

THE GARDEN FENCE



*THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR THE
HARFORD COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS*

December 2015

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President's Letter

Sauerkraut!

The Finished Product!

Source: MotherEarthNews.com



The Finished Product!

At our November Master Gardener meeting, Kim Whichard gave a presentation on fermentation, in which she described the many benefits of fermented foods, and showed us how to make sauerkraut. After her presentation, I found myself researching sauerkraut and other fermented foods. This column discusses what I found in my travels, and all facts in this column come from the sources (most given with links!) shown in the Resources section in this article. No recipes are given in my column, but you'll find recipes in the Resources.

Fermentation is found in such sour foods such as pickled cucumbers, kimchi and yogurt, as well as in alcoholic beverages including wine and beer. Fermented products are preserved by the action of microorganisms such as bacteria, yeast and/or mold that consume sugars and produce primarily acid or alcohol, and carbon dioxide. In the manufacture of sauerkraut, bacteria consume sugar (glucose) from cabbage leaves and produce acid, giving sauerkraut or their traditional tangy taste. Kim noted that making sauerkraut is a good first step in gaining experience with vegetable fermentation.

Source: Dreamstime.com



Heads of Cabbage

Humans have used fermentation to produce food and beverages since the Neolithic Age. The first sauerkraut was made in China about 2,000 years ago, during the building of the Great Wall. The Germans are also known for their sauerkraut. In the 16th century they perfected the fermenting process of mixing salt and cabbage and allowing it to ferment. This process is still used today to make sauerkraut around the world.

Kim noted that there were several good books on fermentation. I found in my research that there are several good sources (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, several State Extensions Offices) with recipes for sauerkraut, and all seem to be identical. These sources are listed in the Resource section after following this article; all describe a tested recipe using 25 pounds of cabbage. The Oregon State University Extension also has a recipe using a small batch (5-lbs) of cabbage. All of these sources suggest that when making sauerkraut, it is best to work with 5-lbs of cabbage at a time.

Containers are important in fermentation. A 1-gallon container is needed for each 5 pounds of fresh cabbage, and a 5-gallon container is of ideal size for fermenting about 25 pounds of fresh cabbage. Food-grade plastic and glass containers are excellent substitutes for stone crocks. Non- food-grade plastic containers may be used if lined inside with a clean food-grade plastic bag. Copper, iron, galvanized metal containers, lead-glazed crocks, and plastics such as garbage bags or trash liners should not be used.

Source: LeafFood.net



The best sauerkraut is made from the mid- to late-season cabbage crop. In other words, the best time to choose cabbage might be this time of year (late fall). Sauerkraut can be made from either red or green cabbage. When picking fresh cabbage, it is best to wait 1-2 days after harvesting to make the kraut. As Kim noted, one must select mature heads of cabbage that are disease free. For 5 pounds of shredded cabbage you will need between 6-7 pounds of fresh cabbage.

Sauerkraut Fermenting in a 5-lb Crock

Safety is a very important consideration when making fermented foods, and basic food safety practices must be followed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends starting with vegetables that have been grown using good food safety practices, including properly washing hands, vegetables, preparation surfaces, containers, and any cutting or preparation utensils. And most importantly, use only tested methods with tested proportions of ingredients that are recommended by USDA, state extension services, home canning equipment manufacturers, or other reputable sources, such as those given in the Resources below.

By the way, writing this column made me hungry, and I found myself eating sauerkraut within hours of finishing this column. I hope that your holidays include dishes made with sauerkraut.



USDA Guide to Preparing and Canning Fermented Foods and Pickled Vegetables:

This publication also lists recipes sauerkraut, as well as for a wide variety of pickled vegetables:
http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/usda/7_USDAcanningGuide6_06.pdf

So Easy To Preserve, Revised Edition (2014), Cooperative Extension, the University of Georgia.
Sauerkraut recipe, pages 149-150.

Carolina Canning, Clemson University Extension: This publication provides recipes for sauerkraut and other pickled recipes:

http://www.clemson.edu/extension/food_nutrition/canning/tips/46_fermenting_vegetables.html

The University of Wisconsin Extension gives a more scientific description of fermentation, as well as recipes for other fermented foods:

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/safepreserving/2013/09/23/safe-preserving-fermented-foods/>

Penn State University:

<http://extension.psu.edu/food/preservation/safe-methods/sauerkraut>

LADYBUGS

*Ladybug, ladybug fly away home,
Your house is on fire and your children are gone,
All except one and that's little Ann,
For she crept under the frying pan.*

Submitted by Elaine Dodd 2004



Recently I visited a number of garden shops and nurseries with my sister who was looking at plants for her new house. I noticed boxes of something inside the cooler and asked what they were. Ladybugs- boxes of ladybugs! So, of course I had to learn more about purchasing and releasing them.

know that insect pests are constantly chewing away at your prize flowers, and try as you might, you cannot protect the blooms.

I am eager to share my flowers at a garden club or MG meeting or to enjoy on my dining room table or in the garden damage-free. But sometimes the pests get there first! Gardeners



Aphids feeding



Ladybug larvae- gregarious feeders!

There may be a solution - The Ladybug Project. Ladybugs can eat up to 5,000 aphids in their lifetime. Order them through the internet, or from a local garden center, (since they are most likely “local” they will likely stay in the garden and consume what they had on their dinner menu before captivity.) To find ladybugs at a nursery look for a refrigerator because they are kept cool to slow them down.

Ladybugs should be released into the garden after sundown; but first lightly water the plants before the insects are released. There are multiple reasons for the evening release time: their primary food-aphids do not fly at night; bird predators can't see them, so they are more likely to set up house in your garden. Also, don't forget that misting the garden will give ladybugs something to drink if they are thirsty, which may tempt them to stay and eat your bad bugs.

If you purchase ladybugs from a nursery they will come in a plastic container with holes. They may smell. If your container of about 1300 to 1500 insects smells “gamy” you probably have a

number of dead ladybugs. The good thing is you can take them back and obtain a replacement container. Or, you can order from an online site, which guarantees live delivery. The ladybugs are shipped in a small muslin sack filled with wood shavings for structure and air space to allow the ladybugs to move around and arrive in good condition.

When you are ready to release the insects into the garden be sure to read the recommendations - i.e. sometimes they may recommend to mist with a mixture of water and Coca-Cola. This mixture makes them to be too heavy for flight, which means they will most likely stay and eat the bugs in your garden, which is the reason you purchased them. Give ladybugs a try and see if your garden flowers improve!



A Gardener's Night Before Christmas

by Dr Leonard Perry Extension Professor Univ. of Vermont's Department of Plant and Soil Science

T'was the night before Christmas and under the snow,
Perennials now dormant were waiting to grow.
The roses were mulched, the soil piled high,
To protect the graft union so the plants wouldn't die.
The strawberries were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of fertilizer (organic or not) danced in their heads.
The orchard was clean, the fruit trees at rest,
No diseases were living much less any pest.
The evergreen branches, all coated with ice,
Provide shelter for birds that they would entice.
Shrubs were all sprayed with repellents this year,
To protect them from feeding by mice and by deer.
Inside the house are poinsettias galore,

While wreaths, boughs of holly adorn the front door.
While enjoying my garden this quiet, cold night,
What my eyes then spied was a gardener's delight!
A jolly old man in suit red and white,
Pulled up in a sleigh and began to alight.
He laughed as he said, " I'm a gardener myself,"
And began to leave gifts packed by his elf.
Practical gifts like tools and a mower,
Along with some labels, pots, and a sower.
To protect our hands were hand cream and gloves,
For my spouse a sun hat in a color she loves.
A hoe will be useful for pulling up weeds,
New flats and soil media for sowing spring seeds.
Next came a trellis for the clematis vine,
Stakes for new trees, and to hold them some twine.
For the patio a planter and large flower pot,
Both were in colors bold, bright, and red hot.
To help all our veggies grow sweet and grow strong,
There were large bags of compost to help them along.
Our cats will be happy with their new catnip mouse,
Our birds will enjoy their heated bath and bird house.
For fun was a rain gauge and new garden book,
A train for the garden, homemade jam for the cook.
As jolly St. Nick finished he winked and stood tall,
And I heard him exclaim "Merry Christmas," and Happy Gardening to all.



November climbing roses still in bloom in the MG garden at Rockfield Manor.

The Master Gardener team working at Rockfield Manor- Sue McCue (left), Becky Cody, Fred Wolfe.



MG's Advanced Training

All class descriptions and registration links can be found at:

<https://extension.umd.edu/mg/advanced-training>

Winter 2015-2016

Carroll County - **Winter Native Tree ID** – Date: TBD

Additional information will be posted at the following site in early August

Alicia the state coordinator for all Master Gardener Advanced Trainings will answer any question you have at aliciafb@umd.edu

Dahlia digging and dividing workshop.
November 20, 2015



December Calendar of Events

December 3, 2015 – Holiday Party	Liriodendron
December 12 – Garden Series Bel Air Library Topic: Aquatic Gardening Speaker: Kelly from Maryland Aquatics	10:15 am - noon
December 25 Extension Office Closed	
December 31, 2015 <u>No</u> Steering Committee Meeting	
January 1, 2016 Extension Office Closed	HAPPY NEW YEAR
January 7, 2016	10 am MG General Meeting

Administrative note from the Harford County Extension Office –

If purchasing supplies for Master Gardener programs or any MG event (or any supplies for the Extension Office) – stop in the office and pick up our Tax Exempt card. Purchases can be made without paying Maryland State Sales tax, by showing this card during purchase. You will also need to return the card to our office. Recently this was brought to my attention during an Extension Office Business Manager meeting and pre-audit consultation. If you choose to not use the tax exempt card, future reimbursements to MG's will be made will be minus the tax

Thank you for your assistance and understanding on this matter. *Robin*

Photo credits:

Cabbage photo on the far right -<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/vegetables/cabbage>

Poetry Credit ¹ <http://poetry.about.com/od/poemsbytitle/l/blladybugladybug.htm>

THE MARYLAND MASTER GARDENER MISSION STATEMENT

The Maryland Master Gardener mission is to support the University of Maryland Extension by educating Maryland residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities.

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Solutions in your community

Joyce Browning
Urban Horticulturist
Master Gardener Coordinator
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