

Garden Tips from Littleton Garden Club

BY BETSY FRASER

Littleton Garden Club

Here are some garden tips from the Littleton Garden Club.

Got Aphids?

When we discovered an aphid covered lupine plant in one of the gardens the club tends, we used an old-time remedy. We made up a jug of soapy water, mild dish detergent is fine, and doused the plant. No more aphids. A search on the web noted that a strong jet of water from a hose will also dislodge them.

Keep your herbs clipped

Most herbs thrive with frequent trimming. If you don't need the clippings for cooking or crafts, drop them around the plant to act as mulch.

Saving money on tomatoes

My friend is smart. Early in the season she buys a six-pack of inexpensive, small tomato plants at the nursery. She transplants them into larger pots with potting soil. These grow into large robust plants that she puts in her garden in June. Larger tomato plants can be pricey

at the nursery, so this is a great way to get some savings on tomato plants.

Barriers keep pests away

Lots of people in our area have wood stoves. You can keep slugs and snails away from squash seedlings by surrounding the plants with a ring of wood ashes. But once the ashes become wet, they're no longer a deterrent.

Pick squash when it's young

Picking summer squash and zucchini when they're young will keep the plant producing and it's tender and delicious. Overripe summer squash turns hard and zucchini can become baseball bats if you aren't on top of picking. But some folks want a big husky zucchini. My neighbor slices them lengthwise into thin slabs and uses them in place of noodles in her lasagna. Other neighbors slice them crosswise into rounds, brush them with olive oil and put them on the grill.

Planting Rhubarb?

Plan ahead

Plan ahead when you decide to plant rhubarb in the garden because it will stay there a very long time! Rhubarb is a perennial that typically lasts for 10 to 15 years, but can live as long as 20 years and maybe longer. Harvest rhubarb when the stems are 1/2 inch in diameter and don't take more than

one-third of the stems at one time. The leaves of rhubarb are poisonous. Cut them off and use them as mulch by laying them around the bottom of the plant.

Radish, anyone?

Plant radish seeds around the edges of your garden. They will be gone by the time slower maturing crops need the space. Radishes also do well in containers and window boxes.

Broccoli

To increase your harvest of side-shoots, cut off the main broccoli head when it's tight and small.

Spinach

Want to have an early crop of spinach next spring? If you do, take action soon. "Lasagna Gardening" author Patricia Lanze says to sow a crop of spinach in late summer and leave the plants in the ground under a cover of mulch through the fall and winter. They will begin to grow again in spring as soon as the soil warms.

What to divide now?

Late summer or early autumn is the best time to divide and transplant spring-blooming perennials. It's a good time to divide irises, peonies, hostas and daylilies.

Happy Gardening! Littleton Garden Club welcomes new members from around the area. Please visit our website to learn more about the club and join us. www.littletonhgardenclub.org

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