Try Seed-Saving

There are many reasons to try your hand at seed-saving. Perhaps your zinnias looked great this year or you are shocked at $4.95 for a packet seeds? Or you are coveting some unusual plant of a friend’s? Seed-saving can be a great way to save money, perpetuate a plant that has done well in your landscape or cultivate heirloom or unusual varieties of plants. These are just a few reasons for saving seeds. Of course you don’t have to have a reason..it’s just fun to try out something new! The following are some tips about getting started with seed saving:

- Don’t collect seeds from hybrid varieties—they will not look the same as the parent plant.
- To keep it simple use annual plants to begin seed saving.
- Some easy vegetable seeds to save are non-hybrid tomato, pepper, bean, eggplant, cucumbers, summer squash, and watermelons.
- Save seed only from healthy, disease-free plants or disease-free, damage-free fruit.
- Collect seeds when they are mature but before seeds disperse or are eaten by birds or other animals.
- Seeds should be stored in a cool, dry, dark and airtight container. Don’t forget to label it. You won’t remember in four-six months’ time what you harvested!

This, like so many gardening topics, is just the tip of the iceberg! Here are a couple links to fact sheets that you may find helpful if you want to dig a little deeper. Of course your MG manual is always a good source of information.


CONSUMER ADVISORY:
If a Tree Falls on Your Property

At one time or another, just about every homeowner or someone the homeowner knows has had a tree fall due to wind, a storm or winter weather. The question that everyone wants to know is, “Will my homeowners insurance pay for the damage?”

The answer is that it depends on the terms of your policy. Each homeowner should look at their homeowners policy or talk with a representative from their insurance company to find out what the policy specifically covers and doesn’t cover. Homeowners should also be sure to know what the policy deductible is and any dollar limits on the amount of damage the policy will cover. Although the terms of your actual policy will determine if the damage you have incurred is covered, generally many homeowners policies will:

- provide coverage for damage to your home and the contents of your home if a tree (even if it is your neighbor’s tree) falls on your home or other insured structure, such as a fence or a detached garage. If your neighbor’s tree was dead and the neighbor knew it was dead, then your homeowners insurance company may seek reimbursement from your neighbor for the claim. This is called, “subrogation.”

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ELIZABETH GARDENS—A place to visit from Lynn Rudigier

On your next visit to North Carolina’s Outer Banks, be sure to go to The Elizabethan Gardens, located on Roanoke Island, a twenty minute drive south of Nags Head. Adjacent to the Fort Raleigh National Park, what started out as a typical sixteenth century settlers’ garden evolved into a Renaissance pleasure garden when a donor gave a sizeable gift of ancient, classical statuary. Hard work and further donations of plantings and furnishing made The Elizabethan Gardens into the marvel that it is today.

A day’s stroll is very relaxing. A fragrant herbarium greets the visitor at the entrance and there are quiet areas where the visitor is invited to sit and reflect on the beauty and serenity; woodland paths and wonderful bay views. There are rare plants, such as the century plant and sea hollies, as well as native plantings. Many of the plantings are familiar, hollies and periwinkles among them, but interestingly enough, the gardens are far enough south to support Spanish moss.

Renaissance gardens are formal and divided into four parterres or quadrants, and true to the spirit of the age Apollo, Diana, Venus and Jupiter stand in the center of each gazing out over their domains. They are not alone. Statues of Virginia Dare and Queen Elizabeth I occupy their own private niches.

A day spent in The Elizabethan Gardens is a treat to the senses. Be sure to go if you stay in the Outer Banks. For further information, visit The Elizabethan Gardens website: http://elizabethangardens.org/

Timely Tips from the HGIC

•Leaves that fall onto the lawn can be shredded with a lawnmower and left to decompose naturally on the lawn. These mulched leaves can be left in place if they don’t exceed 1 inch in depth. However, deep piles of leaves that are not removed for several days may smother and kill the lawn. If you don’t want to mulch them in place on your lawn use a grass catcher to collect leaves and then use them in the compost pile or to winter-mulch beds.

•This is still a good time to control wild garlic, clover, ground ivy, chickweed, and other difficult weeds with an herbicide if daytime temperatures remain in the sixties. Do not spray herbicides around ponds or on breezy days. Always read and closely follow all label instructions.

•According to the Fertilizer Use Act of 2011, the last application of fall fertilizer needs to be applied before November 15th.

•Nursery stock trees and shrubs can be planted until the ground freezes. Carefully examine trees and shrubs prior to purchase to assess quality. Carefully remove container stock plants to examine root systems. If you buy container grown plants, be sure to spread the roots out in the planting hole. (Cut down the sides to encourage new root growth.) With balled and burlap stock, cut the twine around the ball and cut away the nylon or burlap wrapping.

•Continue to watch out for poison ivy. Do not handle the hairy poison ivy vines wrapped around trees. This is a good time to sever poison ivy vines at ground level and paint the cut end with a full-strength herbicide labeled for brush killing that contains triclopyr. Be careful not to bring firewood into the house with poison ivy vines attached. (HG 34)

•Spinach, lettuce, arugula, kale, and other cool-season crops should be protected from freezing with a cold frame, plastic sheeting or floating row cover. Be sure to vent your cold frame or plastic cover on sunny days to prevent excessive heat build-up.
CONSUMER ADVISORY: If a Tree Falls on Your Property

Remember, though, that the amount of coverage will be determined by your policy’s dollar limits. Your homeowners policy may also pay a limited amount (usually between $500 and $1,000) to remove the tree from your property. The amount paid for tree removal is typically based on the event and not the number of trees that fall. This means that you will receive the same amount of money whether one tree falls or if ten trees fall.

- Provide some coverage for the cost of tree removal. Many policies pay a limited amount (usually between $500 and $1,000) to remove the tree(s) from your property, whether the tree damages an insured structure or just falls in your yard. The amount paid for tree removal is typically based on the event and not the number of trees that fall. This means that you will receive the same amount of money whether just one tree falls, or if ten trees fall.

- Provide some coverage for damage to your trees, shrubs or plants in certain very limited circumstances, such as fire, lightning or vandalism; damage from snow, ice or wind is generally not covered. Generally, the amount that your homeowners policy will pay is limited to 5% of the coverage of the structure (this is called your Coverage A), and is capped at $500 for any one item.

- Does not provide coverage for damage to your car if the tree falls on it. If you have comprehensive coverage on your automobile though, then your automobile policy may pay for the damage.

Additionally, your local municipality may arrange for debris removal after a major storm that affects a large area. Watch for information in the newspaper or listen to the radio for details. If there is debris removal by a government jurisdiction, you may need to sign a Right of Entry form granting permission to come onto your property and remove the debris. Before the debris is removed, you should photograph all damaged property because your policy will likely require you to prove your loss.

You should review your insurance policy annually to make sure that you have the appropriate coverage. For more information regarding your homeowners insurance policy, read our information about homeowners and renters insurance.

Advisory taken from website of The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) is an independent state agency that regulates Maryland’s insurance industry and protects consumers by enforcing insurance laws.

UPCOMING ADVANCED TRAINING AND MG EVENTS IN 2013

• Better Yields through Better Soils  
  Location: Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore, MD 21209  
  Date & Time: Sat., February 2, 2013; 9am-4pm  
  Registration Deadline: Jan. 25  
  Registration Fee: $30  
  (Bring your own lunch or order an optional lunch from Whole Foods for $15 - see registration form.)

• New Advanced Training Certificate in Vegetables- This course will count as one of the units you will need to get this advanced certificate.

• Check out the MG website under Advanced Training for more info about the following classes:

• Organic Vegetable Gardening (counts for one day)—Saturday, March 2, 2013 9:00-3:30pm

• Intensive Techniques and Small Space Gardening (counts for two days)—June 18 and June 25, 2013, 9:00-3:30

• Vegetable Plant and Pest Diagnosis (This one-day class will be repeated in two locations.) —Howard Co. Conservancy – Tuesday July 16, 9:00-3:30/Charles Co. locations: Thursday, July 18, 9:00-3:30

• National Arboretum—http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/events.html
Recipe Box

SPINACH CALZONES from the kitchen of Linda Crandall

This is a tasty recipe and it can be as easy to make or as hard as you like.

Here is my easy way...

**For the stuffing:**
1 package of cream cheese
Some extra virgin olive oil
Garlic
Basil (or Oregano)
Some spinach --either a large bowl (basket) of fresh spinach that has been washed and chopped, or 2 packages of frozen chopped spinach.
2 Cups of grated mozzarella cheese

**For the dough:**
Either 2 packs of pizza dough (my quick and easy way) or enough homemade pizza dough for 2 pizzas

**For the topping:**
1 Can diced tomatoes (Italian Style)
1 Can tomato paste

In a large bowl set out 1 package of cream cheese to warm and soften. While that is happening, sauté 1 - 2 chopped onions in a tablespoon (or two) of EVOO - and as onions are cooking add some diced garlic and basil (or oregano). When the onions are completely cooked add either a large bowl (basket) of fresh spinach that has been washed and chopped, or 2 packages of frozen chopped spinach. Lower heat and cook until spinach is cooked and all excess moisture is gone, then remove from heat.

Preheat oven to 400°.

When spinach - onion mix has cooled a bit, add it - a little at a time - to cream cheese in bowl and mix until they are well blended. Let cool until mix is room temperature and at that point add 2 cups of grated mozzarella cheese.

Once stuffing is finished, put aside and remove pizza dough from containers (one container at a time) and divide into 4 large (or 6 medium size) balls. Roll each ball into a circle - I use a plate to make sure all are the same size. Divide stuffing mix into equal portions to fill calzones by spooning stuffing into center of each circle (it is easiest to do this one circle at a time). Once filling is on the circle/dough, fold dough over to form a half circle and press together all edges - I use a fork for this.

Put half circles on greased cookie sheet. Make one or two small slices in each one through the top layer of dough so that they can vent while baking. Put cookie sheet into oven and bake for 15 minutes then reduce oven temperature to 350° and bake 15 - 20 minutes longer - until dough is completely cooked.

While the calzones are cooking, here is a quick sauce to serve with them; In sauté pan, add the can of diced tomatoes - Italian style and the can of tomato paste and mix, then heat until warm. Put pan in oven to cook a little longer and then serve with calzones when they are ready.

PUMPKIN BLACK BEAN TURKEY CHILI from the kitchen of Lynn Rudigier

**Ingredients**

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped yellow pepper
- 1 finely chopped jalapeno pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano leaves
- 3 cups beef broth
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) black beans, rinsed, drained
- 2 1/2 cups chopped leftover cooked turkey
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup dry sherry
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper

**Directions**

Heat oil in large sauce pan on medium heat. Add onion, bell pepper, jalapeno pepper and garlic. Cook and stir 8 minutes or until onion is tender.

Stir in chili powder, cumin and oregano. Cook and stir 1 minute.

Add broth, beans, turkey, pumpkin, tomatoes with their liquid, sherry, salt and black pepper; mix well. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serves 6.
Our Vision: The Maryland Master Gardener vision is a healthier world through environmental stewardship.

Our Mission: to support the University of Maryland Extension mission by educating residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Tool Recommendation

Thanks to Shann Mills for passing this along. I have never seen this tool! She said, “Here is one of my favorite crabgrass pulling tools. Not only is it effective in removing the largest of the crabgrass, it does not require bending over and pulling. It is sold at Lowes but you have to look for it.”

Here’s the blurb from the advertisement:

**Fiskars’ stand-up weeder** makes it easy to remove invasive plants from your lawn without kneeling, bending over, or using harsh, costly herbicide. Serrated, stainless-steel claws penetrate tough soil to grab weeds by the root for clean removal, and an easy-eject mechanism on the handle clears the head between uses. An extra-long handle helps you reach every weed without sore knees from kneeling or back strain from bending.