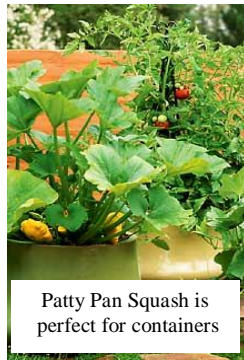


## April Newsletter 2010

### Thyme for Gardening

I've been sitting here all day thinking about how I am going to have *thyme* to do all the gardening that I want to do this season. My first thought was, maybe I'll stop doing my newsletters. That would free up some of my *thyme*. Then the voices in my head said noooo, there are a few people that look forward to the little tid bits or helpful advice I put in these newsletters. So for myself and others who love to garden that may not have enough *thyme*, this newsletter will be about short cuts or tips on making gardening simpler. Growing vegetables, herbs and flowers in containers are one way to make things easier. With containers there will be less garden maintenance



Patty Pan Squash is perfect for containers

for one. Mulching is another key way to having more *thyme* to enjoy your garden. (Unless of course you like weeding). Building a good soil base to begin with, which you've heard me say a million times, will also save *thyme*. Why, you say, how will that help? I can explain this. What about gardening in layers, called sheet gardening or better known as "Lasagna Gardening". I will touch on this just a bit too. I may even throw in some spring cleaning tips with using herbs right from your own backyard.

*Happy Spring*

### Build your soil

Plants are only as good as the soil you grow them in. By using a really good organic soil mix or working in organic matter over a period of time, you will get great results. Every year it will get better and better. You can top dress with organic matter or compost around your flower, herb beds or even around your trees and shrubs. Your plants

will be healthier, they have less diseases, attract less insects and require less water.



Plus the fertilizer is there, so remembering when to fertilize won't be an issue. Use Happy Frog Soil Conditioner for top dressing perennial, herb and flowers gardens. Add it to your soil to replenish it and give it the nutrients it could be missing.

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#### Happy Frog Soil Conditioner

Is hand-blended in small batches, it contains forest humus, bat guano, and earthworm castings. For an added boost to plant development, it also contains beneficial microbes and humic acid, both of which strengthen roots while aiding nutrient absorption. Comes in 3 cu ft bales.

## Container Gardening with Vegetables and Herbs

Many of us have grown flowers in containers but have you tried veggies and herbs? You don't have to be an expert in vegetable, herb gardening to be successful in container gardening. Anyone can grow veggies and herbs in containers with a few easy tips. You can have fun creating your very own mini garden. Nothing tastes better than freshly picked homegrown produce. Being able to step out your back door to pick a ripe tomato whenever you need one is not only convenient, it's awesome not to mention delicious. What's more, growing

container vegetables is no more difficult than growing other potted plants. Container gardening is quick, easy, and less expensive than planting a large garden. (One that you may not have time to work in). Ask yourself some of these questions below.



### Where do I want to put my containers?

*Pick your site:* Do you have sun, shade or a little of each? Is it windy? How long is the sun in those areas? Whatever you plant, make sure your container vegetables get enough direct sunlight. In the early season, they typically need at least 6 hours of sun per day. That said, by midsummer, some varieties may require some shading to prevent them from "bolting" (producing flowering heads that deliver no produce), so do check the plant tag or seed packet for specific light requirements.

### What type of container should I use?

*It must have drainage holes:* Any container will work as long as it has good drainage. Plants roots need oxygen if they are in a closed container the roots can't breathe.

Stones in the bottom are not an option, eventually the water can build up and it will start rotting the root system of the plants. Consider the size of the plants or plant you want to grow. There must be enough room in the container for the plants roots to grow or the plants growth could be stunted. Clay pots will dry out faster than plastic pots. The clay ad-



sorbs the extra moisture. Make sure you have a deep enough pot for the type of veggie you are growing. (Tomatoes will need a deeper container than peppers.)

Most grow best in containers at least 12 inches or more in depth. Be sure to avoid containers made of treated wood or that have contained anything that might be toxic to plants you are planning on eating.

## **Patty's Top Ten Vegetable Combination Planter Suggestions**

These are all companion plants-meaning they all like to be planted with or near each other. You can plant them together in containers as well as in the garden.

1. Patio Tomato, Basil, Chives.
2. Cherry Tomato, Chives, Lettuce
3. Rose de Berne Tomato, Borage, Marigolds
4. Scarlet Nantes Carrot, Peas, Radish, Lettuce use a small obelisk or trellis in the center for peas.
5. Carrot, Rosemary, Onion, Lettuce. (Rosemary deters carrot fly)
6. Bush Cucumber, Pole Bean with obelisk or teepee trellis. Scarlet Runner Beans or Purple Pole Beans would be an attractive planter.
7. Potatoes, Pole Beans with trellis. ( Bean release nitrogen which the potatoes will like)
8. Patty Pan Squash with Nasturiums. (Deters squash bugs)
9. Peas, Lettuce, Radish, Nasturiums. ( No onions, garlic or chives with peas)
10. Pepper, Parsley, Onion, Cilantro



### **Vegetables or small fruit in Containers**



## Do I need special soil in my container?

*Don't use garden dirt in containers.* Use a good quality organic potting mix. Garden dirt is too heavy, it will not drain as well. It will be full of weed seeds and may have diseases that can hurt your plants. I recommend using worm castings to any good potting soil or **Happy Frog Organic Potting Mix** to get your plants off to a great start. In a very sunny spot you can add soil moist or **Natural Soil Moist** to your mix or purchase a mix already with this in it.

Organica potting mix is ready to go with moisture control in it.



WITH and WITHOUT

The larger container grew in 1 week from the time it was replanted with **Happy Frog**, the other one stayed the same.

## When I get my container planted how do I take care of it?

*Water, fertilize and harvesting.* Check your container daily, usually in the morning. Water it thoroughly so the water drains out the bottom. This way you know the entire root system is watered. Don't let the planter sit in water for more than 15 minutes. If it's not soaking it up it's plenty wet. Vegetables need to be consistently moist to grow well. Never let them get dry. Doing so can cause blossom end rot on tomatoes and others like carrots will get woody. There are all different types of fertilizers. From water-soluble to granular to organic. You can fertilize with a diluted solution every time you water or once a month using a granular fertilizer. Grow Big and Tiger Bloom are two wonderful organic fertilizers for all plants. Harvest often so

your plants keep producing all summer.

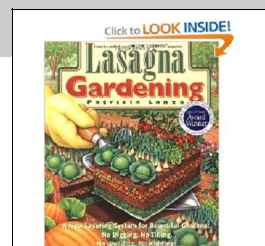
The important thing to remember is that, you are the caregiver and the artist of this mini garden. With the tips in this newsletter you'll have a beautiful and successful container garden for the entire summer. Just remember vegetables need at least 6 hours of sun and don't forget to check it for water and insects daily. So you and your container gardens can have a healthy and stress free summer this year.



## Lasagna Gardening

Ok, so who wouldn't want to grow a great garden without the tilling, digging and weeding that usually go into gardening maintenance. I would! It not only reduces the heavy work, but it also improves the soil so much the plants can grow bigger and healthier in a shorter time. With this type of gardening you will have a lot more time to enjoy your gardens. Here is how to start: Lay a thick mat of wet cardboard, newspaper over the bed and then cover it with grass clippings, ground leaves, peat

moss/coir, compost and any other organic materials. The layers are built until they are 12 to 30 inches deep. You can plant immediately. Eventually, worms will work their way up to the top of the bed as they eat through the newspaper. This a great way to reduce, reuse and recycle.



By Patricia Lanza  
I don't have this book in yet, but I am trying to get it.

## Patty's Plants

220 S. Janesville St.  
Milton, WI  
53563

Phone: 608-580-0066  
Fax: 866-336-6720  
email:patty@pattysplants.com

► **Natural & Organic  
Garden Supply**

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



Patty's Plants

## Mark these dates on your Calendar:

**Milton Public Library** will be hosting "Organic Herb and Vegetable Gardening Workshop", **Tuesday, April 13, 6:30 pm.** - Patty Bailey from Patty's Plants Organic Garden Supply will share with you her organic gardening experiences with everything from building the soil to growing veggies, herbs and edible flowers. No registration is necessary. Hope you can join us.

Patty's Plants will have a booth at U-Rock's Earth Day Celebration on:

**Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:00 am -1:00 pm ,UW-Rock County Campus Grounds**

Open to the Rock County community at large! County campus Earth Day celebration.

The G.R.E.E.N Scene (Grass Roots Environmental Education Network) is a student-run club at the University of Wisconsin – Rock County. This year is the club's 4<sup>th</sup> annual Earth Day event.

## Tips on " Herbal Spring Cleaning"

- When drying your clothes use a pillow case to put an herb of your choosing in it. Mint, lemon verbena, lavender or rosemary are all good choices. Just tie the pillow case closed with a shoelace. They will smell so fresh.
- Mix some dried herbs with baking soda. Put them in a used spice bottle and sprinkle on your carpet. Let sit for a couple of minutes, then vacuum . Use thyme, lavender, rosemary or any of your favorite herbs.
- Renew & polish wood furniture with a soft cloth, moisten it with a mixture of 3T linseed oil, 3T vinegar and 1/2 t lemon oil.
- For glass cleaner use: 4 cups water, 6 T vinegar, 1/2 t mild detergent, add a drop of lavender or rosemary oil.
- To keep drains running clear each week: pour 1/2 cup of baking soda in the drain with 1 cup of white vinegar. If the drain is still running slow, then repeat the process. Follow with hot water and allow it to flow down the drain for a couple of minutes. Regular treatments will keep your drains and pipes running free.
- Fresh sorrel leaves can be used to clean the bottoms of copper pots. You simply wet a handful and rub the copper area.

