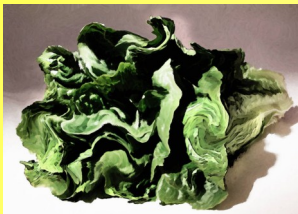




Classroom Garden Update

November 2011

How Does Your Garden Grow?



Now that the weather has cooled off a bit, perhaps your lettuce, spinach, and radish seeds are germinating. These crops grow quickly and offer “instant gratification” as the students see them grow almost immediately. Keep the soil moist but don't drown the seeds so they wash away.

If some of your fall garden is through producing (cucumbers or summer squash, for instance), it is not too early to think about spring crops. If you don't have time to plant onion seeds now, get an area of your bed ready for onion sets that you can plant when you come back to school in January. Also, it is not too early to mark you calendars for the **Spring Teacher Training** provided by Bexar County Master Gardeners on **Saturday, March 31**. Visit BexarYouthGardens.com for more information. Or call our BCMG Hotline (210-467-6575) or visit bexarcountymastergardeners.org if you have questions.

Compost Anyone?

Many gardeners feel that fall is the best time to start a compost heap, when leaves and other green clippings are readily available. Start with an 8” thick layer of wood materials—wood chips, twigs & branches, or shredded newspaper—at the bottom of your bin (a 5' square made of chicken wire or wood fencing to keep animals at bay). On top of the wood layer, place an equal amount of green materials: grass clippings, leaves, fruit or vegetable peelings, wilted cut flowers, etc. Don't include anything with animal flesh or by-products, or anything treated with pesticides or chemicals. Gradually add enough water to make the contents damp, but not wet. Mix the layers with a shovel. Add new materials in equal amounts. After 12 to 16 weeks, the material on the bottom of the bin will be ready to enrich your garden.



Vegetable Garden Tips for November

Plant onion seeds and spinach in November—onions in the early part of the month and spinach transplants throughout. Continue planting lettuce and radish seeds.

□ Side dress your cole crops and onions with a cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer per 10 feet of row.

□ Tomatoes and peppers can be protected from light freezes with blankets. If you're successful, they'll produce another 3-4 weeks. Harvest them regularly...or keep the chowchow and fried green tomato recipes handy.

□ Plant radishes, carrots, beets, and greens this month.

□ Keep a watchful eye on how and where all the plants are growing. When possible without removing or damaging any of these leaves, try to redirect their growth.

□ You need to look for both small and large caterpillars on your plants and destroy them. Especially on the backside of your cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and Chinese cabbage plants. How about your tomato plants and their fruit? Don't assume that the *Bt* liquid is going to get rid of them all. It is only active for 3-4 days, so can be used twice a week.

□ Keep tying tomato branches that are coming out of their cages, to the cage itself. When doing this, remove any caterpillars that are eating the leaves or damaging the fruit and dispose of them. Look for their droppings as an indicator of feeding.

□ Go through the entire plot and look at all your plants closely when harvesting. Did you miss that weed, that insect or yellow leaf? Is there any **broccoli** to harvest today? Did you get all the **pole beans, green beans, and purple beans** today? Go over it one more time! You aren't letting those **squash and zucchini** to get over grown, are you? Don't forget your **peppers**! The question you need to ask is, *Are they ready to be harvested today or will they be too big by next week?*



Happy Gardening!