

HOMEGARDEN

Creative Ideas for Your Homegrown Tomatoes

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Edible gardening is becoming a popular way for Americans to unwind while saving money on their grocery bills. Both novices and expert gardeners can run out of ideas for their luscious homegrown tomatoes, and thinking of new recipes can become overwhelming.

Here are some creative ways to make tomatoes exciting again:

Salsa:

For a simple salsa, start with the basics and chop up some of your fresh tomatoes; add onion, garlic, cilantro, and jalapeños. Now try adding new ingredients like corn, black beans, or even raspberries. For a different treat, add mashed avocado to your basic salsa for a chunky California-style guacamole.

Soup:

For delicious tomato-basil bisque, cut up your freshly grown tomatoes and remove the seeds. Add them to a pot with diced onion, carrots, garlic, a little vegetable broth, and lots of fresh basil. Allow to simmer for about 20 minutes and then use a hand blender to puree.

Add a little milk to the pot for a creamier soup. Prefer chili? Add some chili powder and bell peppers instead of the basil then, after blending, toss in a can or two of beans. Use two types, like cannellini and kidney, for added color and texture.

Pizza:

Homemade pizza can be easy and is always a delicious treat for everyone in the family. You can use nearly anything for a crust. Kids may enjoy making individual pizzas using bagels, English muffins, or slices of bread. Flat breads and wraps work, too. Once you have selected your crust, brush with a little olive oil and toast in a 400°F oven for a few minutes. Remove the crust from the oven and start creating.

For sauce, try pizza sauce, salsa, pesto, BBQ sauce, or just some chopped fresh tomatoes.

Add whatever you desire - pepperoni, grilled chicken, onions, basil, peppers, mushrooms, olives, pineapple, roasted vegetables, spinach...you get the idea.

Now top with cheese like grated parmesan, crumbled feta or blue cheese, fresh mozzarella, provolone...don't be afraid to experiment.

Pop your creation into a hot oven and bake for about 8-10 minutes or until the cheese melts and



bubbles.

Beyond the BLT:

Sandwiches don't have to be boring. Use a panini press or grill to liven things up.

- Bread — A thickly-sliced multigrain, a loaf of freshly baked Italian bread, an 'everything' bagel, or even pita bread can make your sandwich more appealing.

- Bacon — Try thickly sliced peppercorn bacon, ham, salami, roast beef, or turkey. For even more variety, substitute fresh mushrooms or a slice of fresh mozzarella cheese.

- Lettuce — Maybe. Or maybe you would prefer spinach, basil, grilled vegetables, hot peppers, or sprouts.

- Tomato — Of course! Load on slices of any variety of tomato from your garden and enjoy.

- Mayo — If you'd like. You could also try hummus, dressings (ranch, thousand island, or Italian), spicy mustard, sweet pepper relish, BBQ sauce, or even marinara.

Harvest those tomatoes and enjoy! For these recipes and more, visit: www.groyourtown.miraclegro.com.

GARDENING WITH CHARLIE:

What Is Eating My Potatoes?

BY KATHY BOND-BORIE

Family Features Guest Columnist

Potatoes are a fun crop to grow, especially when it comes time to dig for those buried treasures. Unfortunately, there are numerous pests that are also fond of potatoes. Here are the most common and what to do about them.

COLORADO POTATO BEETLE

In spite of the name, these insects can be found in most states. Both the adults, which are yellowish with black stripes, and the larvae, which are dark red or orange with black spots, feed on potato foliage. Check the undersides of leaves for their orange egg masses and rub them off. Dispose of beetles in a can of soapy water. *Bacillus thuringiensis* 'San Diego' kills the young larvae and it's harmless to beneficial insects, animals, and humans.

FLEA BEETLE

Flea beetles are tiny, black or brown, and pesky. They chew small holes in plant leaves and can do serious damage fast if they attack young plants. To foil these pests, cover young plants with fabric row covers as soon as you set them out. Keep flea beetle populations low through crop rotation and by maintaining high soil organic matter.

Aphid

These tiny insects can transmit virus diseases. They suck juices from the leaves and stems of potato plants, stunting their growth. Insecticidal soap sprays are an effective control.

WIREWORM

Wireworms are the larvae of the click beetle. They're a problem when potatoes are planted in a section of garden that was recently in sod. Fully-grown wireworms are 1/2 to 1-1/2 inches long, slender, and brownish



or yellowish white. They tunnel into plant roots and tubers, spoiling them. If your soil is heavily infested, contact your Extension Service for advice on solving the problem.

DISEASES

You may have a disease problem in the potato patch one year and none at all the next. The weather plays a big part in the health of a potato crop. Moisture and temperature conditions may trigger certain diseases, which will spread rapidly through the potato rows. But there's no need to simply sit back and let the weather determine the fate of your crop.

To protect your crop, rotate the potato plot each year. Plant healthy, certified seed potatoes. If you have severe disease problems, consider using a standard potato dust or spray regularly throughout the season. These are chemical mixtures that prevent some diseases such as late blight. They thwart some pests, too, such as the Colorado potato beetle. If you use a potato

dust or spray, read and follow the directions carefully. To be effective, most standard dusts must be applied to the potato foliage every 7 to 10 days, beginning when the plants emerge from the ground.

The fungus that causes common scab lives in the soil for many years. It's not active when the soil pH is below 5.4, so if you have a serious scab problem, take a soil pH test. You may want to lower the pH by adding wood ashes to the potato bed. Avoid lime, which raises the pH.

For more tips and garden information visit www.garden.org.

A former floral designer and interior plantscaper, Kathy Bond-Borie has spent 20 years as a garden writer/editor, including her current role as Horticultural Editor for the National Gardening Association. She loves designing with plants, and spends more time playing in the garden - planting and trying new combinations - than sitting and appreciating it.

Watering Wisely: Tips to Properly Maintain Your Garden

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As you're prepping for your gardens this spring and gathering your much needed supplies and tools, keep in mind that 40 percent of water used during the spring and summer is actually used outdoors.

In fact, as we enter into the summer months, the increase in water use comes during a time of year when there is actually less water available naturally due to increased temperatures and plant demand. For this reason, it's important to ensure that all gardeners - expert or novice - have an understanding of garden watering best practices.

Whether you're gardening plants that are rooted in the ground, in a garden bed, or scattered throughout your back porch or patio in decorative planters, it's essential to tend to your plants with just the right amount of water without going under or over their needs. Watering just the right amount will help your garden flourish, while conserving as much water as possible.

As you care for your plants this gardening season, here are a few tips to consider from Ames TrueTemper:

Tip #1: Follow plant instructions. Read and follow the care instructions and needs of each plant you purchase closely.

Tip #2: Weather is a factor. Check the weather in your area on a regular basis and take note when it's going to rain or if the temperature rises dramatically, and remember to water your plants accordingly.

Tip #3: Remain consistent. Incorporate watering into your daily routine so that you're watering the garden on a regular basis. If you miss a day, don't overwater the next to compensate, as this will simply flood the roots.

Tip #4: Steer clear of midday watering. The best time to water is in the early morning or evening - not the middle of the day when the sun is at its highest.

Tip #5: Water deep. Make sure you're watering enough so that the excess runs down into the roots and does not just sit on the surface. Dig deeper into the soil and feel with your hand to check

if the water is reaching the roots.

Tip #6: Water gently. To protect the integrity of more delicate plants, be sure to water with a gentler stream as opposed to a targeted force.

Tip #7: Make watering easy. It's best to have watering tools that are versatile enough to water your different types of plants and garden beds. For example, the Ames Water Genie, the Bottomless Watering Can, includes a gentle watering option and works for potted and hanging plants alike. Plus, this easy watering solution fully integrates the hose, hose reel and spray nozzle into a simple all-in-one watering can design.

Once you're equipped with the right tools and watering know-how, you'll be able to create and maintain a beautiful garden, lawn or patio from spring through summer, and well into the fall while conserving water.

For more information on the Water Genie or other Ames TrueTemper outdoor products and accessories, visit www.AmesTrueTemper.com.

GARDENING DIGEST

Summer Long Food Drive Planned For Feds, Farmers And Friends Feed

The USDA Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Rural Development are partnering with the office of personnel management to participate in feds, farmers and friends feed families, a summer-long food drive.

All federal employees, farmers, community gardeners and the public are encouraged to participate. Please help make a difference by contributing hygiene products, canned food items, non-perishable items, or fresh produce to your local USDA service center located at 2914 Broadway Avenue, prior to Aug. 31.

All donations will be delivered to the local contact center in Yankton. The Hy-Vee in Yankton has agreed to help feed families. There is a drop-off box in the north entrance to their store.

Yankton Flower And Vegetable Show Will Be Held At Library Today

The free Yankton Flower/Vegetable Show will be held July 31 at the Yankton Library Meeting Room. It is sponsored by the Yankton Town and Country Garden Club.

The club invites anyone who has a green thumb, or even if they don't, to make entries of flowers and vegetables to their show on Saturday morning from 10 a.m. to noon in the Library Meeting Room. From 1-4 p.m. the entries can be viewed.

Anyone may enter. Entries submitted 10am to Noon, judging will take place from noon to 1pm. View all entries from 1 to 4pm. Guidelines for entering can be picked up at the Library, GAR hall, Extension office, and Chamber of Commerce. We have just added a new class, "Less Than Perfect". For more info, call Betts Pulkrabek at (605) 463-2206

Adams Homestead And Nature Preserve To Hold Festival August 14

On August 14, 1997, Adams Homestead & Nature Preserve officially opened as a state park. We mark this very special occasion by having an annual festival on or around this day. Saturday, Aug. 14, has been selected as this year's festival date.

There are many new and exciting activities that are scheduled throughout the day. Some of the activities include threshing machine demo, corn shelling, candlemaking, tin punching, homestead tours, rope making, musicians, Shape Note singing, watermelon seed-spitting contest, buffalo chip throwing contest, face painting, rope making, dutch oven cooking demo, frying pan throwing contest, homemade pie contest and much more.

Those interested in participating in the homemade pie judging contest need to bring their pies to Adams Homestead by 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 14. The pie judging will start at 11:30 a.m. Pies will be judged by their appearance, texture and taste.

Refreshments will be available for purchase throughout the day. There will also be activities, presentations, music and crafts for the entire family to enjoy and take part in. Get a sense of history, learn about your heritage and explore the outdoors. Bring your walking shoes, bikes, strollers and your love for the great outdoors.

The preserve is located off Interstate 29 Exit 4, 1 mile west, and 1/2-mile south. You can follow the brown nature area signs from the Interstate.

If you have any questions, call us (605) 232-0873.

Have You Been Diagnosed with Osteoporosis?

If so, you may be at risk for a spinal fracture!

Come and listen to a local Neurosurgeon talk about treatment options for spinal fractures due to osteoporosis.



At this **FREE PRESENTATION** you will:

- Learn more about spinal fractures due to Osteoporosis
- Learn about the latest spinal fracture treatment options

Join us for a **FREE** informative discussion.

AUGUST 11
Wednesday, 12:00 pm

Walter Carlson, MD
Orthopedic Spine Surgeon

Orthopedic Institute
Ol Auditorium, 1st Floor
810 E. 23rd Street • Sioux Falls, SD 57105
To RSVP: 1-877-792-6635

AUGUST 16
Monday, 6:00 pm

Allen Sossan, DO
Orthopedic Spine Surgeon

Minervas Conven. Center
1607 E. Highway 50
Yankton, SD 57105
To RSVP: 1-877-605-7579

Complimentary Refreshments will be provided!

Co-Sponsored by the Kyphon Products Division of Medtronic



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