

November 2016

## The Victory Garden at the National WWII Museum

One of the 15 projects the Master Gardeners Greater New Orleans supervises is the Victory Garden at the National World War II Museum. The museum was recently voted as the third most popular museum in the US and visitors often stop in to speak with the gardeners about victory gardens. By the end of World War II there were over 20 million such gardens in the United States. Schools, businesses and homes grew their own vegetables due to shortages and in a spirit of helping get more food to soldiers fighting on two fronts. The Victory Garden at the museum grows vegetables and herbs which would have been grown in New Orleans in the 1940s. Produce from the garden is used by the museum's restaurant.



A view of the victory garden at the National WWII museum.

The volunteers at the garden love to speak with people from all over the world about growing vegetables. One volunteer recalls recently having the opportunity to teach a couple from England about growing peanuts. "They had no idea that peanuts grew like that," she said. Another volunteer said that several times she has been told by visiting veterans of the war that being able to walk in the garden after visiting the exhibits was "a wonderful way to relieve the stress of revisiting the horrors of the battles."

~ Melissa Luer



# November Vegetable Planting Guide

| Crop            | Recommended Variety                                                                                                          | Planting Depth | Spacing<br>Inches | Days Until Harvest<br>* from transplant date |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Beets           | Detroit Dark Red, Kestrel, Red Ace F1, Ruby Queen                                                                            | ¼ inch         | 2-4               | 55-60                                        |
| Celery          | None Given                                                                                                                   | ⅝ inch         | 6-8               | 210                                          |
| Garlic          | Creole: Early, Louisiana, White Mexican; Italian: Early Red, Lorz; Large: Elephant (Tahitian)                                | 1 inch         | 4-6               | 210                                          |
| Cabbage         | Blue Vantage, Platinum Dynasty, Stonehead, Cheers, Blue Dynasty, Emblem, Rio Verde                                           | ⅝ inch         | 12-15             | 65-75*                                       |
| Chinese Cabbage | None Given                                                                                                                   | ¼ inch         | 12                | 60-80*                                       |
| Carrots         | Danvers 128, Purple Haze, Thumbelina, Apache, Enterprise, Maverick, Sugar Snax 54                                            | ⅝ inch         | 1-2               | 70-75                                        |
| Leeks           | Alora                                                                                                                        | ⅝ inch         | 2-4               | 135-210                                      |
| Collards        | Champions, Flash, Georgia Southern, Top Bunch, Vates                                                                         | ⅝ inch         | 6-12              | 75                                           |
| Kale            | None Given                                                                                                                   | ½ inch         | 12-18             | 50                                           |
| Kohlrabi        | Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner                                                                             | ⅝ inch         | 6                 | 55-75                                        |
| Lettuce         | Esmeralda, New Red Fire F1, Nevada, Tall Guzmaine Elite                                                                      | ⅝ inch         | 4-12              | 45-80                                        |
| Mustard Greens  | Florida Broadleaf, Greenwave, Red Giant, Southern Giant Curled, Savannah, Tendergreen                                        | ⅝ inch         | 4-6               | 35-50                                        |
| Onions          | Red: Red Creole, Southern Belle; White: Candy, Savannah Sweet; Vidalia: Candy Ann, Caramelo, Century, Georgia Boy, Mata Hari | ½ inch         | 4-6               | 85                                           |
| Spinach         | Bloomsdale Long Standing, Melody, Tyee, Unipak 151                                                                           | ⅝ inch         | 3-6               | 35-45                                        |
| Radishes        | Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross                                                                              | ⅝ inch         | 1                 | 22-28                                        |
| Shallots        | Matador, Prism                                                                                                               | 1 inch         | 4-8               | 50                                           |
| Swiss Chard     | None Given                                                                                                                   | ¼ inch         | 6-8               | 45-55                                        |
| Turnip Greens   | Alamo, All Top, Purple, Top White Globe, Seven Top, Southern Green, Top Star, Tokyo Cross                                    | ⅝ inch         | 2-6               | 40-50                                        |

# Compost Tea

Anyone who has lived in New Orleans for some length of time understands the intense heat and humidity that we endure on a regular basis. What better way to cool off than with a glass of something cold. To hydrate, we typically choose water; but to regain the energy lost, we reach for a glass of something other than water. In the South, the choice is iced tea. It's not just people who need a cool drink to recharge; our plants will also need their thirsts quenched as well.

In addition to the water that we need to stay hydrated, iced tea also carries minerals and nutrients to help recharge us. This same principle can be said about our plants. Like us, they need water to survive, but they also need minerals and nutrients to thrive.

Pouring iced tea on our plants won't do a whole lot of good, but what if there was a tea designed for plants? Making a tea from compost is the plant equivalent of iced tea for people. Brewing this elixir is as easy as brewing iced tea and uses the same principals.

Compost tea is an oxygenated or aerobic water based solution that contains a multitude of concentrated beneficial microbes and plant available nutrients. Plant available nutrients are those that are immediately absorbable by the plant and are ready to use in their current form without any additional changes. Compost tea is an extremely quick and easy way to utilize your compost and make the contained nutrients available to your plants

The only materials the roots of plant are capable of absorbing



Step 1: Fill  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a bucket with compost.



Step 2: Top off bucket with water.



Step 3: Stir and add aerator.



Step 4: Strain solids from the liquid.

are water and water soluble nutrients. These water soluble nutrients are what we are looking to extract from the compost pile. Comparable to a tea bag, both compost and tea bags come in a dry solid form, and once mixed into water, certain minerals and nutrients will be extracted. When we are making compost tea, we are taking what is a solid and removing all of the water soluble nutrients that the plants need and leaving behind the water insoluble nutrients and solids.

To make compost tea you will need the following materials: (2) 5-gallon buckets, air stone, 3ft or more of tubing, strainer (old pillow case, cheese cloth, nylon stocking, etc.) and an aquarium air pump. The first step to creating homemade compost tea is to obtain about 1.5 gallons of well finished compost. Well finished compost is one that is a mixture of kitchen and yard waste that has been broken down into simpler components that can be used by the plants. This material should be dark brown to black in color and have an earthy or nutty smell.

Fill  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the bucket with compost then top off the bucket with water. Water from the faucet will be sufficient. Once the bucket is filled, stir the mixture and add the air stone. The addition of air or oxygen will help to aerate the mixture and it will keep the microbes alive. We add the air stone for the same reason fountains are put into fish ponds. This helps to ensure there is enough oxygen for the microbes to consume and remain healthy.

*(Continued on next page.)*

## Compost Tea (Continued)

Let the mixture sit for three to four days stirring once or twice daily. After 3-4 days, strain the mixture and collect the tea solution in the second bucket. The solids may be added back to the compost pile or incorporated into your garden soil.

To utilize your tea, add directly to hardy trees and shrubs by pouring over the root system of the plants. To extend the amount of tea you made you may dilute your tea by half or more. When applying the tea to tender annuals or vegetables you will want to use only 25% tea and 75% water. The nutrients in the tea are in such a high concentration that it would be detrimental to add the pure compost tea directly to the tender plants. When making your tea, make only what you can use in one day. You will want to use up all the tea you made as quickly as possible as it will not keep for very long.

Making compost tea is an excellent way to get the most out of your compost. The nutrients you are able to extract will quickly add invaluable components to your garden that are lacking. After you have added your tea to the garden, make yourself some iced tea (not compost tea), then sit back and watch your plants thrive like you have never seen before. ~ Lee Rouse



Finished compost tea.

## Plant of the Month

**Golden Rain Tree** *Koelreuteria paniculata*: If you have driven around the New Orleans area lately, you have certainly seen one species of tree that stands out for its remarkable display of color; The golden rain tree. This may be a controversial selection because many people



Golden flowers in the spring.

believe this to be an invasive species and others who don't like it because of the mess that they can make. The golden rain tree is native to China and was first grown in the United States by Thomas Jefferson in his garden at Monticello in 1809. Since then the golden rain tree has increased its range to include 75% the country. Golden rain trees are medium in size growing to about 30-40 feet tall and equally wide. They prefer full sun but can tolerate a variety of soil types and even dry conditions. They are also a fast growing tree and can be propagated easily from seeds. Besides their attractive shape the golden rain tree are best known for the 3 distinct color displays that they offer throughout the year. In the late spring and early summer the trees are covered with clusters of small golden yellow flowers which cascade down to form a blanket on the ground (thus the name of golden rain tree.) In the late summer and fall the trees develop large seed pods that turn red and later in the fall the leaves will turn yellow to orange in color before dropping.



Red seed pods in the fall.

~ Chris Dunaway

## Volunteer Spotlight



**Melissa Luer**-has been a Louisiana Master Gardener since 2008. She first joined the program to learn more about growing. She was particularly interested in learning how to grow fresh fruit, vegetables, and herbs. Melissa was first introduced to gardening by her father who always had a garden when she was growing up. She remembers always growing fresh food but she does admit that she wasn't always the most enthusiastic helper during her teenage years.

Since becoming a master gardener Melissa has been an outstanding volunteer and has contributed greatly to the people of the New Orleans area. She was a project manager at the Hollygrove Market & Farm for 4½ years. Currently she is volunteering as a docent at the WWII Museum and administrator for the victory gardens. At both locations she used her past experience as a teacher to create educational programs for children. Melissa has also served in three positions on the Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans board of directors including her current position as vice-president.

Melissa says that she has developed the best friendships as a master gardener and even with all that she has done, she believes that she has benefited more from the experience.

## Is Your Front Yard Fabulous?



### To Enter:

Email a short description of your garden along with a few snapshots to [insideout@nola.com](mailto:insideout@nola.com). Include your name, phone number, and the location of the garden.

# Growing Food Indoors

Even with the blessed growing climate of the New Orleans area, a full-blown garden may not be an option for some folks. There are, however, many indoor growing techniques that are simple to implement in a small space. Start simple and get into a routine and soon enough you too can begin to produce tasty, healthy, incredibly local veggies and herbs using little more than a few square feet, a countertop, or a windowsill.

A good indoor gardening project to start with is sprouting seeds. All this requires is an old jar, some mesh-like fabric, a rubber band and a about a tablespoon full of your favorite seeds. Place the seeds in the jar and cover them with water. Allow the seeds to soak in the water overnight (about 8 hours) then drain off the water. The seeds will need to be “rinsed” twice a day, draining the excess water out each time. The sprouts may be harvested after the plant has put out it’s seed leaves and turn green. Most sprouts take about five to six days to harvest. Good easy ones to start with are alfalfa, radish, and peas.

My personal favorite is alfalfa sprouts, which I use on sandwiches, as a garnish, or as their own little salad. They are packed with protein and vitamins and taste great. Radish sprouts have a sharp flavor, and are also good in sandwiches or on stir-fry or Pad Thai as a topping.



Soak beans in water overnight to begin sprouting.



Cut the green onions just above the white bulb.

Pea shoots are a little slower growing, but taste like snow peas and are great sautéed in a butter and white wine sauce and poured over a steak. Seeds for all of these sprouting varieties are available from several seed suppliers, as are some more sophisticated spouting containers. An old jar, some fabric, and a rubber band work just as easily and efficiently however.

Green onions or scallions are also very easy to grow indoors. Buy a bundle of them at any grocery and cut off the top green section. The bottom section is typically white with some rootlets still attached. This can be planted in a simple potting mix filled pot and left on a countertop. The onions re-sprout and can be harvested indefinitely. Take care not to under or over water for best results. Every few days there will be several inches of usable scallion to cook with.



Place in a pot of potting. Place outside or in a window where they will get some light.

Ginger is also easy to grow in a simple pot filled with potting mix. Choose a large, healthy rhizome from the store, soak overnight in warm water and plant it two inches deep in rich, well drained potting soil. It should begin sprouting in several weeks, and in about six months the root will begin to produce more usable material. Harvest as needed, taking care to replant what you don’t need. Ginger survives well in low sunlight conditions, making it an ideal edible houseplant.

*(Continued on next page)*

## Growing Food Indoors (Continued)

Many herbs also do just fine on a windowsill and can be harvested as you need them. Try to keep them out of intense, hot sunlight. An East-facing window is typically best. Parsley, cilantro, chives, lemon balm, basil, and mint are all very easy to grow. Many garden centers are now selling kits that contain seeds, potting mix, fertilizer, and matching pots. These are usually a bit more expensive than just purchasing the materials separately. Rich, well drained potting mix is best, along with a daily watering. Plants can be moved outdoors also if you have the space and time to keep them watered.



Many herbs may be grown indoors.

Several kits are available to grow a variety of mushrooms on your countertop. This is a fun project that usually comes self-contained in a box. The mushroom spores are added to a growing medium, and all you have to do is keep it watered. In two to three weeks you should be harvesting delicious portabellas, oyster mushrooms, or creminis. The kits are available online and increasingly at local garden centers. After harvesting, the kit may produce a second or even a third crop.

A small space can yield a variety of fresh foods, even indoors. Consider checking out these easy growing systems as a great way to add fresh, homegrown food to your plate!

~ Anna Timmerman

## Upcoming Events



**2016 dates:**

**November 25, 2016 through January 1, 2017.**

**Closed November 28, 29, 30 and December 1st.**

**Closed Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.**

**Sunday - Thursday : 6pm -10pm**

**Friday & Saturday: 6pm -11pm**

**Last entry to event is 20 minutes prior to closing.**

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# Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans

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## The Living Louisiana Landscape

*Cultivating relationships with people, plants and wildlife*

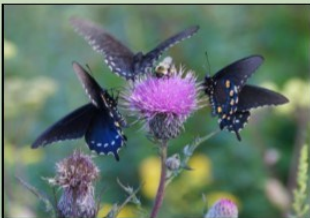
Presented by Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans and LSU AgCenter

## Winter Gardening Symposium

Saturday, January 28, 2017

8:00 A.M. to Noon

New Orleans Museum of Art Auditorium, City Park



Join award-winning authors and lecturers **Doug Tallamy** and **Rick Darke** along with local landscape horticulturist and master gardener, **Tammany Baumgarten**, for three inspiring presentations illustrating how to integrate beauty and biodiversity in your home garden through native plants that nurture Louisiana wildlife. You'll learn how to recognize and enrich the layers of your landscape to create an ecosystem that is diverse, visually appealing and sustaining on many levels.

**Designing and Maintaining the Living Landscape.** Discover how an understanding of living relationships can be put to practical use in the design and maintenance of beautiful gardens that are biologically diverse and joyfully livable. Rick Darke will share strategies for employing "organic architecture" in creating beautiful, conserving, highly functional layers that can be found in the Bayou country and other parts of the southeastern U.S.

**Restoring Nature's Relationships at Home.** Specialized relationships between animals and plants provide our birds with insects and berries, disperse our bloodroot seeds and pollinate our plants. Learn why specialized food relationships determine the stability and complexity that support animal diversity, why our yards and gardens are essential parts of the ecosystems that sustain us, and what we can do to make our landscapes living ecosystems once again.

**My Weeds, My Bugs, My Home.** Tammany Baumgarten will share wisdom and discoveries from her years of gardening research and experimentation in and around New Orleans. You'll learn about naturalistic garden design in the reality of small-scale urban lots, including specific methods and plants that have proved successful in drawing and sustaining insect life in our city setting. She will finally address some paths forward to a greater good in our neighborhoods, city and state.

Your morning of learning will include a continental breakfast from Café NOMA, raffle of a stunning gallery of garden wildlife wreaths designed by master gardeners, complimentary admission to NOMA immediately following the program and an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful Besthoff Sculpture Garden adjoining the museum.

**Registration fee is \$35.00.** Plus you'll have the option to purchase a specially-discounted copy of *The Living Landscape* signed by co-authors Doug Tallamy and Rick Darke. Please go to [mggno.org/symposium](http://mggno.org/symposium) for complete details and to register securely online through our Eventbrite site.

Have a question? Call 504-908-2018 or email [symposium@mggno.org](mailto:symposium@mggno.org). Follow us on [Facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfGreaterNewOrleans](https://www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfGreaterNewOrleans) for updates and the latest news about our 2017 Winter Gardening Symposium.

### Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans

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information on  
just about anything,  
visit our Web site:  
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## Essence of Style Design Symposium

featuring René van Rems AIFD

### *Holiday Centerpiece Workshop*

November 19, 2016 from 9 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4 p.m.

*Visit Longue Vue House and Gardens for a Holiday Centerpiece Workshop. Part of the three-day Essence of Style Design Symposium, floral enthusiasts will work alongside world-renowned floral designer, René van Rems and learn how to create a holiday centerpiece using autumn foliage.*

\$150 for Longue Vue members and Design Symposium Luncheon attendees. \$175 for nonmembers.

Purchase tickets by calling 504.488.5488 or online at:

**[www.longuevue.com](http://www.longuevue.com)**

# Tips for Getting Those Orchids to Bloom Again

Orchids are becoming an increasingly popular gift, in particular the common Phalaenopsis. Virtually everyone from the more seasoned gardeners to those folks with a black thumb have trouble solving the mystery of getting these common orchids to re-bloom.

After your orchid's blooms have withered, it is a good idea to leave the flower stalk attached for a while. Gently remove the spent blooms and see if the plant sends out a fresh batch of buds. If after several weeks the flower stalk begins to turn brown, it is best to clip it back to the leaves. At this point the plant has gone dormant and needs to re-group. There are several things that you can do at this stage to coax it towards blooming again.

The most important thing is to water it and pay attention to the ambient humidity. It is a good idea to not let the roots dry out for too long, taking care to not let them sit in standing water also. When orchids are purchased many of them come with a solid plastic pot. Remove this and re-pot the orchid in a well-draining pot using orchid media. A saucer full of peb-

bles underneath the pot will keep the humidity up if it is regularly filled with water.

Getting in the habit of fertilizing regularly is also a good idea. There are many water-soluble fertilizers on the market that are fantastic for getting orchids to re-bloom. Follow the instructions on the packaging for the product that you choose.

Orchids need light to grow, but typically do not appreciate direct sunlight. Bright light is preferred but be sure to not house them in a hot windowsill. East or West facing windows are best, setting the pot a foot or two away from the window. If no good natural light exists then a full-spectrum bulb can do the trick.

Cooler night time temperatures can stimulate an orchid to bloom again. Ideally, they would experience a drop in ambient temperature of 10-15 degrees Fahrenheit.

Next time your orchids stop blooming try to stick to these guidelines. Your efforts will more than likely be rewarded by a fresh burst of blooms to enjoy!

~ Anna Timmerman



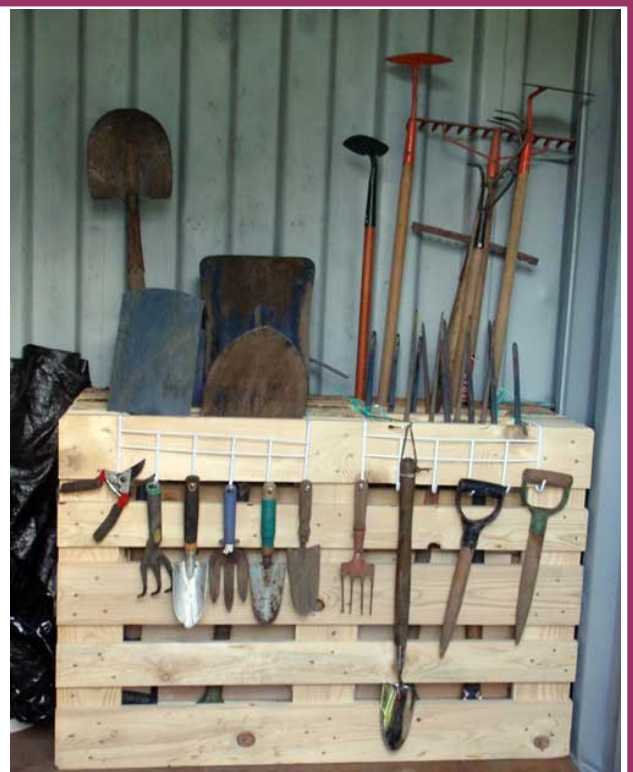
## Gardening DIY Project

Looking for a place to store your gardening



An old rake head makes a great tool holder.

tools? Turn an old wooden shipping pallet into a tool organizer. Attach the pallet to the wall. Larger long handle tools can be stored vertically by loading from the top. Attach hooks to hold hand tools and other supplies on the front. Get creative and use other repurposed items like an old hard rake to personalize it and make it your own.



# November Gardening Checklist

Cut back chrysanthemums after they finish flowering to remove the old faded flowers. Sometimes the plants will set a new crop of flower buds and produce more flowers during the winter if weather is mild.

Harvest broccoli when the largest buds in the head are the size of the head of a kitchen match. Do not focus on the size of the head itself as that is not an indication of when the broccoli is ready to harvest. If you begin to see yellow flowers you waited too long.

Don't forget to hose off and check outdoor container tropicals carefully for pests and critters before moving them inside for the winter.

Make sure you mulch new beds of cool season bedding plants as soon as they are planted to control weeds. It's also helpful to water them in with a soluble fertilizer to get them off to a good start.

Mirlitons are ready for harvest this month. This vining relative of squash and cucumbers is popular in south Louisiana and virtually unknown to gardeners in the northern part of the state. Popular for use in Cajun dishes, mirlitons are light green pear shaped vegetables that have a mild squash-like flavor. The mirliton vine grows vigorously all summer, but generally does not begin to bloom and produce fruit until October and November (an early summer lagniappe crop sometimes occurs). Harvest continues until the first killing frost. At that time, remove the dead vine and heavily mulch the perennial roots. The vine will usually return in the spring.

Direct seed poppies, larkspur and sweet peas into well prepared beds where you want them to grow. Planting the seeds in the spring or even in late winter will not work well with these plants. It gets too hot too early.

Finish planting spring flowering bulbs such as daffodils, Dutch irises, narcissus, lilies, etc. this month. Buy tulips and hyacinths by mid November, and refrigerate them for at least six weeks before planting them in late December or early January.

Use the same trellises used during the summer for cucumbers and luffa to grow cool season vegetables such as English peas, snow peas and edible podded peas.

## Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help

E-mail us at: [GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu)



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