

FRUIT TO KNOW: STRAWBERRIES

Did you know that strawberries are a member of the rose family? Strawberries brighten your garden with white blooms and provide you with the first fruit to ripen in spring!

SOW & GROW

Strawberries need at least 8 hours of full sun each day, and require slightly acidic soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.8. Before planting strawberries in heavy clay, amend the soil with composted leaves, fully rotted wood or another bulky type of organic matter. After mixing in about 4 inches of compost, rake clay soil into raised mounds to further improve drainage. When in doubt, you can grow strawberries in half-barrels or other large containers filled with potting soil. Since many strawberry varieties produce many offspring, it is a best practice to space them 18 inches apart, unless the tag directs you otherwise. When planting, make sure the roots are well covered with soil, but the central growing bud (crown) is exposed to light and fresh air. Warning: Burying the crown can rot the plant. Be sure to water well, and mulch to keep the soil moist and the plants clean.



TROUBLESHOOTING

Slugs often bore holes in strawberries just as they begin to ripen. If you notice a slug problem, put a shallow cup of beer next to the plant to trap them. In summer, several fungal diseases are a usual dark spots on leaves. Clipping or mowing strawberry foliage and raking it away in summer can interrupt the life cycles of some strawberry pests and diseases. The worst pests of strawberries are birds if you need to keep the birds from eating your berries or the plants with lightweight bird netting when the berries begin to ripen. Sometimes your fruit may be small because of heat and drought. Proper watering and improved weather will produce strawberries of normal size.

NUTRITION

Strawberries are low fat and low in calories. They are a good source of Vitamin C, fiber, folic acid, and potassium, and are rich in nitrate, which lowers blood pressure.

STRAWBERRY JAM



1. Crush washed and stemmed berries. If you like chunky jam, don't crush it completely.
2. Measure out the sugar, honey, or other sweetener. (Diabetics can use honey) Set ¼ cup of sugar/honey aside to mix with pectin.
3. Mix the dry pectin with 1/4 cup of sugar and keep this separate from the rest of the sugar. (If you are not using sugar, you'll just have to stir more vigorously to prevent the pectin from clumping.)
4. Stir pectin and lemon juice into the berries and put the mix in a big pot on the stove over medium-high heat (stir often to prevent burning). It should take about 5 to 10 minutes to get it to a full boil (the kind that cannot be stirred away).
5. When the berry-pectin mix has reached a full boil, add remaining sugar, and return to boil. Boil hard for 1 minute. If you bring it back to a full boil fairly slowly (on medium heat rather than high), that will help reduce foaming.
6. Remove jam from the heat. Skim excess foam.
7. Test for "jell" (thickness) by putting it in a cold metal spoon and let it cool to room temp. If it does not thicken at room temp, just add a little more pectin.
8. Fill the jars, put the clean lids and rings on. Leave about 1 inch of room at the top of the jar to allow it to expand while it boils. This is called "head room."
9. Put the warm jars in boiling water (if your jars get cold, warm them under hot tap water first, or they will bust in the boiling water) and the water must cover them at least 2 inches.
10. Keep the water boiling and boil the jars for 5 minutes. Remove from water and let cool. The lid will pop when it's sealed.

Ingredients

- 10 cups raw whole strawberries (fresh or frozen without sugar)
- 1 package and a half, or 8 tablespoons. Pectin
- 1/4 cup bottled lemon juice
- 4 cups granulated (table) sugar, or 3 cups honey

Equipment

- Jar Funnel
- At least 1 large pot to make jam in
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball-brand mason jars lids and rings - lids must be new for food safety



Mailing address:
PO Box 1742, Columbia, MO 65205

The Urban Farm:
1209 Smith St., Columbia, MO 65201

Office: 1007 N. College

Phone: 573-514-4174

ColumbiaUrbanAg.org
Food Is Good!



PIRATING PLANTS!

Instead of buying seeds or seedlings, propagate more plants from the ones you or your friends already have! There are two ways to get more plants from your old plants: dividing and rooting. We will concentrate on **dividing** in this issue as you can do this with strawberry plants, as well as peonies, lillies, irises, day lillies, black-eyed susans, asters and hostas. For more information on how and when to divide, visit <http://extension.psu.edu/plants/gardening/fact-sheets/perennial-garden/dividing-perennials>.



To prevent weakness or disease, only propagate from healthy, vigorous plants. If a plant looks sick, don't take cuttings from it; you'll only spread the disease in your garden. Give your plants a couple of years rest before dividing them again.

Dividing a plant means digging up the roots of the plant, removing the entire plant from the soil, and dividing it into sections. This method works for perennial plants that grow in clumps, like irises. Works best in early spring or fall. Here are some more tips to keep in mind when dividing your clumped plants:

- Divide plants before they get too big and it becomes difficult to separate the roots. Wiggle them apart with fingers or use sharp shovel to slice gently apart.
- Tie stems together to prevent damage when digging the plant out.
- Dig below the main roots (about 1 ft) and lever the whole plant out of the soil.
- Brush off excess soil so that you can clearly see the plants roots before dividing.
- Divide the clump into sections that are 25% or less of the original size.
- Replant the divided plants quickly! If you cannot replant immediately, wrap the divided plants in wet newspaper to protect the roots from drying out.
- Plant at the same soil depth, water and mulch to keep your new plant moist.
- Give your new plant plenty of space to grow!

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Special points of interest:

- Planting & Events Calendar
- Beneficials vs. Pests

While Southern food has evolved from sources and cultures of diverse regions, classes, races, and ethnicities, African American slaves have one of the strongest, yet least recognized roles. Some culinary historians are attempting to change that.

Chefs to know are:

- Michael Twitty
- Bryant Terry
- Govind Armstrong
- Sean Brock

See:

- Southern Foodways Alliance



CCUA's seasonal growing guide and news

Soul Food is Good!



To celebrate Black History month, CCUA is shining a spotlight on Soul Food! From gardeners' yards to restaurant tables, vegetables like collard greens, okra, and black-eyed peas are grown and served up. These nutrient-dense, delicious vegetables - among several others like Cherokee purple tomatoes and sweet potatoes - provide a cultural connection to heritage and tradition, and also nourish us.

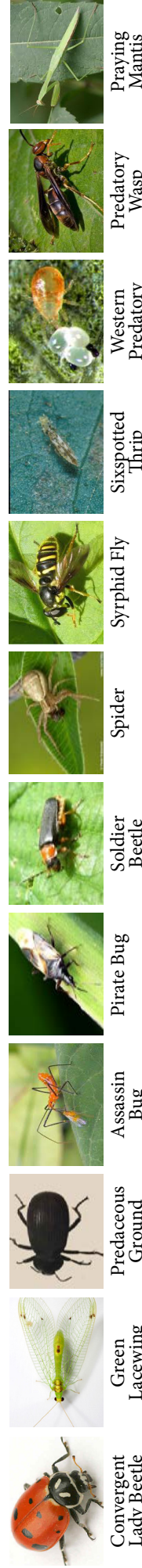
Influences for many of the foods we enjoy come directly from colonial and pre-Civil War slave quarters. The complex blend of European, Native American, and African origins found their way into our kitchens through the hands of enslaved people. For enslaved people, cooking was about culture and community as much as it was about survival. Southern food reminds Americans of this difficult past, but it can also help us understand it and respect it.

One of our favorite vegetables at CCUA and the one most requested by Opportunity Gardeners are Greens: Collard greens, Turnip tops, Mustard, Kale, Spinach, and lately we even have a growing request for Arugula. Collards most often are boiled with pork fat; or sautéed with tomatoes, onions and peppers; added to stew; stir fried or boiled with added herbs and spices. This vegetable is loaded with nutrients and vitamins. The closer to harvest that you eat it, the more nutrients you get. So having a few plants in your yard ensures you have the best greens in town.

Another favorite vegetable is sweet potatoes. One story we love is how one woman would dig a pit in the floor in front of the fire place to keep the sweet potatoes warm through the winter so she could plant the next year. We certainly appreciate it when we have heirloom sweet potatoes. Like corn, the prevalence of sweet potatoes in Southern food is a marriage of African and Native American practices. The sweet potato is native to the Americas and was a familiar staple to many Native American nations. Posing a strikingly similar resemblance to the yams of West Africa, enslaved people could apply their traditions and techniques previously reserved for yams to the sweet potato with relative ease. It's quick to cook, nutritious, and a flavorful starch. Even the leaves are tasty!

We hope this inspires you to dig into your roots, celebrate the foods you can grow and that connect you to your history. Soul Food is Good!

Beneficial Garden Bugs



Planting Calendar for Spring

Volunteer Orientation (VO)

6:00pm - 7:00pm
@ the Urban Farm
on the second
Wednesday of every
month:

- Feb. 11th
- March 11th
- April 8th
- May 6th
- June 10th
- July 8th
- Aug. 12th
- Sept. 9th

Kilgore's Community Garden Workdays

4:00pm - Sunset
@ 700 N. Providence

Every Wednesday
April through September

Urban Farm Potlucks

6:00pm - 8:00pm
@ the Urban Farm

- Friday, April 10th
- Friday, July 10th
- Friday, Oct. 9th

Green Drinks

6:00pm - 8:00pm
@ Cafe Berlin on the third
Thursday of every month

- Feb. 19th
- March 19th
- April 16th

Farm Visit Days

10:00am - 12:00pm

- Saturday, May 16th
- Saturday, June 20th

Member Dinners

- Friday, Feb. 20th
- Friday, Aug. 14th

6th Annual

Harvest Hootenanny
Saturday, Sept. 12th

~ February 2015 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 VO	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Start indoors: Head Lettuce						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

~ March 2015 ~

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Start indoors: Bunching Onion, Swiss Chard						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Daylight Savings	Start indoors: Parsley					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Direct Seed/Transplant Outdoors: Arugula, Beets, Brussels Sprouts, Spring Equinox						
Start indoors: Kale, Tomatoes						
Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Cilantro, Kale, Lettuce, Onions, Peas, Potatoes, Scallions, Spinach, Tatsoi, Turnip						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Start indoors: Swiss Chard, Head Lettuce, Beets, Mustard						
29	30	31				
Start indoors: Basil						

~ April 2015 ~

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kilgore's WD	Kilgore's WD	Direct Seed/Transplant Outdoors: Arugula, Beets, Broccoli,				
April Fool's Day						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Kilgore's WD	Kilgore's WD	Potluck				
Easter						
Brussels Sprouts,	Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Cilantro, Collards, Kale, Leek, Lettuce, Onions, Parsley, Parsnip, Peas,					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Potatoes, Scallions, Spinach, Strawberry, Swiss Chard, Tatsoi, Turnip						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
COMO Earth Day	Direct Seed/Transplant Outdoors: Green Beans, Swiss Chard					
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Direct Seed/Transplant Outdoors: Basil, Cantaloupe, Cowpeas, Cucumbers, Okra, Watermelon, Sweet Corn						

Garden Pests

