

# The Garden Gazette September 2009

A newsletter for Grafton County 4-H Garden Program Gardeners



## Upcoming Deadlines and Events

**Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:00 pm** – UNH Cooperative Extension Workshop on the Asian Longhorn beetle, Grafton County Complex, North Haverhill, NH. Presented by Dave Falkenham, Forestry and Wildlife Educator and Heather Bryant, Agricultural Resources Educator. Call for more information, (603) 787-6944

**Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup> 6:30 pm** – 4-H Gardening Awards Night at Blackmount Equipment in N. Haverhill. See page 3 for more info.

## Keep Your Plants Warm!

There is no guaranteed way to protect your plants from a frost, but here are several ideas about how you might try...

--Water your garden thoroughly before nightfall. The soil will release moisture into the air and may keep your plants slightly warmer.

--Cover plants up before dusk. By the time it gets dark, much of your garden's stored heat is already lost. You can use blankets, tarps, newspapers, or any other light materials. If time allows, build a rough frame to protect your plant's delicate foliage; sometimes even a single stake is enough.

--To cover individual plants you might use buckets, upside down flower pots, or other large containers. Don't forget to uncover your plants the next morning!

**Editor's note: This article was re-printed from**



Dear 4-H Gardeners—

I've recently finished my garden judging for the year, and like last year I've thoroughly enjoyed poking around the back roads, side roads, and garden-dedicated corners of Grafton County. There are a few advantages to doing this the second time around. The first and most obvious reason is that it is one shade easier to find those of you who live way up in Landaff or on unmarked roads in Orange. The other more important advantage of year two is having the chance to witness how your gardens have improved from last year. In case *you* couldn't see how happy your plants were about the manure you added, or how helpful the mulch you used was for weed control and increased soil temperature, rest assured that *I* did see the results of all this. I saw better weed control, better spacing, and as a result better productivity and plant growth.

Good farmers and gardeners are always learning and experimenting. They make a note of what didn't quite work this year and they constantly day-dream about what they might do differently next year. Pay attention to those observations and daydreams; they are the seeds for next year's garden plan.

**Nice work 4-H gardeners!** Again you have revealed yourself as smart, dedicated gardeners and again you have my utmost admiration. Keep up the great work, don't let rainy summers and plant diseases get you down, and come to our Awards Night in October!

Sincerely,

Arianne Fosdick  
Grafton County UNH Cooperative Extension  
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# Fall Gardening: Curing and Storage Tips

Although many of your plants will be slowing down in their production, and a few may have stopped producing all together, cool fall weather doesn't have to mean an end to all of your wonderful, homegrown vegetables. Here are a few tips to help you make the most of the fall vegetable season.

A few vegetables, like kale, brussel sprouts, and broccoli, actually like the cold weather. Other hardy vegetables that can survive well into the fall are spinach, swiss chard, carrots, and beets. Many people even say carrots and beets taste sweeter after the first frost.

Some vegetables you will want to pick in large amounts and store before it gets too cold. These include winter squash, onions, and potatoes. **Winter squash** should be allowed to "cure" in the sun for 7-10 days. This helps toughen up the skin. You can cure your winter squash in small piles out in the garden, in a greenhouse, or in any other sunny, relatively dry spot. After your winter squash are cured store them in a warm, dry location—between 50-60° F. **Potatoes** intended for storage should not be washed. They should be cured at about 50-60° F for two weeks or until their skin doesn't easily rub off. Once they are cured, store them in a dark place at 40° F. Light will cause potatoes to turn green, warmer temperatures will encourage them to sprout, and cooler temperatures will give them a sweeter flavor. Do not store potatoes (or any other root vegetables) with apples or any type of fruit. Fruit releases ethylene gas which may promote sprouting in potatoes or ripening in other stored vegetables. You might use a cool basement, an unheated guest room, or an insulated garage as a make-shift root cellar. For **carrots, beets, and parsnips**, the easiest storage is to leave them in the ground. Cover them with 6-8 inches of mulch (hay, straw, or pine needles) after the first heavy frosts, and mark the rows so you can find them in the winter. Harvest **onions** on a sunny day after the tops have fallen over. Allow them to cure 7-10 days in a sunny, dry spot, and then trim the tops to about 1 inch above the edible bulb. Store onions in a ventilated box or bag at 32-50° F. For tomatoes, corn, cucumbers and other veggies you will need to get creative; visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/can4vegetable.html> to explore the freezing, canning, and pickling possibilities.

For more information about the harvest and storing of potatoes and other crops, visit the University of Iowa's Extension site at (<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/2009/8-12/potatostorage.htm>)

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The following harvest and storage guidelines came from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension's September/October 2009 newsletter:

## DO:

- Keep fruits and veggies in small piles
- Handle produce carefully—like eggs
- Check stored produce often and remove questionable items
- Store only the best
- Keep vegetables as cool as possible
- Cut leafy tops of root vegetables back to a 1" stub

## DON'T:

- Wash root vegetables before storing them
- Store bruised or damaged produce
- Store vegetables directly on a concrete floor



## How To Prevent Late Blight from Over-Wintering



Did you or your friends loose tomato or potato plants to late blight this year? Here is some information to help prevent the same thing from happening next year.

- Late blight can only survive the winter on living tomato or potato plants or plant parts, so...
  - Bag up your plants and rotten potatoes and tomatoes and send them to the landfill.
  - If you can't bag them, either bury them under 18" of soil where they won't be able to sprout, or spread them on the surface of the soil where they will freeze.
- Remember that when you harvest potatoes it is very difficult to find them all. If you miss an infected potato and it sprouts next year, that plant could be infected. Therefore...
  - DO NOT plant tomatoes or potatoes where you had potatoes this year; you don't want to mix up healthy plants with potentially infected ones.
  - DO watch carefully to see if volunteer potatoes sprout up in this year's bed; if they do, pull them out, bag them, and send them to the landfill
- Start your tomatoes from seed next year and look for certified late blight free potato seed.
- Share this information with your gardening friends  
Contact Heather Bryant, Agricultural Resources Educator @ (603) 787-6944 or [heather.bryant@unh.edu](mailto:heather.bryant@unh.edu) for more info.

## *YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND OUR: GARDEN PROGRAM AND COUNTY AWARDS NIGHT*

Friday, October 9, 2009 at Blackmount Equipment on Rt. 10 in North Haverhill; 6:30pm for judging and 7:00pm for awards

The evening will include:

- ◆ Pumpkin and Vegetable Carving Contest  
Please carve your items prior to the event, sign-in begins at 6:30pm (Open to all 4-H'ers)
- ◆ Giant Pumpkin Contest  
Weigh-in begins at 6:30pm (Open to Garden Contest Participants)
- ◆ Giant Sunflower Center Contest  
Measuring/sign-in begins at 6:30pm (Open to Garden Contest Participants)
- ◆ I Dare You Award Winner Presentation
- ◆ Reporter's Notebook Award Presentation
- ◆ Club Scrapbook Winner Presentation
- ◆ Window Display Awards
- ◆ County Medal Presentation
- ◆ Prudential Spirit Award

*Light refreshments will be served*



For more information on contest categories and rules, or to RSVP, please call the office @ (603) 787-6944 or see the latest issue of 4-H in Motion.



Bob-O-Link 4-Her Catherine Flynn poses with her decorated pumpkin at last year's awards night.

# Recipe Page

Check out this unique recipe from Vermont's own Shelburne Farms for  
**Root Vegetable Cake**



This is just like a carrot cake - after all, carrots are root vegetables - but using any combination of beets, sweet potatoes and carrots you like. If you like, use baby food squash or sweet potato puree in place of the applesauce, or replace half of the oil with applesauce (use 1 cup oil and 1 ½ cups applesauce) or pumpkin puree, which is nutrient dense and goes well with grated root vegetables.

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3 cups (750 mL) all-purpose flour  
2 cups (500 mL) sugar (I sometimes use half white, half brown sugar)  
1 Tbsp. (15 mL) baking soda  
2 tsp. (10 mL) cinnamon  
1 tsp. (5 mL) salt  
1 cup (250 mL) canola or vegetable oil  
4 large eggs  
1 Tbsp. grated fresh ginger (optional - or 1 tsp. dried)  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
2 packed cups coarsely grated carrots, beets, sweet potatoes or a combination  
1 cup (250 mL) applesauce (sweetened or unsweetened)  
1 cup (250 mL) chopped walnuts, pecans, raisins, or dried cranberries, or a combination of dried fruit and nuts

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Preheat the oven to 325°F. Spray a Bundt pan or two 9-inch round cake pans with nonstick spray.

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon and salt.

In a smaller bowl, whisk together the oil, eggs, ginger and vanilla. Add the oil mixture, grated vegetables and applesauce to the dry ingredients and stir by hand until almost combined. Add the nuts and dried fruit and stir just until the batter is blended.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan(s). Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes for a Bundt cake, or for 40-45 minutes for layer cakes, until the tops are cracked and springy to the touch and the edges are pulling away from the sides of the pan.

Cool the cake(s) in the pan for 10-15 minutes, then loosen the edge with a knife, and invert onto a wire rack to cool completely. If you decide to frost the cake, make sure it is completely cool first, or the frosting will melt and slide down the sides. Makes 1 cake, serving 16.

Recipe from

<http://www.ediblegreenmountains.com/content/pages/articles/fall07/cookingWith.pdf>

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New Hampshire counties cooperating.*



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