

# Patty's Plants August Newsletter 2010

Inside this issue:

**Canning Salsa** 2

**Patty's Veggie Casserole Recipe** 3

**Patty Pan/Squash Cinnamon Bread Recipe** 3

**Tomato Blight** 4

**Harvesting, Preserving & Storing Herbs** 4

**Serenade Disease Control** 4

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## Eating our Rewards

I hope everyone's garden is producing an abundance of delectable homegrown herbs and vegetables. It's always so satisfying knowing that the food you're putting on the table came straight from your own garden. But what do we do with all that zucchini! (One plant really is enough). Casseroles, breads or sautéed with other fresh garden treats are some of our choices. In this newsletter I have given you a few recipes to choose from. I have my famous Zesty Salsa recipe that you may either can, freeze or make fresh. If you haven't been pruning and using your herbs, this newsletter will have

some tips on harvesting and storing them. Plus a repeat on Tomato Late Blight and prevention.



*Basil, Cinnamon, Ginger, Garlic & Cajun Seasoned Chicken with Fresh Beans and Zucchini*

August 15th Patty's Plants will have The Third Annual "Fiesta Organica" Veggie and Tomato Taste Testing Day. The Rock Prairie Master Gardeners will have a small farmers market with produce grown at the Huber Gardens. All proceeds for the market will go back into the program. "The Wreath Lady" will be here with more of her fun wreaths. (Patty's Plants just isn't big enough to have them all in the shop). Hope to see you soon!

## Preserving Herbs in Vinegar

Preserving herbs in vinegar is really very simple. Use clean sterilized bottles. Do not use bottles with metal tops, there can be a reaction with the vinegar. Tight fitting cork stoppers work well with recycled glass bottles. Use herbs of your choice, Tarragon, Rosemary, Basil are just a few tasty ones to use. Choose wine, white or cider vinegar depending on whether you are making it for a dressing or a marinade.

Wine or white vinegar is better for marinades and cider is better for salad dress-

ings. Pack the herbs in the bottles then warm the vinegar, and pour over the herbs. Close and put in a sunny window sill for 2-4 weeks. Shake the bottle every day. When the steeping time is over use a cheese cloth and strain the liquid into a fresh bottle. You may add a few fresh sprigs for identifying the type of vinegar you just made. Plus it makes it look pretty, especially if you would like to give it as a gift. Tie a little ribbon or raffia around it with a tag for uses to give as a nice hostess gift.



*Use Herbal Vinegars in salad dressings, marinades and sauces.*

## Patty's Hot & Spicy Salsa Recipe

Yup, that's me at the bottom of the page canning salsa. My Husband and son love it hot. I have to wear a mask because the hot peppers make me choke. So I make this out of love for them. My son can eat one jar full with chips, in one sitting. Ouch! Here's one of my recipes, this is my canning recipe but you could cut everything up and eat it fresh:

12 cups peeled, chopped tomatoes

12 cups seeded, a combo of chopped hot peppers,

(habanero, jalapenos, red chili) I add a few sweet peppers too.

4 cups chopped onion

24 garlic clove sections, minced

8 Tbsp minced cilantro or sometimes I use the leaves of celery, chopped or both

8 tsp oregano

6 tsp salt

1/2 tsp cumin

3 cups cider vinegar

Lime juice optional

Combine all ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent burning. Pour into clean sterilized canning jars leaving a 1/4" head space. Process 15 minutes in boiling bath canner.

**Note: It is save to change to ratio of hot to mild peppers just do not add more than the 12 cups. The amount of onion may be decreased but not increased. The amount of vinegar CAN NOT be decreased. The salt is optional. It is safe to add dry spices like cayenne pepper, dried cilantro or hot pepper flakes. Makes 6 to 8 pint jars.**

- This recipe as been tested and used my me many times. It comes from the Ball Corp, blue book. I changed the types of peppers. Still you must be careful if it's not done right it could be a safety hazard. You can also freeze this recipe if you don't want to can it.
- For easy peeling on tomatoes. Heat water to a boil, throw in the tomatoes. When they start to crack (only a few seconds) remove and put in ice cold water, then peel.
- Don't forget to label jars.

**Tips**– I use less habanero than jalapeno peppers. I also add bottled juice equivalent of one lime. Then if I want a thicker salsa, when canning I add a small can of organic tomato paste. Or you can make your own paste and add it. That takes toooo long for me and I've got to get the mask off!

**Remember to always wear gloves when working with hot peppers. If you should happen to rub yours eyes, cut a couple of cucumber slices and put on your eyes, it takes the burn out or flush with water. Seek medical help if you can't get relief. This recipe can be cut in half or less.**



Blanch the skin, put tomatoes in boiling water for a couple of seconds then plunge in ice cold water. This makes the tomatoes easier to peel.



## Patty's Veggie Casserole

Layer in 9" casserole bake-dish.

Slice veggies, put in this order:

Zucchini, Bell pepper, onion, tomato, sprinkle with parmesan cheese, add a layer of

Swiss or cheddar cheese. Repeat one more time, but leave off the last layer of swiss and or cheddar until the last 15 minutes of baking.

Bake at 350\* for 1/2 hour to 45 mins. Don't forget to add the last layer of cheese. Sprinkle with more parmesan.



**I add a little water in the bottom of the pan first.**

This can get very juicy depending on the kind of tomatoes used. My husband likes the broth it makes so we put it in soup bowls.

Season with any of your favorite spices and herbs. I use both cheeses. Yummy!

## Patty Pan/Zucchini Cinnamon Squash Bread

I can't keep these in the house, my son eats them as fast as I make them. I use my husband's great mothers 1800's Griswold Erie, Penn. Aaron's bundle pans. But this recipe calls for two loaf pans, 9x5x3-inches in size. Easy !

3 eggs  
 1 cup vegetable oil  
 2 cups granulated sugar  
 1 cup grated patty pan squash  
 1 cup grated zucchini  
 2 teaspoons vanilla  
 3 cups all-purpose flour  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

Beat eggs until light and foamy; add vegetable oil, sugar, zucchini and vanilla. Mix lightly but blend thoroughly.

Mix together flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder, and cinnamon; mix lightly. Add dry ingredients to first mixture, stirring to blend. Stir in walnuts and raisins or dates, if using. Pour batter into two loaf pans, 9x5x3-inches in size. Bake at 325° for 50 to 60 minutes, until a toothpick inserted near center of a loaf comes out clean.

Cool and serve or wrap and freeze. Enjoy!





## Patty's Plants

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### What You Need to Know About Tomato Blight

Late blight, caused by the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*, is a very destructive and very infectious disease that killed tomato and potato plants in gardens and on commercial farms throughout the mid-west and eastern U.S. during 2009. The cool, wet growing season contributed to last years disastrous tomato troubles.

Tomatoes. Late blight is not seedborne (however, it is tuber-borne in potato), so tomato plants started from seed locally should be free of the disease. Growing your own transplants from seed or purchasing from a reputable local grower will ensure a healthy start to the season. In addition to late blight, each year tomatoes become infected with early blight and Septoria leaf spot, which look very similar.

Potatoes that freeze or fully decompose will not carry the pathogen over winter. Tomatoes will not carry late blight over the winter, because freezing kills the whole plant. Tomato seed, even from fruit that was infected with late blight, will not carry the pathogen, so no need to worry about the tomatoes left behind in the garden or compost pile. Certain perennial weeds can become infected with late blight, but none of their above-ground tissues live through the winter. Late blight will not survive on tomato stakes and cages.

The biggest threat for overwintered disease is on potatoes. In the spring, inspect last year's potato plot and any compost piles for volunteer potato plants that might come up. If potato plants are found, pull them out and put them in the trash or destroy them. If tubers were infected and survive, then the late blight could grow upward from the tuber, infecting the stem and producing spores when weather conditions are favorable. These spores could then disperse to other tomato and potato plants.

Source: Tina Smith outreach educator, UMass Extension, Amherst

## Harvesting, Preserving & Storing Herbs

If you would like to store some of your herbs to have this winter for adding to homemade soups or stews, this is the time to start pruning them and storing them.

Hopefully all summer, any time you wanted to use your herbs you pruned them slightly. This would have made them nice and full for harvesting now.

Harvest herbs in the morning just after the dew has dried. This is when they have the most flavor. Prune most herbs just before flowering. In the fall, prune perennial herbs 6-8 inches or to last years growth as long as there's still some growth or shoots below this level. If you don't have time to dry and hang your herbs, use the cuttings on the grill or fire pit. It will add flavor to your cooking, plus it's great aromatherapy.

**Air-Drying-** Drying herbs like this is one of the easiest ways to save your herbs. Make small bundles and take off the bottom leaves. Tie twine around the stems. Air-Drying can take 1-2 weeks.

**Freezing-** Some herbs don't dry well, so freezing would be better for them. Basil and chives freeze very

well. Tear them in small pieces and put them in ice cube trays with water. Once frozen take out and put into freezer bags. There are many different ways to preserve herbs Micro-Wave and Oven Drying are also an option. There is more info on this in August 08

newsletter at [www.pattysplants.com](http://www.pattysplants.com)



**Storing-** To store dried herbs use tight fitting glass containers. Tight lids will prevent moisture, mold and bacteria from ruining the herbs.

Plastic containers are not recommended because they can give the herbs a "plastic-y" smell. Make sure the containers you do use are clean and dry. Place in an area away from sunlight. I use blue & clear canning jars to store mine. I put my herbs in whole without crushing them. I believe it holds the flavor in better that way. I crush them just before I'm ready to use them. I do carry a few old blue canning jars here at Patty's Plants.

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