



**What's New?**

**Out back, in the garden...**

**Compost Alert!**

**Book of the Month**

**To Ponder...**

**Growing Community**

**Web Finds**

**Closing Comments**

**Garden Notes Archives**

**WELCOME Garden Notes Subscribers!!**

Good News!!! **The nursery** is BACK ONLINE!!

Wow, it has been a tumultuous month for me here at GS. I bought my own hosting company. A **GREEN hosting company**. All our energy use for home and office; servers and websites is offset 100% through the use of green tags. We are supporting clean, renewable energy that generates zero carbon emissions and does not contribute to accelerated global warming and climate change by purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) or 'Green Tags'

This is an easy, affordable way to clear the air. A U.S. home using about 12,000 kilowatt hours of electricity annually (1,000 kWh monthly) will avoid the release of about 7.3 tons of carbon dioxide in a year - about as beneficial as not driving 14,600 miles in a year.

For daily pocket change - 50¢ a day or \$15 a month - you too can invest today in cleaner air for both current and future generations. You'll find out more about this in the 'Community' area of Garden Notes.

[Back to Top](#) ↑



**What's New?**

Below you'll find anything new or 'added onto' at Garden Simply's Reading Room!  
Happy Reading!

● **Growing Green Beans**

The bean is a tender, warm season vegetable that ranks second to tomato in popularity in home gardens.

● **Spring Hydrangea Facts**

Hydrangea shrubs are as sub/urban as the azalea and the SUV. But, did you know that of the 5 hydrangea varieties most popular here in North American, two are natives and only one (an Asian) turns color depending on the PH?

● **Spring Gardening Tips for Bedding Plants**

Spring is a season of renewal. And of course, gardeners are especially excited about

this season as they anxiously await the annual ritual of digging into the fresh earth to plant new things to create their own glorious green and colorful world.



## Jodi's Cool Find Alert !!



### 8ft Steel Windmills - American Made

Don't be fooled by cheap imitations, ours weighs 32 lbs., theirs only 22 lbs. This official Air Electric Machine windmill is the highest quality on the market, MADE IN THE USA. Made of galvanized steel, it's top rotates to indicate wind direction. The blade assembly 22inch revolves on quality ball bearings. Assembly required. Includes grease fittings and stakes for mounting the windmill. Base of windmill is 26inch x26inch .

[Back to Top](#) ↑



## Out Back, in the Garden.....

### Anxious For Asparagus...

Want to grow asparagus from seed, but hate to wait the extra year to harvest? Try seeding the asparagus indoors in late winter to get two year's worth of growth in one season. Plant seeds 3/4 inch deep in flats. Sow them 1 inch apart in rows 2 inches apart. Provide as much natural light as possible and supplement it with fluorescent lighting. Fertilize the seedlings every three weeks once they have their true leaves.

This next tip is from my friend Steve Boulden. If you've never been to his site you're missing out. Check it out... [The Landscape Design Site](#) *Excellent* newsletter there by the way ;)

### Spring Freeze - Saving My Peach Tree Blossoms

In most parts of the country winter is winding down. However, in a few spots like here in the Desert Southwest, the warming weather starts to play tricks on Spring budding trees and plants. They think it's time to wake up when it's really not quite safe to.

In my own garden, I have an old Peach Tree that produces the most wonderful almost

softball size peaches. And up until a few years ago, I rarely got the opportunity to see one make it past the blossom stage.

As sure as the first warm days would wake the old tree up in a display of absolute pink, so surely would a Springtime freeze bring it to an end.

But then one day a few Springs back..... I had a great idea.

It was a little overdue but still quite fortunate that I picked those first warm Spring days to take down and put up the Christmas lights. Because as I held those lights in my hands and looked over at that beautiful pink tree just coming into its glory, a light bulb turned on in my head.

Hmmm....., are you thinking what I'm thinking? I'm sure you are and it does work.

From then on I've been able to get the majority of my blossoms to the point of battling birds and June bugs. However, battling the birds and June bugs will be another article altogether.

While I am more comfortable to grow more fruit trees now, I find that this method still works well for me because I do only have a few trees. I'm not sure how practical, cost effective, or easy it would be to string Christmas lights through more than a few trees.

If you do ever use this method, use the old fashioned base type bulbs and not the little twinkling lights. They put off more heat. Also, if you live in an area where the climate is harsher than here in the desert, it may be helpful to place a sheet of plastic or tarp over the trees in addition to the lights.

While there are other ways of protecting your trees and plants from a freeze, I just thought I would share this little bit of garden wisdom with you.

## **PRIORITY LIST**

- **Tidy Up Around Fruit Trees...**

No one likes worms and other pests in their fruit trees. A simple clean up now can dramatically reduce the number of pests that return next year. Just pick up and destroy any fallen fruit, branches, and leaves. Worms and other pests feed on this fruit and debris, overwinter in the soil, and emerge in the spring to lay eggs and start the cycle all over again.

- **Vegetables, Fruits, and Herbs**

Plant out peppers, cucumbers, aubergines and tomatoes in pots and growing bags in most zones by the middle of the month.

By the end of the month, sow runner beans, sweetcorn, marrows, courgettes, squashes, pumpkins and outdoor cucumbers, and fennel outdoors.

- **Monthly Reminders...**

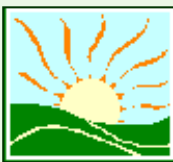
Evergreen Pruning... Light pruning of both needle and broadleaf evergreens is recommended in late fall to encourage a strong framework to help the plant overcome any snow damage. Simply remove any weak or crowded branches with a pair of clean sharp pruners.

- **Tools and Equipment Monthly Reminders...**

Clean and oil your garden tools for winter storage. Place some sand and some oil in a large bucket, then slide your garden tools in and out of the sand. This will do an excellent job of cleaning them, as well as applying a light coat of oil to prevent rusting.

- **Trees, Shrubs, and Groundcovers Monthly Reminders...**

Your trees and shrubs will begin to harden for the upcoming cold weather. To encourage this, remove mulch from around the stems of shrubs and trees.



Check out what goes on in the sustainable garden in the month of **April!**

Great Prices on Trees & Shrubs [Click Here to Visit Our Online Nursery](#)

[Back to Top](#) ↑



## Compost Alert !!

Did you know that 'bugs' play a very important role in the composting process? There is a complicated food web at work in a compost pile, representing a pyramid with three different levels of consumption going on. The base of the pyramid, or energy source, is made up of organic matter including plant and animal residues.

Bits and pieces of organic matter like leaves or other plant materials are eaten by some types of invertebrates such as millipedes, sow bugs, snails and slugs. These invertebrates shred the plant materials, creating more surface area for action by fungi, bacteria, and actinomycetes (a group of organisms in the middle between bacteria and true fungi), which are in turn eaten by other buggies like mites and springtails.

Different sorts of worms (including earthworms, nematodes, red worms and potworms) eat decaying vegetation and microbes and excrete organic compounds that enrich compost. Their tunneling aerates the compost, and *their* feeding increases the surface area of organic matter for microbes to in turn feed upon. As each decomposer dies or excretes, more food is added to web for other decomposers.

### Compost Tip:

Chop up or crush stems and large pieces of tough vegetables . Brassica leftovers (cabbage, broccoli... most of the Mustard Family) are most difficult. They are best beaten into it with a solid hammer. Some people avoid potato peel as the eyes can sprout and produce plants If they do, pull them out and re-compost them.

If you are using tea bags or coffee filters then try and make sure that they are the non-chlorine bleached kind. Egg shells should be rinsed and then crushed.

- **Soil Building for April**

Not sure where to start? [Learn to Compost.](#)

Need an *entire* compost primer?

Check out our [Master Series Gardening Courses!](#)

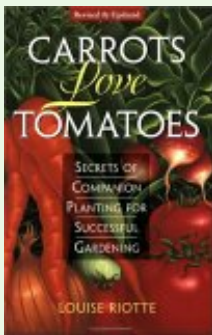
What are you reading  
when you're *not* reading Garden Notes?  
Wonderful Gardening Magazines, are **RIGHT HERE!**

[Back to Top](#) ↑



## Book of the Month

### Carrots Love Tomatoes: Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening



This classic has now taught generations of gardeners how to use the natural benefits of plants to protect and support each other. Here is a reader's complete reference to which plants nourish the soil, which keep away bugs and pests, and which plants just don't get along.

Not only does it tell what to plant with what, but also how to use herbal sprays to control insects, what wild plants to encourage in the garden, how to grow fruit and nut trees, how to start small plots or window-box gardens, and much more. It's one of the most practical books around for any gardener of edibles, no matter how serious or casual. Here is a complete guide to using companion planting to grow a better garden. 555,000 copies in print.

[>> Buy It!](#)



## To Ponder...



A panel of the National Academy of Sciences concluded that the maximum amount of fluoride currently allowed in the nation's drinking water can cause health problems and "should be lowered."

The report concluded that children exposed to four milligrams of fluoride per liter, the highest allowable level, risk developing severe dental fluorosis, in which teeth become mottled, pitted and scarred. Because fluoride can weaken bones, people who consume water containing that much fluoride over a lifetime are likely to be at increased risk for bone fractures.

[Learn more...](#)



## Growing Community

This month since most of us aren't actually *eating* what we're *growing* yet, lets talk about the food we must *buy*. **Organic Foods**. To coin a current phrase, is "Not Just For Hippies Anymore."

When you thought of organic foods in the past, you might have thought of hippies eating organic granola out of an organic hemp sack. Times have changed, and organic foods are no longer only for those who follow a "natural" life. Americans spent **12.2 billion dollars** on organic foods in 2004, and we all know hippies can't buy 12.2 billion dollars in granola. Organic food sales are a rapidly growing industry to say the least.

Organic food is produced without synthetic pesticides, bioengineering, ionizing radiation, and the like. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy are from animals fed organic grain and given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic farmers emphasize use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality now and for future generations. The EPA estimates that 70% of the pollution in the nation's rivers and streams come from non-organic farming practices using toxic, chemical-laden pesticides.

The real question is: **Is it worth it to buy organic?** Pesticides in non-organic food can be threatening to health, and some are said to increase the risk of cancer. At least 73 of the 300 pesticides approved by the federal government are listed as "probable" or "possible" carcinogens, and many of these pesticides are commonly used. Some people say that trace amounts of pesticides won't harm you, but trace amounts of carcinogens are not welcome to the healthfully-eating active hipster. Some of these chemicals are thought to cause nervous system damage too, especially in children. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should avoid some foods altogether if they are not organic (check the list below).

So now you want to eat organic, but as a working stiff maybe you can't afford to fill your grocery cart entirely with organic foods. Don't fret, some foods are much more important than others to buy organic. Certain foods might contain a particularly harmful pesticide; some fruits and veggies absorb the pesticides used on them while others you can peel off the skin, leaving virtually no pesticides behind.

Foods that you should always **buy organic** include strawberries, bell peppers, spinach, cherries, peaches, Mexican (winter) cantaloupes, celery, apples, apricots, green beans, Chilean (winter) grapes, cucumbers, cultivated button mushrooms, and wheat.

Foods that are **relatively safe** to buy non-organic include bananas, mangoes, papayas, pineapple, and corn (usually genetically modified... don't get me started.) If you notice in the link above, their most and least contaminated produce is tested after it's washed and prepared. This means no matter how bad your OCD gets when you're washing your veggies, they won't lose their pesticide contamination.

If you cannot find organic produce, I wouldn't advice avoiding produce across the board. A large amount and variety of raw vegetable matter is an essential part of *any* healthy diet. You're probably better off eating only non-organic fruits and vegetables than you are eating only processed foods with red #309 and blue #982. But now that you have a list to work with, try to at least find the organic foods that matter.

More links on food production and energy use:

- Interested in more?
  - **STARTING A SCHOOL GARDEN AND KITCHEN - HOW WE CAN HELP**
  - **Developing Ecoliteracy**  
A garden, whether at home or at school, is an example of a managed ecosystem. In

a garden, the principles of ecology and systems thinking come alive. Through hands-on experiences students can gain understanding of cycles, from the life cycle of a plant to the nitrogen cycle.

### Community Food Security: Definitions and Explanations

Want to find one in your state? **See the list!**

You don't HAVE a community garden where you live? **Then START ONE!**



## Web Finds

### REALLY COOL TIP!

**Gardening can be tough on hands: Protect them with Gloves!** Designed for durability and comfort while digging and working in dirt and mud. No seams in fingertips to wear out. A 100% cotton knit glove is dipped in thick rubber. The fingers are precurved for flexibility. The rubber is then texturized for better grip so it is easy to grab roots or rocks. Knit cuff keeps dirt out so fingers and nails stay clean. Machine washable and dryable

**Mud Gloves** Tip from **Garden.org**

[Back to Top](#) ↑



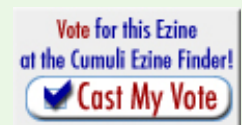
## Closing Comments

We are pleased to offer products from one of the largest, most dependable, and easiest places to navigate on the web, **Gardener's Supply Company**. They offer simply everything you'll need to get done what you want to get done... and then some. They have some of the coolest home and garden accessories on the internet, so please take a peek!

We incur expenses every month making Garden Simply a truly valuable internet resource and with you **visiting our sponsors**, it will help us keep it free Garden Note FREE!

### Thank you for your support!

As you all know, we joined an **eZine Directory** last year. And it has turned into a contest! If you enjoy Garden Notes would you please take a minute and please vote for us! They will ask for your email address, but that is just to prevent unauthorized use. They won't send you anything, I promise.



Until next year!, remember the words of John Lucas, *Backs to the Garden Wall...*

"All clays are pretty well unworkable with ordinary implements. For the melted toffee consistency of winter, you might prefer a large soup-ladle; for light working over summer, a hammer and cold chisel. Is the soil always too wet or too dry? No, there's a period - usually a day or two in May - when you can actually use a fork.

**From GS's gardening quotes.**

Never underestimate the value of what you are doing.  
Life is short,



[Back to Top](#) ↑



## Subscription Management

HELP OUT YOUR FRIENDS - - - - -

People you care about can take charge of their garden by effectively using the information and resources available at Garden Simply, help them learn how -

**forward them a copy** of this month's Garden Notes.

**Unsubscribe**

**Tell Your Friends**



**Garden Simply!**

Let **GardenSimply** help you with a plan of action for YOUR garden every month!



**Get your own Gardening Journal**  
as a **FREE** gift for subscribing!



**>> subscribe!**

[Home](#) | [Newsletter](#) |  
[About Us](#) | [Support](#) |  
[Contact](#)



**GardenSimply.**

**com** | All Rights Reserved  
2005
