

#### What's to Grow This Month?

- ★ Radishes
- ★ Spinach
- ★ Chard
- ★ Lettuce
- ★ Beets
- ★ Parsley
- ★ Arugula
- ★ Snap peas

#### SLUG PATROL

Watch out for emerging slugs. As the weather warms & the garden sprouts, if you do not keep an eye out for them, slugs will surely come out to dine on your new veggies. By getting rid of some of them now, you can greatly reduce their populations as the season progresses. There are many methods for reducing slug populations but, here in the Pacific Northwest, it is highly unlikely to get rid of them altogether. While there are different chemicals & poisons that you can buy at the store to kill slugs, these methods can become very dangerous to pets, children & other wildlife as well as pollute our waterways & soil. There are however, many alternatives to getting those slimy bandits without the use of chemicals.

**1) The Beer Trap.** This method involves filling a shallow dish or plate with beer & putting it near your garden but not too close to the plants that the slugs seem to be eating most of. After all, you want to lure them away from those plants. Place the beer trap into the soil so it is level with the soil. The slugs will be drawn to the beer, fall into the dish & drink themselves to death. Empty the container & refill with fresh beer every few days.



**2) The wooden board method.** Place a piece of wood in your garden to create a safe spot for the slugs to hide. Check the underside of the wood daily & discard slugs found under it as needed. Please **DO NOT** pour salt on slugs. It is a very slow & painful death for them.

**3) The Indiana Jones method.** This one can be especially fun for kids. Slugs like to come out & feast the most at night so grab your flashlights & head out to the garden to catch them in the act. Pick them off your prized veggies & dispose of them as you see fit.

#### Creating a Garden Space

Gardens come in many sizes and forms. Don't dismay if you think your yard is not big enough for a garden. Even a little patio can provide a small bounty of produce if you choose the right plants and can supply a few containers for them to grow in. Store bought planters and pots are great but there are many other ways to acquire containers to grow your plants in. If you eat dairy, you can clean and reuse your cottage cheese, yogurt and milk containers to start seedlings in. Also, check your local deli for 5 gallon buckets. Often, neighborhood restaurants receive pickles, mayonnaise, and other bulk food items in large buckets that you can pick up for free. Just drill some holes in the bottom, add your soil and you have a great planter for your bigger veggies. I've even seen people start a garden in their child's old kiddie pools. Be creative and have fun! Just remember to punch a few holes in the bottom of the containers to allow for drainage.

If you are fortunate enough to have a yard to plant in, raised beds are a great option. The soil in a raised bed will warm up faster than a garden right on the ground. Sometimes having the bed elevated also helps protect from outside offenders such as foot traffic, lawn mowers and digging pets. You can use items such as bricks, cinder blocks, wood, or stones to build raised beds. If you choose to use wood, make sure that the wood does not have lead paint on it and try to make sure it is not pressure treated as some wood materials contain chemicals that can leach into your soil. Raised beds are also a wonderful choice to use if you have questionable soil because you can add your own soil mixtures.



If you choose not to use a raised bed and to plant your veggie garden directly in the ground, you may consider getting your soil tested for lead as your plants can potentially become contaminated. This is especially true if your home was built before 1978, if you are near any industrial areas or major roadways, or if you are simply concerned that the soil may be contaminated. The tests generally start at \$30 depending on where you take your soil samples. [OSU Extension Service](#)\* has compiled a list of local places to get soils tested. You can find this information in the chart below this article.

Finally, another important factor to consider when planning out your garden is the elements. Pay attention to the amount of sun the area you are planning on using receives. Planting your plants in a south facing area that receives 6 or more hours of full sun a day is usually the best. If you are growing in containers it may be easier to move them around to get more sun. Also, try to keep your garden protected from wind and roof runoff that can hammer down on plants and damage their leaves and stems, especially the younger ones. And of course, make your garden easy to access. You want to be able to reach all sides of your garden and be able to tend to it without straining yourself or becoming overwhelmed.

\*<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/>

#### Resources for Soil Testing

- **A & L Western** : \$33 - \$40; P) 503-968-9225, Web: [www.al-labs-west.com](http://www.al-labs-west.com)
- **Agri-Check, Inc.** : \$28 - \$53; P) 541-922-4894 or 800-537-1129
- **Northwest Agricultural Consultants** : \$35 +; P) 509-783-7450, Web: [www.nwag.com](http://www.nwag.com)
- **Best-test Analytical Services** : \$56- 99; P) 509-766-7701, Web: <http://www.besttestlabs.com>
- **Soiltest Farm Consultants** : \$100-200; P) 509-765-1622, Web: [www.soiltestlab.com](http://www.soiltestlab.com)

## Upcoming Events

- **Seed Handout. Saturday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am at Jurgens Park.** We will be giving out free seeds and a brief lesson on planting potatoes to our NNC volunteer gardeners. The seeds we will be distributing are:

- \*Scarlet Nantes carrots
- \*Dark Star Zucchini
- \*Sweet Reba Acorn squash
- \*Sunburst patty pan yellow squash
- \*Provider bush snap beans
- \*Red Gold seed potatoes
- \*Shiraz red beets

- **Volunteer Backyard Party: Saturday April 26, 6:30 pm at Chad Darby's house: 17660 SW Shawnee Trail, Tualatin, OR.** We'll have a get together for all volunteer gardeners and families. There will be beer, wine, sodas and snacks. Weather permitting there will be a fire in the fire pit with marshmallow roasting and smores. It's a good opportunity to get to know one another.

**(We hope to see you there!)**

## **THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!**

**Tualatin Park Veterinary Clinic-** Dr. Bertelsen is donating his business property lawn for community garden beds.

**S&H Bark and Landscape-** will be providing free soil for our community garden beds & a 25% discount to our volunteer gardeners.

**The Garden Corner-** \$10 off coupons for purchases of \$20 or more.

**Al's Nursery-** 12 free 4" plants for our volunteer gardeners.

## Preparing for the Garden Season

On Friday April 11, 2014, The community garden at Boones Ferry Community Church was the site for a class intended to help get the community ready for this year's growing season. Hosted by Laurie Jarmer, the night included an incredibly informative Master Gardener speaker named Tim Lanfri, who provided garden education and handouts covering the topics of the evening. There was also a free raffle for all attendees to get a chance to win garden tools, gloves and seeds. It was a fun, informative evening that allowed for community gardeners to meet and share gardening experiences and questions.

Thank you to Boones Ferry Community Church and to Laurie for organizing this educational and networking opportunity to help kick off the gardening season!

NNC will be scheduling similar educational offerings throughout the season to provide for our volunteer gardeners. Please feel free to reach out to us with topics that you are interested in learning about. ....



On Saturday April 12 2014, a few of NNC's board members and their families gathered with the community at the Tualatin Community Garden to prepare the garden beds for planting. NNC has four garden beds at the site that will be provided to families in need of food assistance. The weather was perfect and the smiles were abundant.

## **In the Kitchen**

With the garden season just getting under way, harvests are not quite up to speed yet. While your newly planted plot may not have a bounty of food ready to be harvested, you can still pick fresh food from your garden relatively quickly. One such food item is MICROGREENS! When we plant veggies in our garden there will come a time when we need to thin our seedlings to allow for more growing room for our crops. For example, when planting radishes, the seed packet calls for us to sow 2 seeds in the hole. This increases the odds of at least one healthy plant if not all of the seeds are viable. Often, you will still get two seedlings growing in one hole. It is important to remove the weaker seedling(s) so that the stronger seedling has enough room and nutrients to grow to full size. That will lead to a lot of little seedlings that are just discarded. You can compost these little guys or you can do what I like to do and make a salad out of them! The little seedlings are always packed full of flavor. You may find you don't even need salad dressing! If you go to the store you can find microgreens for sale. They cost \$20-\$50/Lb! What's more, a study performed by Dr. Qin Wang, PhD, assistant professor at the University of Maryland in College Park, demonstrated that microgreens have up to 40 times more vital nutrients than mature plants\*. With a 7-10 day rate of harvest compared to the 30-60 day rate of harvest for mature plants, microgreens are also the impatient gardener's dream. Bon appetite!



\* Xiao, Z. *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, Aug. 22, 2012. News release, American Chemical Society