

Hello Master Gardeners!

Fall seems to have passed quickly this year, with winter hard on it's heels. Cold nights, flocking birds, and the season's final flowers like goldenrod, asters and mums, signal the end of another growing season. It's time to shift into high gear to finish any final garden activities for the year.

Start by assessing how your plans and plants worked this year. Did it please you? Did you like the color scheme? Or do some areas need to be rearranged? Now would be the time to make notes for next year, or remove plants to make way for spring plantings.

Next comes the big fall job of putting the yard and gardens to bed for the winter. Cut back perennial foliage, such as peonies, iris and lilies, but let ornamental grasses stand through the winter for their beauty. Coneflowers and *Rudbeckia* can be left standing as a food source for birds. Remove dead annuals and topdress mulch beds for a finished winter look.

Late October is the time to apply your final fertilizer application to Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue lawns. This application promotes good root development and early spring greenup. Don't skip it! Finally, enjoy all the color that Autumn brings and start making plans for next year! —*Betty Hamata*

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Reminder:

**MG Volunteer Log
Sheets Due
October 30**



To remain active in the Master Gardener program, you must turn in your volunteer and education hours each year. Take a look at Page 8 of the newsletter for a reminder about how to use the on-line reporting system. If you need a hardcopy of the reporting sheet, or have questions, give Sarah a call at (402) 727-2775.

Please Join Us!

**Newsletter Committee
Meeting**

October 26 st

7:00-8:00 pm

UNL Extension Office

1206 W. 23rd Street

Fremont, NE.

Join us to brainstorm newsletter article ideas for our January 2010 issue of the Going & Growing Newsletter.

From The Garden To The Table

Now That I've Grown Herbs, What Do I Do With Them?

By Bonnie Parrish

Herb Butter

½ C. Soft unsalted butter
½ C. Fresh herb leaves (chopped, diced or minced)
1 t. lemon zest (optional)

Combine all ingredients. Serve on vegetables, bread, or meat. Freezes well for up to 2 months. Can be made into logs and cut into slices or make fancy shapes with candy molds.

Herbs De Provence

1 T. dried marjoram
1 T. dried thyme
1 T. dried savory
1 t. dried basil
1 t. dried rosemary
½ t. dried sage
½ t. fennel seeds

In a small storage container, combine all ingredients. Use to season soups, stews, and sauces. Place in a square of double thickness cheesecloth. Tie into a bag. Remove before serving.

Herb Jelly

2–3 oz. fresh picked herb sprigs
3 c. unsweetened apple juice
¼ c. lemon juice.
1 (1 ¾ oz.) pkg. regular powdered fruit pectin
4 c. sugar

Chop clean herbs; press into measuring cup to make 1 to 1 ½ c; transfer to 8 or 10-quart Dutch oven. Add apple juice. Bring to boiling over high heat. Boil, uncovered for 5 minutes. Remove from heat; cover.

Let stand for 10 minutes. Strain the herbs through cheesecloth; press to extract juice. Measure juice; add enough additional apple juice to equal 3 cups. Discard herbs.

In the same Dutch oven, combine apple juice mixture, lemon juice and fruit pectin. Heat on high, stirring constantly until mixture comes to a full rolling boil. Add sugar all at once.

Return to boiling; boil for 1 minute stirring constantly. Remove from heat; quickly skim off foam with metal spoon.

Immediately ladle into hot, sterilized half-pint jars, leaving ¼" headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids.

Process jars in boiling water canner for 5 minutes (start timing when water begins to boil) Remove jars from canner; cool on racks. Makes 5 ½ pints.



Going & Growing Newsletter Contributors:

Bonnie Parrish
Mary Svoboda
Lorraine Urban
Sarah Browning
Marilyn Fenton
Betty Hamata

Basil Pesto

2 c. basil leaves
½ c. parsley leaves
½ c. olive oil
3 T. pine nuts
2 garlic cloves peeled
¼ c. freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 T. soft butter
Salt & Pepper to taste

Puree basil, parsley, nuts, and garlic in food processor or blender. With machine running, slowly add olive oil to make creamy mixture. Mix the cheese and butter in by hand. Season to taste.

TO FREEZE: Omit butter and cheese. Spoon mixture into ice cube trays. Pop out & thaw when ready to use; add butter and cheese.

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Herbal Vinegar

To 1 quart jar, add ½ cup of herbs and fill with vinegar. Close the container tightly and let sit for 3 to 4 weeks in a cool, dark place. Strain and bottle. (Use good quality vinegar. White distilled vinegar works well for most herbs, but you can use cider, white or red wine, rice, champagne, or sherry.)

- To make a flavorful blend, try thyme, rosemary, garlic cloves, lemon zest, and black peppercorns. Opal basil and tarragon are good used alone (the opal basil vinegar takes on a ruby-red color).
- Or try a garden vinegar made with a sprig of every herb you have on hand, such as dill, basil, cilantro, thyme, marjoram, chives and rosemary.
- To make a savory salad dressing, use 1 part herbal vinegar to 2 parts good quality olive oil.

Lavender Lemonade

2 t. dried lavender buds
1 c. boiling water
6 c. lemonade
Lemon slices
Sprigs of fresh lavender or mint

Place lavender buds in a 2 cup glass measuring cup. Add 1 c. boiling water to measuring cup. Cover; let steep for 5 minutes. Pour mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a 2 quart pitcher; discard lavender buds. Stir lemonade into mixture in pitcher.

Cover; chill for several hours. To serve, pour lemonade mixture over ice cubes in a glass. Garnish with lemon slice and sprig of lavender or mint.

Herbal Hair Rinse

1 large handful fresh herbs (chamomile, rosemary or sage)
2 c. boiling water

Place herb in a 1 quart jar and pour boiling water over it. Cover with lid or saucer and steep for 10-15 minutes. Allow the infusion to cool; strain to remove any plant material. Pour over just washed hair and leave in.

Kitchen Bouquet

Arrange cut herbs, such as sage, chives, garlic chive blossoms, purple basil, and dill in low jars filled with water to keep them fresh. Set the herbs in a basket.

Most herbs air-dry well after they've served as a bouquet; let them stand in the vase without water. They'll be useful in cooking as dried material.

Peppermint Foot Soak

½ gallon water
8 c. fresh peppermint

Bring water to a boil in large pot; turn off the heat. Add fresh peppermint, cover with lid and steep for 15 minutes. Transfer the brew to a basin. Add warm or cool water to make a comfortable footbath. Sit in the garden, soak your feet for at least 10 minutes, and relax!

Landscaping Mistakes Observed

We've all done it. Driven around town and observed other peoples yards and noticed things that didn't seem quite right. Have you seen, or even done, any of these things in your landscape?

- Watering the lawn when rain is predicted, or it's raining?
- Planting small trees (that grow up to be big trees) right under power lines. And then topping them!
- Planting trees too deep, so that you can't see the root flare.
- Pruning branches back to a stub and getting water-sprouts everywhere.
- Leaving a stump behind when removing a branch, instead of cutting back to the branch collar.
- Building a raised bed around existing trees and burying the roots inches, or even feet, beneath new soil?
- Staking a newly planted tree with wire and leaving it there for years.
- Planting small evergreen shrubs right next to the

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You can always view the
Going & Growing Newsletter

online and in color at <http://extensionhorticulture.unl.edu/MG/MGresources.shtml>

Understanding Botanical Names

By Merry Fenton

The first time I heard a gardener referring to plants by their botanical Latin name, I was in Yorkshire, England in the garden of the friend who would become my gardening mentor. She was talking about her “capsicums” and I had no idea at the time she meant peppers.

As we toured her garden, she rattled off the Latin name for every plant. I was totally impressed. Since I had minored in Classics in college and had several years of Latin under my belt, I decided then and there that if I was going to be a serious gardener, I needed to learn the proper names for what I was growing.

Before the advent of the binomial nomenclature system, the same plant could be known by many common names. For instance, cornflower, bachelor’s button, bluebottle and boutonniere flower all refer to the same plant, which we know of in botanical Latin as *Centaurea cyanus*. And those are just the English language common names!

Imagine the confusion when trying to study and document plants across languages when you couldn’t even be sure if you were talking about the same plant.

Then along came Swedish botanist, Carl Linnaeus. He laid the groundwork for our modern binomial nomenclature system in the early 1700’s and it’s still going strong. In this system, plants are categorized by Kingdom, Phylum (Division), Class, Order, Family, Genus and Species.

We most commonly refer to plants by

their genus and species descriptor, which together form the species name. In writing, the entire species name is either italicized or underlined. The genus name is always capitalized, and the species name is written lower case. The species descriptor, or specific epithet, is often an adjective, referring to some characteristic of the plant.

Some plants are further categorized into subgroupings, such as cultivar (cultivated variety), subspecies, form or variety. Cultivar names are designated by single quotes. Variety names are preceded by “var”, subspecies by “subsp” or “ssp”, and form by “f.”

For example, the species name for Purpleleaf Wintercreeper is *Euonymus fortunei* 'Colorata'. *Euonymus* is the genus, *fortunei* is the specific epithet and 'Colorata' is the cultivar name.

If you see an “X” between the genus and specific epithet that denotes a plant that is a cross of two others, in other words a hybrid. Shasta daisy, or *Leucanthemum x superbum*, is an example of this. Hybrid plants can have a cultivar designation, too, such as Becky Shasta Daisy, *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Becky'.

As for pronunciation, just give it a whirl and sound it out. But if you’re really worried about getting it right, this website allows you to enter either the common or scientific name and then chose “Hear the scientific name” to hear the proper pronunciation - <http://plantfacts.osu.edu/Plant/>

Nomenclature Shortcuts

By knowing a few key words in Latin, it’s easy to identify specific characteristics of plants through their botanical name.

Here are just a few to get you started.

- Folia or phylla = leaf
- Micro = small
- Macro = big
- Alta = tall
- Nana = dwarf
- Reptens = creeping
- Scandens = climbing
- Compactus = dense
- Rubrum = red
- Alba = white
- Aureus = golden
- Lutea = yellow
- Virens = green
- Purpurea = purple
- Glaucus = covered a with powdery white bloom
- Glabra = smooth
- Spicata = spikey
- Vulgaris = common

Words that end with “ata” or “atum” are describing shape.

- Cordata = heart shaped
- Lanceolata = lance shaped
- Palmatum = hand shaped
- Stellata = star shaped

Lilies– Queen of the Garden

By Betty Hamata

Lilies are beautiful, reliable perennials for the garden that are easy to grow, adding color, fragrance and grace to the summer garden. They are members of the *Lilium* genus, unlike daylilies, calla lily, toad lily or surprise lily, which are not “true lilies” because they are categorized in different genera.

Choosing Lilies

Asiatic lilies are the hardiest and earliest to flower. They are available in a range of heights, from short border plants to four-foot tall giants.

They usually have upward facing flowers, although some cultivars have downward or outward facing flower is a tremendous range of colors. In fact, all the colors of the rainbow, except blue, with each flower lasting for several weeks.

Asiatic lilies make excellent cut flowers, but do not have much scent. Most are hardy to Zone 3.

Oriental lilies are next to bloom, from July to August, and are noted for their intense fragrance and large flowers. Plants are usually taller than the Asiatic lilies, up to six-feet tall, with larger flowers that are outward or nodding.

Two popular varieties are ‘Stargazer’, featuring white, pink and magenta flowers, and ‘Casablanca’ with pure white, fragrant flowers. They are the most frequently requested cut lilies by florists. The leaves of Oriental lilies are wider and more succulent than those of Asiatic lilies, and this characteristic is one of the best ways to dis-

A Tale of Two Lilies

Have you ever wondered what the orange “lilies” are that you see blooming along roadsides and in old farmyards? Well, this could be either Tiger lily or tawny daylily. Take a closer look to see which plant you have.

Tiger lily, *L. tigrinum*, is a vigorous plant that is regularly found growing along roadsides. It multiplies readily from bulbils and produces abundant seed that is scattered hither and yon by birds.

Flowers are orange, with recurved petals, and purplish-black spots. The stems are purplish-green, with white cobweb-like hairs, and numerous black bulbils produced in the leaf axils.



Tawny daylily, botanically known as *Hemerocallis fulva*, is also known as “ditch lily” or even “outhouse lily”. Although often maligned by gardeners, this plant was used in the development of modern garden daylilies. The orange flowers have a yellow throat, without any brown spots.



Leaves are the typical one-inch wide, linear, strap-like foliage that originates from a basal crown. Plants are very vigorous and usually form large colonies.

Community Gardens

By Lorraine Urban

I like grass...the kind you mow. But, I noticed the church I attend in Wahoo has about ¼ of its city-block-size property used only for growing and mowing grass.

The empty space is on the far side of the church parking lot, not next to the building, not really enhancing the looks of the property. It seemed like “wasted space” to me, space that could be put to better use.

While at the International Master Gardener Conference in Las Vegas in late March, I attended a program on “Community Gardens” and my interest deepened.

There are some community gardens in Eastern Nebraska. Omaha has at least two:

- “Big Garden” coordinated by the United Methodist Ministries
- “City Sprouts” - a demo plot at 40th and Franklin

Lincoln has three community gardens:

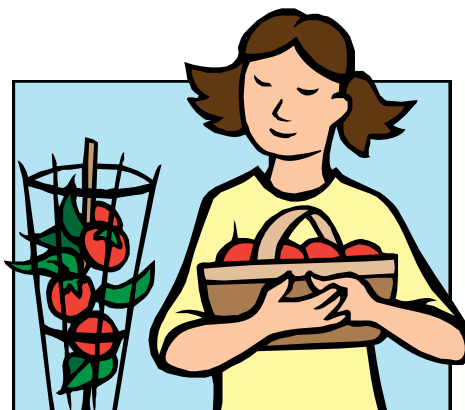
- “Community Crops” with more than 16 actual sites
- 46th Street Community Garden
- F Street Community Garden

Plus one garden in Fremont on an open city block near the airport, that has not been developed due to airport zoning restrictions.

Some gardens are in vacant lots, some in park space, and some on property that cannot, because of lo-

cation, be developed for housing or business. Some are also on church properties. In large metropolitan areas, roof tops have been used for this purpose.

The purposes are also varied. For some a community garden just provides a space to garden. Others provide much needed food for low-income families. Some supply farmers markets or ask their users to “Plant a row for the hungry” for low-income ministries.



Maybe you’ve spotted a place in your community that needs a purpose other than growing weeds. Where should you start if you’d like to make this into a Community Garden?

1. Find out if the property is available by contacting the owner, or civic or religious group.
2. Does it have a water source available to gardeners? If not, could you get donations or grants to provide one? (From Garden to Table USDA Community Food Project grant, perhaps.)
3. Check out the American Community Gardening Association and other web sites to get as much information as possible about

community gardening. Consult your local County Extension Offices as well. (Some gardens are cooperatives between two or three agencies, such as the Community Crops/Open Harvest/Lincoln Parks and Recreation cooperative in Lincoln.)

4. Form a committee to make this happen. You won’t be able to do it by yourself.

If you clear these hurdles, here are **other things to think about:**

- How will ground be divided?
- Who will assign the plots?
- What is required of those who use the garden?
- Will you need to charge a fee to pay for water usage, fall and spring maintenance of beds, mowing around the area? Other?
- Who will give the orientation for the gardeners and what sort of agreement will you have with them?
- Will your committee/co-operative provide seeds and seedlings (as Community Crops does) or will each gardener supply her/his own (as Fremont does)?
- Will you need liability insurance?

If you are interested in such a project as this, you can find out more by going to <http://Communitycrops.org>, or visit the American Community Garden Association at <http://Communitygarden.org>.

“High Country Gardens” Nurseryman, Nov. 5 in Lincoln

Horticulturist and owner of High Country Gardens David Salman will speak Thursday, Nov. 5 at 7 p.m., at the UNL City Campus Union Auditorium. Salman’s focus is on “plants with an untamed spirit, plants strong enough to survive this region’s harsh climates, short growing seasons and unpredictable precipitation.

A professional nurseryman, greenhouse grower and gardener, Salman also writes his High County Gardens catalog and selects the plants offered by the catalog. As part of his professional focus, he also seeks out, breeds and evaluates garden worthy plants, specializing in native species from the U.S. and northern Mexico as well as cold hardy, xeric species from western Asia and South Africa.

Pre-register before October 29 by calling (402) 472-2971.

Cost is \$12 for the general public, \$10 for NSA members, and is free to students with ID. On-site registration is from 6-6:45 p.m.

The Joseph & Dorothy Young Memorial Lectures in Horticulture is hosted by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and is made possible by a generous gift from the Young family.

Lilies– Queen of the Garden, Continued

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tinguish between the two species. Hardy to Zone 4.

Martagon lilies, or Turk’s cap, are a group of lily species with downward facing flowers that have reflexed or rolled back petals, including *L. martagon*, *L. superbum* and numerous other species. Dozens of small flowers are found on each flower stalk, which may reach 3-6 feet tall. They can tolerate more shade than other lilies, blooming in June and July. Hardy to Zone 3.

Orienpet lily hybrids are the result of crosses between Oriental and Trumpet lilies. They possess the best characteristics of both parents, including great size, vigor and beauty. They bloom in July and August, and can grow from 4–7 feet tall. Hardy to Zone 3.

Easter lily, *L. longiflorum*, is a beautiful plant that many gardeners like to plant outside after receiving it as a holiday gift. Floral Easter lilies are only winter hardy to Zone 8 (7), but can often overwinter in Nebraska if planted in a warm, protected location.

Plant them outside immediately after flowering, or as soon as the weather permits. Do not cut back the foliage, but allow it to remain to photosynthesize for the plant.

In recent years crosses between Easter lily and other lily species has increased the color selection and winter hardiness of new trumpet lily cultivars.

Lily Culture

Lilies grow from an underground bulb and prefer an organic, well-drained soil. They required full sun to light

shade. Bulbs are usually planted in fall at a depth three times the height of the bulb, or about 6 inches deep, and about 12-18” apart.

Lilies with large flower heads may need to be staked. Remove flowers as they fade to reduce seed set, but allow the foliage to stand as long as possible to produce food for the bulb and next year’s flowers.

Rabbits like tender lily shoots so a cylinder of wire mesh around the plants can protect the bulb.

When lily clumps become over crowded and plants begin producing smaller or fewer blooms, they should be divided. Dig up the clump in the fall and separate the bulbs. Pull apart the clusters of bulbs with your hands and replant the bulbs in fresh, organic matter enriched, soil.

Using the On-Line Volunteer Reporting System

In 2006 a new online system for reporting volunteer and education hours was developed by Anne Streich, former State Master Gardener Coordinator. The system gives county and statewide totals of MG activity each year, an important step that enables UNL Extension Educators to document the tremendous impact MGs make in their communities each year.

Please use this system for reporting your volunteer hours again this year. You can enter your activities at any time during the year, so please complete the online report every time you complete a volunteer or education activity to keep it up-to-date. The system will keep a running total of your volunteer and education hours.

Those MGs without a computer can continue using paper log sheets, or you are welcome to come to the Extension Office to enter your information online.

Accessing the Reporting System

Go online to:

<http://mastergardener.unl.edu>

Click on: "Volunteer Reporting" in the selection menu on the right side of the screen.

Your Username & Password:

Contact Sarah if you don't have a record of your username or password.

Remember: usernames & passwords are case sensitive. If you have problems logging into the system, check that you have used the correct capitalizations.

Changing your password:

The first time you access the site, I suggest you change your password to something unique that is easy to remember.

On the top of the main page, click on the red link with your name. This will bring up your personal data page. Here you can change or enter your address, phone numbers, email address, username and password. Use all lowercase letters in the username and password.

Please remember your username & password!!!

Once you have changed your password from the original setting, I will not have access to that information. If you lose it, we will have to reset it again.

If you make any changes to your address, phone numbers or email address, please send me an email to notify me there has been a change. The system will not automatically let me know.

Reporting: When you sign-in, you will be shown a page with your history of activity for the current year. This page is divided into "Volunteering Activities" at the top of the page and "Continuing Education Activities" in the lower portion of the page. The first time you visit your page in 2009, there will be no volunteer or education activities listed for that year.

Add a New Volunteer Activity:

To add a new volunteer activity click on "Add a new volunteering report". Type in the date, hours, number of adult contacts and number of

youth contacts. From the Activity drop-down list, select the activity category that most closely matches your activity. Or select "Other Project" at the bottom of the page. To add other activity, click on "Add a new volunteering report" again.

Please enter time rounded to the nearest quarter hour and expressed as a decimal. For example, enter 1 1/2 hours as 1.5 hours. Forty five minutes is entered as .75 hours.

When you are finished entering information, click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page.

Caution-
If you don't click
"Submit" before
leaving each page the
information will not
be saved!!

Once you are finished entering activities, click on "Back to Gardener's History" to view your updated history.

If you submitted an activity and find an error, from your history page click on red date link for the activity. This will take you to the edit screen for that activity. Make the necessary changes and click "Submit". To remove the activity from your history, click "Delete this report".

Tips for Entering Volunteer Activities:

If there is a project you

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Volunteering Activities for John Doe, Year 2008

Change year:

[Add a new volunteering report](#)

Date	Activity	County of Reporting	Hrs	Adults Contacts	Youth Contacts
08-20-2008	Educational Teaching	Dodge	4	12	
05-02-2008	Answering Phones/Ask a Master Gardener	Dodge	8	25	
05-01-2008	Demonstration garden/landscape	Dodge	6	25	
04-26-2008	Nebraska Statewide Arboretum project	Dodge	12	50	0
03-03-2008	Demonstration garden/landscape	Dodge	10	5	
01-01-2008	Writing for publication	Dodge	6	120	
TOTAL:			46	237	0

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Continuing Education Activities for John Doe

[Add a new cont. education report](#)

Date	Activity	Hrs
07-17-2008	Other State MG Conferences/Field Days	10
TOTAL:		10

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work on several times throughout the summer, such as maintenance of a community garden, writing articles for the MG newsletter, or answering phones at the Extension office, add up all your hours for that project for the summer and enter the activity only once. However, if you work at more than one community garden, please enter each site's hours separately.

Add a New Continuing Education Activity: In the lower portion of the page, under "Continuing Education Activities" click on "Add a new cont. education report". Complete the report form and click "Submit".

If you have questions about using the system or problems entering information please contact Sarah Browning at (402) 727-2775, or by email at sbrowning2@unl.edu.

Hort Update— Timely Recommendations for Nebraska Gardeners

By Sarah Browning

Twice monthly from April through September and once a month in the winter months, UNL Extension horticulture staff and specialists meet via phone conference to discuss horticulture problems being found in the state. One result of this is the Hort Update newsletter, on-line at <http://extensionhorticulture.unl.edu/>.

Delivered directly to your email box, this newsletter outlines current and upcoming horticulture issues, management strategies, and links to additional information.

Topics of special interest for October include:

- Late fall turfgrass fertilization
- Avoiding damage to frozen turfgrass
- Fall tree irrigation

- Natural needle drop
- Dormant season tree pruning
- Protecting trees & shrubs from wildlife damage
- Vegetable storage
- Winter mulch for strawberries

Master Gardeners are welcome to subscribe to Hort Update by visiting the Extension Horticulture website, and clicking on "Hort Update."

Topsy-Turvy Tomatoes

By Mary Svoboda

The manufacturer says the topsy-turvy tomato planter promises to make tomato gardening easy. They claim that by growing your tomato plants upside-down you can get rid of many problems associated with growing tomatoes.

- ✓ No more worries that your tomatoes will get too heavy for the plant.
- ✓ No more bugs.
- ✓ And the ability to pick your tomatoes easily without having to crawl around the plant and dig through the branches.

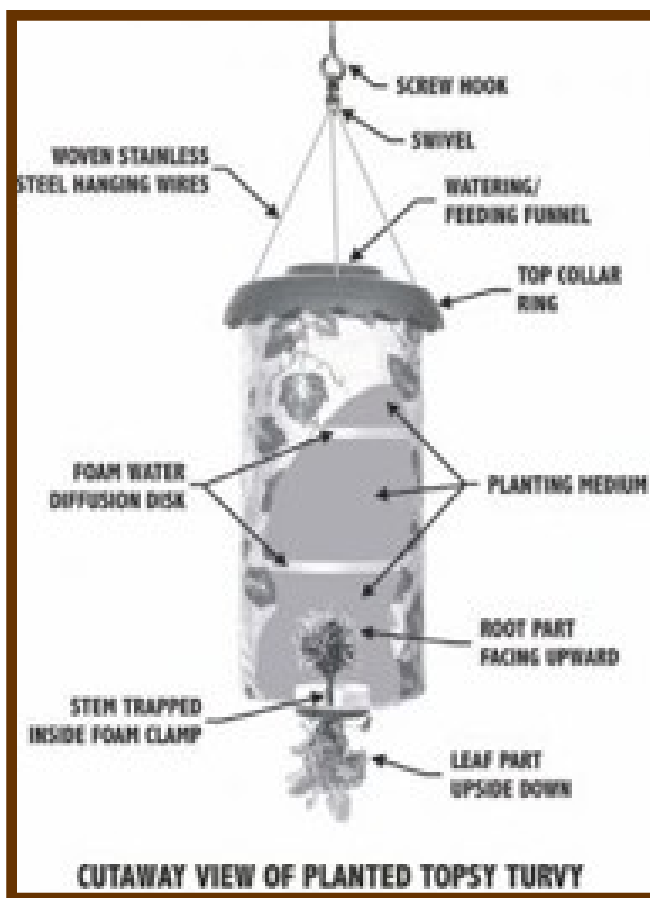
The ingenious design of the topsy-turvy planter allows you to grow double the tomatoes in half the space and without all the back-breaking work. Simply attach the hanging bag from your deck, porch or tree and you'll have ripe tomatoes a month earlier than everyone else. Insert your tomato seedling, fill with soil and hang in a sunny area of your property. Growing tomatoes upside-down eliminates the need for weeding, staking and caging. It's a real space saver.

Avoid Common Mistakes

- ⇒ When you choose a seedling for your planter, it should be no more than six inches tall. Any taller will put unnecessary strain on the plant and it may die.
- ⇒ You will have better luck growing a smaller variety of tomato, such as a cherry type, instead of big beefsteak types.
- ⇒ Feed the plant through the foam insert inside the planter to avoid

damaging the tender roots. You can wrap it in a plastic bag for protection. Bury one-fourth of the plant in the soil for a strong anchor.

- ⇒ The tomato planter comes with two sponges that are supposed



- to keep the soil moist. Layer the soil and sponges in the planter, beginning and ending with soil.
- ⇒ The planter can weigh up to 60 lbs. when full of soil and water. You must have a strong enough hook or it will come crashing down.
- ⇒ To avoid overwatering, cut a milk jug in half and poke holes in the bottom. Take a little soil out of

the planter and put in the milk jug. Fill the jug with water to make a drip system for slow, consistent watering. When the jug is empty, fill it again. Excess water will run out the bottom of the planter.

Gardeners who have tried topsy-turvy planters say:

⇒ Plants grow up toward the sun, despite this unusual planter, and the roots grow down toward the plant.

⇒ Watering can cause excess drainage to wet the foliage below the pot, increasing the chances of disease.

⇒ There's no easy way to support the plant as it grows, like staking or caging.

⇒ Tomatoes require a lot of water, but even more direct sunlight. The ground can hold a decent amount of water normally after a good soaking. Topsy cannot do this and it need a more gradual soak, as with a drip irrigation system.

Those who have the grown the same cultivars of tomatoes in both ground beds and topsy planters make a comparison. The tomatoes in the ground were healthier, more productive and prettier. There was no comparison.

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The plants must be supported when the fruit gets heavy. With all the weight involved, you must have a very substantial frame to hang them. A tree is not a good place because of the shade. A shepherd's hook will not support the planter.

One gardener noted that the stem and leaves are drenched in dirty water 24 hours per day and her plant died in three days. Several gardeners reported blossom end rot.

Most people who have tried the topsy planter say they have harvested more tomatoes with plants from regular ground beds and felt that topsy planters weren't worth the novelty.

One gardener reported that she feels every idea can have its own place when a gardener knows what they are doing. Sleeping in a closet can't be compared to sleeping in your bedroom, but still can give you rest if you only have a closet.

My Experience

I found two nice new topsy-turvy planters at a garage sale and thought I would try them out. I placed two of my precious heirloom tomatoes in the planters and put them outside on May 15.

They froze that night. I knew I could never hauler the planters down, take all the soil out, replant and refill them. They were just too heavy. So I placed two more precious heirloom tomatoes in the top of the planters.

It is impossible to keep the planters watered. Twice a day was not enough and the water does run out the bottom of the planters. The plants looked wilted most of the time.

My first purple tomato had blossom end rot. When the plants started getting large they split at the branching point, which was probably why they looked wilted. It is impossible to stake them on the deck.

Meanwhile my garden tomatoes grew well and produce great fruits. I think I will just have flowers on my deck next year.

Landscaping Mistakes Observed

(Continued from page 3)

house foundation? I made this mistake with a Dwarf mugo pine, that wasn't, and finally had to remove it.

Here are some other mistakes I have made (and can now admit :0).

- ⇒ Planting an invasive perennial type of Miscanthus that spread by rhizomes. It seems to love RoundUp!
- ⇒ Not planting spearmint in a contained space, and watching it spread all over. After three years I finally got rid of it.
- ⇒ Putting down plastic years ago, with lava rock, and now trying to remove it. I have learned not to mulch with rock!
- ⇒ I have learned nutsedge does not make a beautiful grass.
- ⇒ I learned on Backyard Farmer that pre-emergence herbicide **does** work if it is watered in within 48 hours, after that Preen loses its effect rapidly. Of course then I read the Preen label and it does say that.
- ⇒ Finally, read the whole label before applying any pesticide or herbicide.

Fall and winter is a great time to evaluate landscape plantings and look for problems that need to be fixed next year. Make notes of plants that don't work in the landscape anymore, weed problems, or insect or disease problems severe enough that you want to get rid of the plants. During winter, investigate garden catalogues to find plants that would make good replacements. You can order plants and have a plan of attack for the garden/landscape as soon as spring arrives next year.

Happy gardening!

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