture.

To freeze most vegetables, parboil for three minutes, drain well, and seal in freezer bags, or containers. Peppers and grape tomatoes do not need to be parboiled. Just cut to size and freeze.



--Sandy