



Welcome to the new

What's Sprouting!

The Oxford Community Garden Newsletter

March 2015

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A Message from the President

We can't wait to start gardening in 2015! It's not too soon to plant some cool-season vegetables—see below for some suggestions. April 15 is the traditional 'frost-free' date in our area, when it is 'safe' to plant warm-season vegetables like tomatoes. If you want to take a bit of a risk and get a jump on the rest of us, you can give it a try before that :)

Gardeners, we still have a few open plots at the garden, so I'm asking for your help to get the word out. Despite our best efforts, much of Oxford still does not know about the community garden, and that needs to change! Can you help?

I hope to see you soon at the garden, at the events listed below or on a random afternoon. If you have any thoughts or ideas about the garden in the meantime, please contact me at oxfordcga@gmail.com.

Jason Hoeksema, OCGA president

Coming Soon- Garden Orientation: Saturday, March 21, 1:00 p.m.

For all plot holders, new and returning: this is a fun event at which new gardeners can meet with experienced gardeners, learn how the OCGA works, and get acquainted with your new plot (if you haven't already). If we each have a little knowledge, then together we have a lot. Come and join the discussion!

Coming Next- Seed and Plant Swap: Saturday, April 4th, 11:00 a.m.

Your plot seemed really big when you were digging out the weeds. Now you are ready to plant, and there's just too much to fit. You have those extras from your six-pack of arugula, and you started a few too many tomato plants on top of the refrigerator. What will you do with the extra seeds and plants? Don't compost those little guys; bring them to the **plant swap** to share with everyone else. This way, we can all try a new plant, tucked into a spare corner of the garden, or even into a pot at home. Also, this is a great time for non-members to visit the garden, see what we're about, and consider getting their own plot! So, please **bring or invite a friend** who does not already have a plot.

Meet a gardener!

At the annual meeting, I got the impression that a lot of people enjoy the social aspects of the garden, such as the potluck. That gave me the idea to help us get to know each other better. Each month our Newsletter will feature a profile of one of the OCGA members. Our first gardener is **Frankie Winn**, who has been gardening with us since 2009.

How long have you been gardening? I have dabbled in gardening since my late twenties. I have had a plot in the Community Garden since 2009, almost since the very beginning.

What's your favorite thing to grow? My favorite thing to grow and eat is cucumbers. I also grow a lot of zinnias and perennial flowers and strawberries because they don't require as much care and I have 2 young children who require a lot of care right now.

What do you wish you could grow? I wish I could grow tomatoes. I haven't had much luck with these, so I prefer to buy them at the Farmer's Market now.

What future changes do you envision for the OCGA? Or is it perfect the way it is? I would like more people to know about the community garden and people from all walks of life to get involved. You do not necessarily need a plot to lend a hand in the garden. The community harvest always needs volunteers.

How do you motivate yourself to go out into the garden when it's cold/wet or hot/muggy? In the summer, I have to go really early in the morning or late in the evening. It's very peaceful in the garden during those times and exciting to see what is happening in my little plot.

What sources of gardening information would you recommend to others? I think other gardeners are the best source of garden information, particularly those who have gardened for a long time.

Anything else you want to add, or wish people at the garden could know? Every year, I briefly consider giving up my plot because I don't have a lot of time and energy to divert to gardening right now, but I feel so connected to my plot and the friends I have made at the garden. Though I dread pulling the Bermuda grass from the pathways around my plot, I know that it will be worth it when I have fresh cut herbs and flowers in my kitchen all summer long. There is something very satisfying about growing your own and sharing the bounty with your friends and family.

What to Plant Now

The following is from Leila Scott Kelly, who writes for the Mississippi State University website MSUCares. If you're not familiar with it, MSUCares is a useful website, geared to our state. You can look up lots of agriculture and home-related topics, like Weeds, Pests, Canning, and Spring or Fall Gardening. Information is arranged by month. This tip is for North Mississippi for March:

Early bird gardeners already have established transplants of cabbage, broccoli and the other cool season vegetables in the garden. If you're not an "early birder" you still have time to set out transplants of these vegetables. The limiting factor is usually the weather and the wetness of the soil. You may be antsy to go but the soil cannot be worked. That's a good reason to prepare those vegetable rows in the fall, or have your early vegetables in raised beds for easy planting. Here are some optimum dates to have those vegetable seeds in the ground: plant English peas until April 1, Irish potatoes and spinach until March 15, radish until April 25, mustard until April 10, and beets until April 5.

See more at: <http://msucares.com/lawn/garden/northmissgarden/14/3.html>

Community Garden Needs

Our February 23rd annual meeting resulted in several new gardener sign-ups. A lot of new ideas were discussed. Jason mentioned several pressing needs. These include:

- An At-Large Board Member
- Organizational help for the plots devoted to the Pantry. Vicki is doing a terrific job leading this effort to grow food for local families in need. It is a big job, and she needs help with contacting volunteers to work the plots and maintain the volunteer lists.
- Volunteers to help Mary Hartwell Howorth with landscaping the exterior of the garden.
- Publicity:

We are looking for ways to publicize the OCGA. Several writers who are OCGA members have agreed to write about the garden for local newspapers. Look for us in the *Oxford Eagle* Eating Well section soon!

Kathy Wachter is stepping down as treasurer and moving into the position of Outreach and Education Coordinator. If you have ideas for her, contact her at <mailto:kwachter@bus.olemiss.edu>.

Thank You, OCGA Supporters!

Periodically, we want to thank those who have provided us with significant financial support, which has allowed the garden to thrive and grow over the years. Below is a list of significant contributions to the garden since our beginnings in 2009. THANK YOU!

- \$5000 from the Oxford Garden Club (2009, 2010)
- \$500 from Leadership Lafayette (2009)
- \$250 from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford (2009-2011)
- \$3000 from the Lafayette Oxford Foundation for Tomorrow (LOFT) (2009 – thanks to Marie Barnard, who wrote this grant proposal for us)
- \$200 from The Pantry (for Community Harvest, 2010)
- \$300 from the Mid-Town Farmers Market (for Community Harvest, 2010)
- \$5000 from the City of Oxford

Need a tiller to use in your plot?

The tiller in the garden is for everyone's use. Thanks to OCGA member Bo Dunn, it will have gas, oil, and be maintained. If you use it, please clean off the tines and return in to the roofed area. (It won't fit in the shed).

The website

Don't forget to look at our website ocga.org for useful information and links. There are instructional videos from our YouTube channel and notes from previous workshops. These include "Gardening Basics" and "Gardening for Beginners," and a link to my favorite PDF--"Search and Destroy with Jenny Lee," about pests.

Recipe of the month: RADISH BUTTER

It's sometimes discouraging to think about gardening in February and early March because of the cold wet ground. I always find radishes cheerful; they don't mind cold weather, and they come up in about 21 days. One excellent variety is Easter Egg. They come in several colors in one package, and seem to be rounder and plumper than your average radish. My grandmother, who was a farmer, would bring out the season's first radishes and slice them thinly onto buttered, salted white bread. Eating your vegetables straight out of the garden is probably what most people do, but I thought it would be fun to look for a radish recipe. I had so many last year that I ended up giving a lot away. This year I'm going to try succession planting- plant half the package now and half two weeks later. That way, I'll have both radishes and baby radish greens to put in my salads. When I made this recipe with grocery store radishes, it seemed a bit bland, so I minced some chives from the yard to sprinkle on top. (On the other hand, if the radishes that you're growing are too hot, you need to water them more). This recipe is from the Splendid Table website.

<http://www.splendidtable.org/recipes/radish-butter>

It is very pink and pretty, a more party-friendly version of my grandmother's radish feasts:

RADISH BUTTER

Ingredients

- 1/2 pound round red radishes, trimmed, at room temperature
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, completely softened
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, or 1/2 teaspoon Maldon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground white or black pepper
- about 24 thinly sliced rye toast points, toasted slices of French bread, water crackers, 2-inch celery sticks, endive leaves, or romaine heart halves

Instructions

1. Put the radishes in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until the radish is chopped into very fine dice, four or five 3-second pulses.
2. Transfer the contents to a length of cheesecloth or a double thickness of paper towels and wring out the excess liquid.
3. Transfer to a medium bowl and add 4 tablespoons of the butter.
4. With a rubber spatula, cream the radishes and butter together, adding more butter 1 tablespoon at a time, until the mixture comes together in a smooth, pliable mass.
5. Transfer the mixture to a 2-cup ramekin or bowl, sprinkle the salt and pepper over the top, and serve immediately. (The butter will keep, covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.
6. Remove it from the refrigerator 15 minutes before serving to let it soften. Sprinkle the salt and freshly ground pepper over the radish butter before serving).

Note to Everyone: This is your newsletter. Please contact Ashley Brewer at Msglyptodon@gmail.com with ideas or contributions. It could be anything from your favorite recipe or gardening tip to a signed editorial or research project. Thanks! I hope to see you in the garden.