

CityBites

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

WINTER CHOWDOWN!

TRICKS AND TIPS FROM OUR
FAVOURITE CHEFS, SOMMELIERS,
AND BARTENDERS (P20)

GET STUFF (p14)
Gifts, gadgets
and edible delights

FESTIVAL (p18)
Icewine in Niagara

SALOON STYLE (p11)

Allen's is still doing it right

CHAMPAGNE TASTES (p9)

Zoltan Szabo on essential sparklers

GOLD PLATED (p8)

Lorenzo Loseto's award-winning tuna

Get More
Visit
citybites.ca

PLUS! BEST COOKIES + YEAR IN BEER + LANGDON HALL + NEWS TO EAT

An essential winter Reading List

NEXT YEAR'S FABULOUS GARDEN IS JUST A PAGE OR TWO AWAY

You may be kicking and screaming your way into winter but it's time to talk turkey. Thanksgiving is long gone and the 2013 growing season has come to an end. But there is much to be celebrated as a groundswell of new vegetable gardens has sprouted: from rooftops to allotments, from fire escapes to front yards, from spontaneous guerilla gardens to pristine edible landscapes. More and more people are growing and eating their own food. But people who love to grow must face the fact that it's time to abandon the frozen soil and seek refuge in the warmth of the great indoors.

Grow-aholics will still maintain herbs on a windowsill or nurture microgreens in a fancy fridge-like growing cabinet, while some will extend their season outdoors using tunnel cloches, cold frames and greenhouses. But others prefer to put down their hoe, put up their feet and enjoy a warm drink by a fire while reading a good book. And who can blame them? Winter is the perfect time to regenerate, rethink, and dream of gardens yet to come. So grab your Kobo, pull out that library card or take a trip to your local bookstore and dig into this must-read selection of books.

For DIYers, you can't beat **The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Pest and Disease Control: A Complete Guide to Maintaining a Healthy Garden and Yard the Earth-Friendly Way** by Frank Tozer, who expertly guides the reader through

the intricacies of making quality soil, raising seedlings indoors, garden planning, crop rotation and building raised beds and greenhouses. The book is loaded with diagrams and useful charts, making it a number one garden companion for the dedicated at-home grower.

Garden nerds will love the juicy detail and fascinating photographs in **The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Insect and Disease Control**, edited by Barbara W. Ellis. This well-organized encyclopedia will assist in the diagnoses and troubleshooting of everything from leaf damage to spotted tomatoes, and help differentiate insect friend from foe.

Neat and tidy types will love Mel Bartholomew's **All New Square Foot Gardening: Grow More in Less Space**, especially if your own garden space is at a premium. This book provides a step-by-step approach to growing more food in less space using raised beds and an ingenious alternative planting method to traditional rows.

For foodies with a discerning palate for quality writing, **Apples to Oysters, A Food Lover's Tour of Canadian Farms** by Margaret Webb is sure to please. This utterly engrossing culinary adventure is part travelogue, part cookbook and sometime political manifesto. Webb fearlessly digs into her own past as a farmer's daughter to reveal the dangers of conven-



WINTER COMFORT Good books, good wine, good gardening.

tional farming practices and celebrates the diversity and ingenuity of a new crop of Canadian organic food producers.

And if kitsch is your thing, pick up the nostalgic but still relevant **The Old Farmer's Almanac Canadian Edition**, where you'll find region-by-region weather forecasts for 2014, planting tables, astronomical charts and "zodiac secrets". A great year-round reference and bathroom reader—who can resist? **CB**



MARC GREEN AND ARLENE HAZZAN GREEN own The Backyard Urban Farm Company. BUFCO brings organic vegetable gardening to urban and sub-urban homes and businesses throughout the GTA. Visit bufco.ca.

PHOTO: ARLENE HAZZAN GREEN

coffee tree.ca

25
YEARS

ROASTERY

Mon-Sat: 7am-7pm
Sun: 10am-5pm

Toronto's 1st coffee roastery
artisan coffee roasting
cafe and patio

2412 Bloor Street West (at Jane)
Tel: 416-767-1077

CityBites

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK



WINE (p22)

Touring Niagara
and Prince
Edward County

BEER (p26)

Stephen Beaumont
attempts to match
lobster and beer
...and succeeds!

JOIN THE PARTY! HOW ROSE AND SONS MAKES EATIN' FUN (P8)

OYSTERS (p12)

How to eat. Where to eat. What to eat.
When to eat (now!)

CHEF Q&A (p10)

What's up with Matt Blondin?

Now
online at
citybites.ca

Bring it on!

HOW TO PUT YOUR GARDEN BOUNTY TO USE ALL YEAR LONG

Forty-five heirloom tomatoes, 15 giant zucchini, mountains of green and yellow beans—what is an overwhelmed urban farmer to do with all that harvest? And that's just what's ripe. In many urban homesteads across the city there are bushes full of vegetables, fruits and herbs reaching their peak and demanding attention.

By the end of the summer the novelty of picking produce from your own backyard starts to wane, especially if you've been at it for years. There is only so much produce an enthusiastic gardener and their clan can eat, no matter how fresh or delicious. It's far too easy to turn a blind eye to the surplus of vegetables that become overripe on the vine.

There are many different strategies for keeping guilt at bay and your bounty off the compost pile

Fear not. Not everything has to be consumed immediately. There are many different strategies for keeping guilt at bay and your bounty off the compost pile. Do as our savvy forbearers did: dry it, freeze it, can, preserve or pickle it, and you'll be eating fresh all winter long.

DRYING: Drying herbs is as easy as cutting and tossing leaves in a paper

bag or hanging bouquets upside down in a cool, dry place. Everything from strawberries to tomatoes can be dried in an oven or dehydrator. Even garlic scapes! Homemade garlic powder anyone?

FREEZING: The super green and nutritious kale freezes just as well as spinach. Some people like to cut the stems and blanch before freezing but it's not necessary. Kale, chard or collard greens all thaw well enough to add to an omelet, soup, stir fry or muffin mix. Tomatoes can also be frozen whole or chopped, with or without skins, and used for a delicious spaghetti sauce. Herbs or garlic freeze well when blended with oil and poured into ice cube trays. Remove the cubes and store in freezer bags for individual portions of parsley, fennel fronds, cilantro, dill and basil.

CANNING: Pressure canners are inexpensive, easy to use and versatile. Save the taste of summer in jars of peaches or use up all your zucchini, eggplant, onions and jalapenos in a homemade spicy ratatouille.

PRESERVING: Making jam with leftover rhubarb and strawberries is easier than you think. All you need is a big



FRESH FOR NOW Preserve your crop to get you through the winter.

pot, mason jars and a set of tongs. Kits for making jam are also available at your local hardware store.

PICKLING: Cucumbers aren't the only things that benefit from brine. There are many simple pickling recipes for hot or sweet peppers, garlic scapes, asparagus and beans. And brine is reusable for your next batch or two. Don't forget to add herbs from your garden such as bay, dill, fennel, garlic and cilantro. **CB**



MARC GREEN and **ARLENE HAZZAN GREEN** own *The Backyard Urban Farm Company*. BUFCO brings organic vegetable gardening to urban and sub-urban homes and businesses throughout the GTA Visit bufco.ca.

PHOTO: ARLENE HAZZAN GREEN

THE BIG CARROT
Organic Leaders for 29 Years!

Natural Food Market • 348 Danforth Avenue • 416.466.2129

info@thebigcarrot.ca • www.thebigcarrot.ca • the_bigcarrot thebigcarrotnaturalfoodmarket



CityBites

MARCH/APRIL 2013

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK



THE KITCHEN PARTY REFINED

7 SINS OF DINING OUT

Time for some etiquette lessons (p18)

GO EAST FOR GREAT EATS

Hidden gems of Toronto's right bank (p16)

TERROIR IS COMING!

And they brought a big sandwich (p34)

HOW *CHANTECLER*
KICKS UP A NIGHT OUT (P7)

THE SECRETS
OF WARM SAKE
(p24)

THE GOURMUDGEON
On Momofuku's
Mojo (p31)

Now
online at
citybites.ca

PLUS! OYSTERS + BOREAL BITES + COGNAC + TASTING MENUS + ONTARIO REDS

Dig these terms

SOME DEFINITIONS TO TAKE TO HEART COME GARDEN PLANNING TIME

It's garden planning time and with that comes a host of confusing words and phrases that can mystify even the most earnest grower who is trying to do the eco-right thing in his or her garden. To help you sort through it all, we've created a mini-glossary of commonly used terms that often cause confusion.

ORGANIC: Simply put, organic means something is made of, pertaining to, or derived from living matter. It's alive; or, when dead, will decompose. In the food world, organic refers to foods grown according to strict standards that encourage the use of natural fertilizers and limit the use of synthetic herbicides and pesticides. These practices promote biological pest control and the use of age-old disease control methods like crop rotation. The goal is to maintain the genetic integrity of plants and animals by avoiding the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO). Before the development of synthetic pesticides and herbicides, all growing was done organically.

HEIRLOOM: A solid definition appears on marthastewart.com: "Heirloom vegetables are open-pollinated plants that have been cultivated for at least 50 years. They are often more flavourful, colourful and interesting than hybrids." If variety is the spice of life, then heirloom seeds and plants are spicy.

OPEN-POLLINATED: This is a process whereby plants are pollinated through natural means such as by insects, birds or the wind. Many food crops are self-pollinating, which helps to keep the plant and its offspring consistent and predictable, generation after generation.

Before synthetic pesticides and herbicides, all growing was done organically.

HYBRID: A hybrid plant is one that has been created through intentional human intervention where two plants with different characteristics are cross-pollinated (bred with each other) in order to combine certain desirable properties. Many hybrids are used in large-scale farming as the plant's behaviour is easier to predict. Hybrids are fine for the backyard garden as well, as long as they are not of a GMO variety.

GMO (Genetically Modified Organism): There's a clearly anti-GMO article at gmo-awareness.com that states: "Genetic modification is the process of forcing genes from one species into another entirely unrelated species. Unlike cross breeding, which involves two related species and has been done without ill effects for centuries, genetic engineering forcefully breaches the naturally occurring barriers between species, causing both known and unknown/unintended consequences."

Genetically engineered plants were designed by mega-corporations to be pesticide and herbicide tolerant, allowing these companies (Monsanto leads the pack here) to promote the intensive use of synthetic chemicals on the plants, theoretically without negative consequence. Fact is, GMOs are a world of trouble and are leading to the destruction of our soil, poisoning our water, killing the family farm, limiting food crop biodiversity (a huge issue in itself), forcing insects to morph into new "superbugs" that are themselves pesticide resistant... and on and on and on.... GMOs are quickly destabilizing an already unstable food production process. **CB**

Marc Green and Arlene Hazzan Green run The Backyard Urban Farm Company. Visit them at bufco.ca.



PRIZED POSSESSIONS Heirloom tomatoes on the porch.

Mezcal makes its mark

THE SPIRIT OF MEXICO GETS HIPPER

It's becoming tiresome to complain about the lack of interesting spirits available to Torontonians (cue the usual LCBO-bashing), so let's not even go there. Let's begin with the positive. **Fortuna Mezcal** is a new brand of mezcal that landed in Toronto last month (no thanks to the LCBO, which does not stock it yet) at enlightened bars around the city.

And it's good. Real good. Bad news is, if you want it, you'll have to buy a six-bottle case from the good people at On the Case, and you'll have to pay \$79.99 a bottle. Perhaps, once the LCBO gets up to speed, the price will come down a bit, but don't hold your breath.

Mezcal is the hipper, darker cousin of Tequila, favoured by connoisseurs in part because of its bad-ass reputation (artisan farmers, open-fired pits, massive stone crushers, etc.). Engine oil, as an aromatic descriptor, is not used much in the spirits category, but it kind of makes sense with mezcal. Fortuna has a bit of that quality on the nose, but it's so smooth and elegant on the palate you'd hardly notice. (I, for one, love the engine oil quality of mezcal, so Fortuna gives me the best of both worlds.)

The nose also delivers softer notes, some banana and tropical

fruits, bolder citrus, and that unmistakable whiff of cooked agave that makes you go "whoa!". There's a bit of smoke, some earthiness and just enough funk to keep things interesting. The palate comes through with similar colours, and a long, warm finish that is clean and deliciously exotic.

Fortuna is not only a refined sipper, but has the ass-kick to make a cocktail sit up and take notice. It's pricey, but worth it. What else are you going to spend your cash on, anyway?



MEZCAL MANIA Fortuna (\$79.99) makes a smooth entrance.

On the Case, cpapple@onthecasedistribution.com, 647-725-2444.

CityBites

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

| FREE |
SUMMER 2011

THE BEST OF SUMMER

FEATURING
BRAD LONG (P.20)

- + LAKESIDE EATING
- + NOSHING IN THE PARK
- + FLATBREAD GRILLING
- + TRAVELLING, TOURING
- ... AND MORE!

A CHAT WITH
DANIEL BOULUD

BUFFALO'S BOUNTY
GREAT CROSS-BORDER EATS!

PLUS! ROSÉ + GOURMET GETAWAYS + CHAMPAGNE + GADGETS & BOOKS

Succession Success

LEARN HOW TO PLAN YOUR FALL AND WINTER GARDENS IN THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

By mid-July, your vegetable garden will probably look something like this.... Tomato plants are strong with well-established fruit and some cherry tomatoes are already harvested with lots more to come. Peppers and eggplants are getting big and colourful. Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cukes and zukes—in fact all the heat lovers—are flourishing but not quite ready for prime time.

On the other end of the spectrum are your salad greens, spinach, chard, kale, radishes and peas. They've either all been harvested or have bolted, thanks to the heat, and gone to seed. (If it was a good crop, let the seeds dry on the plant and save them to sow next year). If bolted, they are now probably a tangled mess of bitter leaves and long flowery stalk. If you harvested, there are earthy black gaps in your garden, like missing teeth in an otherwise beautiful smile. So what do you do now? Plan and plant your fall garden!

In the height of the summer (July to mid-August) there aren't many options when it comes to planting veggies. You can direct sow beets and carrots, and if you can find broccoli and cabbage seedlings, they too can be planted in the high heat and grow into the coming cold.

When mid-August rolls around it's time to plant new foods for the fall harvest. All the spring plants that loved those cool nights three months ago—leaf lettuces, spinach, tatsoi, radishes, kale, chard—should once again go in the ground. In three or four weeks the temperatures will have dropped some, which is just what these plants love.

In the fall, arm yourself with two types of row coverings. For September heat-waves, have some shade cloth handy. It is a very light, white cotton fabric for draping over your plants to protect them from direct sunlight and stunt their natural disposition to flower and seed.

The other worthy row cover is a hoop tunnel, also known as a cloche. As the temperatures get colder in October you can extend your growing season by installing hoop tunnels (check out *City Bites*, February 2011, for more on cloches). These mini-greenhouses hold the heat of the day and protect plants from frosty nights. Remember to open up the hoop tunnels on very hot days. You don't want to bake your plants!

With your summer garden under control and your fall garden planned, looks like you just might be a farmer. Your planned second and third plantings (known in the biz as succession planning) are an integral part of a sustainable garden that helps you eat locally and well for many more months than you might have expected. **CB**

Marc Green is the owner of The Backyard Urban Farm Company. For more information visit bufco.ca.



A mid-summer garden at various stages. Tatsoi has bolted (yellow flowers), a second succession of arugula seed is coming in and some blank spaces await their second planting.

GET DIRTY

Remember to amend the soil before each planting with compost, manure, worm castings or some other natural additive. The more successions you are able to plant, the more nutrient depleted the soil becomes. Feed the soil so it can feed the plants!

PHOTO: MARC GREEN



*Now open 7 days a week
4 seasons a year*

www.CafeBelong.ca



After a year of planning, foraging and building we are thrilled to announce Chef Brad Long's newest culinary adventure is now open for you to discover at the Evergreen Brick Works

550 Bayview Ave, Toronto, ON, Canada

| FREE |
SPRING 2011

CityBites

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

THE WINE ISSUE



PLUS! PANCAKES + BOOKS + SPOT PRAWNS + WHISKY

Contain Yourself!

NO BACKYARD? NO PROBLEM!

You're dying to grow your own food but you don't have a plot to plant in. No worries. There are many options for the space-starved.

Container gardening has been around for centuries, not only because it's practical but also beautiful. Even a small collection of pots can transform an empty patio, balcony, driveway or deck into a lush and edible landscape. A humble bucket, a recycling bin or even an old teapot can make a great home for salad greens, peas, beans, tomatoes and peppers. Most fruits, vegetables and herbs can be grown in containers as long as they get enough sun, a proper-sized pot with drainage holes and the right soil. One nice thing about containers: you can move the pots to follow the sun.

WATER WATER EVERYWHERE

Container growing means more frequent watering. A pot is a relatively small space compared with a garden bed and is more likely to dry out. Those pretty terra cotta pots are notorious for absorbing water so

they have to be watered often. Try planting in self-watering pots that have a reservoir at the bottom, forcing the plant to drink from below through its roots. If drainage is poor, plants will be vulnerable to root rot. You need to strike a perfect balance between draining and retaining.

SUCCESS IS IN THE SOIL

Keep it light and fluffy. A pot filled with triple mix will turn into a cement block after a few good rains, and that's not good for airflow or healthy root growth. Start with a good quality organic potting soil and amend it with something nutritious such as vermicompost (worm castings).

SIZE DOES MATTER

The pot must fit for the plant. Plants with shallow root—like lettuces and greens—are ok in shallow pots, while tomatoes, peppers and eggplants prefer large vessels so the roots can spread out.



THINK VERTICAL

Containers can be placed on shelves or tables and that means less stooping. Another benefit: because each plant has its own self-contained ecosystem, you're less likely to be hit by a major bug or weed infestation. Add a trellis to your containers for climbing plants like peas and pole beans. Bamboo hoops can support a shade cloth to cool your plants at the peak of summer—and you can switch to clear plastic sheeting to create a mini greenhouse when temperatures dip in the fall.

Arlene Hazzan Green co-owns *The Backyard Urban Farm Co.* in Toronto. Visit bufco.ca.

PHOTO: ARLENE HAZZAN GREEN



St. Lawrence Market



presents

The Executive Chef Series

Eat. Meet. Mingle with top executive chefs
Launching May 12!



An evening inspired by **BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL**:
Andrew Carter, Executive Chef of The Queen and Beaver Public House, May 12, 6–8 pm, \$95 per guest



Patrick McMurray, Owner of Starfish Oyster Bar & Grill, May 26, 6–8 pm, \$80 per guest



Trevor Wilkinson, Owner & Executive Chef from Trevor Kitchen & Bar, June 9, 6–8 pm, \$95 per guest



Peter George, Executive Chef of 360 The Restaurant at the CN Tower, August 25, 6–8 pm, \$95 per guest



Timothy Palmer, Restaurant Chef of the Fairmont Royal York restaurant EPIC, September 15, 6–8 pm, \$95 per guest

The executive chef series includes a five or six-course tasting menu, wine and food pairings and all gratuities. Register at kitchen@stlawrencemarket.com or call 416-860-0727 stlawrencemarket.com facebook.com/stlawrencemarket

Special thanks to our partners:



| FREE |
(EARLY) SPRING 2011

CityBites

Special Issue

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

SPICE WORLD

**HOT STUFF
TO ZAP
YOUR
'BUDS!**

**RISING STARS!
3 PASTRY CHEFS
TO WATCH**

**TORONTO'S BEST
FOODIE NEWS!**

**SWEET WINE SECRETS
BY JOHN SZABO**

PLUS! COOKBOOKS + NEW EATERIES + SCHNITZEL + GINGER BEER



Spring Fling

DON'T WAIT FOR MAY TWO-FOUR TO START PLANTING. GET OUT THERE NOW.

Gardeners are an impatient lot. Especially in the dark days of winter. But short of planning a garden on paper, putting in seed orders, waiting and fantasizing, what can you do? You can start growing now, that's what.

"Season extension" is a technique that allows you to plant in late March or early April so you can be eating by mid-May, when most gardeners are only just starting to get their hands dirty.

All you need is a glass garden bell jar called a cloche, which is placed over a single plant to protect it from the cold. Nice, but not very practical. More effective are hoop tunnels (clear plastic stretched out over semi-circular hoops embedded in the soil) and cold frames (a box with a hinged glass lid). Basically, miniature greenhouses.

Hardy, cold resistant plants such as radishes, salad greens, kale, collard greens and spinach work well here. Off-season growing works much better in raised beds, as the soil is isolated from the surrounding frozen ground. This is vital, as the first step in getting a pre-spring start is to soften the soil using the natural heat of the sun.

Place a sheet of black plastic over the soil, and anchor it with a few rocks or bricks. Remove as much snow as you can, as well as mulch leftover from fall. Over a period of two to three weeks, the black plastic will suck up heat and transfer it to the soil. You're waiting for the top six to eight inches of soil to soften. Then it's time to install the hoop tunnel or cold frame.

Store-bought hoop tunnels work well, or you can make your own from bamboo. An old window makes a good cold frame.

And now it's time to plant. First, amend the soil with good, rich compost, worm castings or both. Sow seeds toward the centre of the tunnel, so the curved sides won't impede growth. There should be a fair bit of humidity inside your greenhouse, so water only occasionally.

Winter Greens

Use the techniques in this article to extend the growing season on the back end, too. Install the hoops and plant cold hardy veggies in late August. Cover with the plastic as the weather cools, and you'll be harvesting salads and spinach in mid-November, maybe even December.


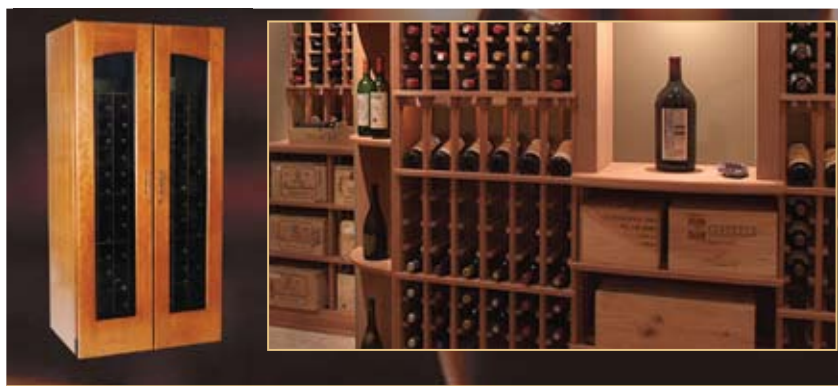
As it gets warmer, you can prop open the cold frame, or roll back the plastic to expose the plants to fresh air and sunlight, but keep the plastic intact for the inevitable cold spell or early spring snow. Then, get ready for fresh April salads. **CB**

Marc Green co-owns *The Backyard Urban Farm Co.* in Toronto. Visit bufco.ca.



A hoop tunnel can get your sprouts going early, and keep your greens growing into winter.

PHOTO: MARC GREEN



Rosehill

WINE CELLARS

Wine storage experts for 15 years.

Visit our showroom at 339 Olivewood Road, Toronto
416.285.6604 • 1.888.253.6807
www.rosehillwinecellars.ca

Wine Cellars • Wine Racks • Cooling Units • Cabinets • Stemware • Accessories • Gift Certificates

CityBites

| FREE |
Winter 2010/2011

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

Celebrating
5 Years!

HOW TO EAT, DRINK
AND STAY COZY

WINTER SURVIVAL GUIDE

WHAT'S WRONG
WITH **DUCK CONFIT**?

A GARDENER'S
LETTER TO SANTA

THE TRUTH
ABOUT **HONEY**

A WORLD OF
CHICKEN SOUP

PLUS! BOOKS + PERSIAN PASTRY + GOURMET GIFTS + KARMIC CAVIAR

Visions of Seedlings

GET THROUGH WINTER WITH THESE GREAT GARDEN IDEAS

The days are shorter, the nights are longer and the veggie patch, once ablaze with summer colour, has faded into shades of brown, gray, and white. In an act of self-preservation or therapy, the restless gardener starts making lists, pouring over seed catalogues, imagining the possibilities, and planning. The dead of winter is the perfect time to put your favourite gardening paraphernalia on your wish list. We've raked up a few tips and must-haves to help see you through.

ORGANIC AND HEIRLOOM SEED CATALOGUE FROM MATCHBOX GARDEN AND SEED COMPANY

Start Planning! Local, organic growers Hanna Jacobs and Eric Rosenkrantz have assembled an intriguing, drool-inducing seed catalogue. Discover their unique collection of heirloom tomatoes, peppers, beans, herbs, flowers and more.

Seed packs \$2 from matchboxgarden.ca or in the spring at the Sorauen and Trinity Bellwoods farmer's markets.



A Gardener's Journal, \$39.50

GARDEN TOOLS AND MORE AT LEE VALLEY

Get going! You haven't lived until you've ogled the gorgeous tools and gadgets at Lee Valley. It's a wonderland of high quality goodies for the ardener. Here are a few of our faves.

590 King St., W, 416-366-5959, leevalley.com.



Ergonomic Hand Tools set of 3, \$34.50



Lee Valley Garden Apron, \$31



WINDOW SILL GARDENS BY ECOCULTURE SERACON

Keep Growing! It's easy with these all-in-one growing kits that use organic heirloom seeds and earth-friendly Eco-coir (coconut fiber) as a soil-less growing medium. Just add water and in a few weeks you'll have yummy greens, edible flowers, unusual herbs and more.

Starting at \$20 from Blue Banana Market, 250 Augusta Ave., 416-594-6600, bluebananamarket.com; or from seracon.ca.

Arlene Hazzan Green and Marc Green seek a simple country life in the big city. Get gardening ideas and join The Backyard Urban Farm Company community at bufco.ca.



since 1981

639 Queen Street East
(416) 461-4576
www.marymacleod.ca

**Happy Holidays*

Phone orders accepted
Delivery and shipping available

Hours of Operation:
Mon & Tues 10-4
Wed 10-6
Thu & Fri 10-7
Sat 10-5
Sun 11-5 **NEW**
from Nov 28 to Dec 19



This holiday visit our store or one of these fine retailers:

Cheese Boutique
Cherry-Fairs Handicrafts
For Friends
Future Bakery & Future Bistro
Holt Renfrew & Holt Renfrew Cafe
Homefront
Kurtz Orchards Toronto Gourmet Store
McEwan
Pippins
Putti
Sandelli's
Say Tea & Say Tea II
Signature Gift & Design
Summerhill Market
Winderdarden

CityBites

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

| FREE |
Fall 2010

Celebrating
5 Years!

CATERING
WHAT YOU NEED
TO KNOW FOR
THE HOLIDAYS

GET SHARP
WITH OUR
KNIFE GUIDE

THE QUEST FOR

PERFECT PIZZA

Queen
Margherita
Pizza

PLUS! MUSTARD + APPLE PIE + BOOKS + KITCHEN STUFF

It's Bedtime!

A COZY WINTER IN THE GARDEN

Like a child at bedtime, here we go, kicking and screaming into the cold and dark of another winter. Who can blame us? Gardeners live for spring planting, summer tending and fall harvesting.

However, the garden's slumber must be endured, and putting the soil to bed for the winter—comfy and cozy—plays an important role in maintaining a healthy northern-climate garden.

The best time to winterize is right after harvest, when your plants are no longer supporting fruit or vegetable growth. This usually occurs at different times in different areas of the garden. In a perfect world, you would winterize the soil in bits and pieces, as the finished plants are pulled out. It is, however, more expedient and perfectly acceptable to prepare the entire garden at once.

Start by removing harvested plants. Remove the roots as well—disease and non-beneficial insects can lay low over the winter in this organic matter and damage the new crop the following spring.

If you compost, the pulled plants can go straight onto the pile. If you don't, start now. Decaying plants make an excellent foundation for a new compost heap. Remember though, good compost needs a mix of both moist green matter (high in nitrogen) as well as dry brown elements (high in carbon). So make sure you add roughly equal amounts of greens and organic browns such as dried leaves, dried grass clippings, sawdust and straw to your compost pile.

Once the plants are out, amend the soil

by adding organic compost, organic manure, worm castings or a mixture of all three. Don't wait until spring—give your soil a nutritional boost right after the demanding growing season. A two-inch layer, turned in to a depth of about six inches, will do the trick.

Although next year's garlic is best planted in mid to late September, you may still have success if you plant right now, especially in light of Toronto's recently mild winters.

GARLIC PLANTING IS SIMPLE AND WORKS LIKE THIS:

1. Separate the cloves from the bulb right before planting.
2. Plant each clove, pointy end up, about two inches from the surface.
3. Spacing the cloves six inches apart yields nice-sized heads.

As long as the cloves have enough warm weather for the roots to set and a short sprout to appear—say three weeks before the ground starts to freeze—then you should see very early growth next spring.

The final step in bedding down your garden is to establish a blanket over the soil. This

OF COMPOST AND DEAD GRASS

Compost needs equal amounts of green and brown organic material, as well as moisture and air. Add water until the compost heap has the consistency of a damp sponge, and use a pitchfork to turn and aerate the pile. Before adding your pulled plants, remove the fully composted bottom layer and use it to amend your soil.

Straw bales are packed very densely. You can cover about 80 square feet to a depth of about four inches with just one bale. Don't be surprised to see a few pieces of grass popping up next spring—straw does contain the odd seed. Hay, on the other hand, is full of seeds. Unless you plan on growing loads of rye, wheat or barley, do not use hay!

prevents sun-bleached soil—yes, even the winter sun is strong—and greatly reduces weed infestations next spring.

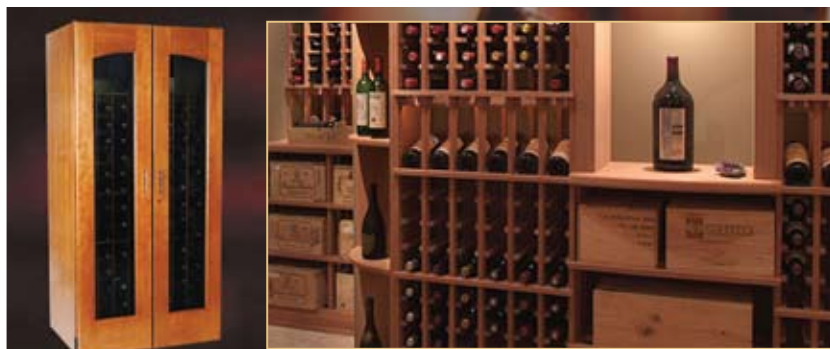
Straw makes an excellent winter cover. It's cheap, ubiquitous and looks great dusted about the yard. Apply a four- or five-inch layer over the bed and secure it by running string across the top. It makes excellent insulation for garlic. In the spring, when you pull the straw off, you have instant browns for your compost, and the pieces left in the soil will just decompose and nourish your plants. **CB**

Marc and Arlene Hazzan Green of The Backyard Urban Farm Company (bufco.ca) design, install and maintain organic vegetable gardens.



A cozy blanket of hay makes a nice bed.

PHOTO: MARC GREEN



Rosehill

WINE CELLARS

Wine storage experts for 15 years.

Visit our showroom at 339 Olivewood Road, Toronto
416.285.6604 • 1.888.253.6807
www.rosehillwinecellars.ca

Wine Cellars • Wine Racks • Cooling Units • Cabinets • Stemware • Accessories • Gift Certificates

CityBites

TORONTO'S GUIDE TO GREAT FOOD & DRINK

| FREE |
Harvest 2010

Celebrating
5 Years!

THE HARVEST 2010 TOUR!

GET OUT OF TOWN
AND EAT SOMETHING
FRESH AND LOCAL

TURKEY
BUYING GUIDE

BEST VINEGARS

THE TIFF
SURVIVAL GUIDE

TORONTO
BEER WEEK

KOSHER PICKLE 101



Michael Potters of
Harvest Restaurant

PLUS! FOOD BOOKS + CHEAP WINES + SECOND HARVEST + URBAN GARDENS

Grow your own

TAKE THE LEAP AND REAP THE BOUNTY

If you had to be completely self-sustaining, could you do it? Goodbye mod-cons, hello hunting and gathering. You'd have to find, collect and purify water and learn to recognize what was edible and what could potentially kill. As a self-sustaining survivalist, you'd have to focus on the absolute basic necessities of life: food, water and shelter.

Do you think you could provide at least some of your own food? Are you up for the challenge? It's actually not that hard, you know...

Consider this precarious reality. Only about 3 percent of the North American population is in the business of feeding 100 percent of the rest of us. Compare that with 150 years ago, when 70 to 80 percent of us were involved in agricultural food production.

In the time it's taken us to burn through 3 trillion barrels of oil, we've lost our knowledge of the lifecycles of plants and insects,

weather patterns and the phases of the moon. As a culture, we've also lost our confidence, with many urbanites suffering from a Black Thumb Complex. Perhaps most damaging of all, we've lost the joy of communing with nature—quite possibly without even realizing that it's gone.

Okay, chances are the power isn't going to go out suddenly or permanently tomorrow, but learning to grow your own organic fruits and vegetables is a very good idea. Not only is it good for you—more plants, less Prozac—it's good for the planet.

Tending to the life of a plant is surprisingly simple. Give it the basics—food, water, shelter, light—and Mother Nature takes care of the rest. All you have to do is pay attention and assist from time to time. Remember the plant has a life of its own and knows what to do.

Arlene Hazzan Green and Marc Green run The Backyard Urban Farm Company and design, install and maintain organic vegetable gardens: 416-450-3899, bufco.ca.



The author's garden in Toronto.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Think September is too late? Here are a few tips to get you thinking about next spring.

- ✦ Visit a private or community garden, peak over a neighbour's fence and see how it's done.
- ✦ Take a country drive to a local farm like Everdale Farm in Erin (www.everdale.org) or Farmstart in Brampton (www.farmstart.ca). Both have exciting fall events and programs.
- ✦ Don't be shy. Gardeners love to talk, share their secrets and show off their bounty.
- ✦ Start small and keep it simple.
- ✦ Grow herbs like basil, chives and oregano on your windowsill.
- ✦ Ignite your imagination at the bookstore.

PHOTO: MARC GREEN

FROM LOCAL FARMS TO YOUR TABLE

We invite you to experience the freshest of Niagara's bounty, produced locally and prepared by Niagara chefs who embrace the Farm to Table philosophy every day. Each afternoon demonstration features a vineyard walk with Michèle Bosc and discussions with a local food purveyor, ending in a delectable tasting created while you watch and paired with Château des Charmes wines. Our series culminates with the Harvest Feast, as our featured chefs join forces for a grand finale: a winemaker's style dinner sure to delight your inner foodie.

FARM TO TABLE SERIES

Sunday, June 27

Chefs Anna and Michael Olson

Sunday, July 18

Chef Roberto Fracchioni,
Millcroft Inn & Spa

Sunday, August 15

Chef David Watt, Zest

4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

\$50 pp + taxes & gratuity,
for each date

HARVEST FEAST

Sunday, September 26

Featuring all Farm
to Table Chefs

6:30 pm to 10:30 pm

\$150 pp + taxes & gratuity

**PURCHASE THE ENTIRE
3-DATE SERIES PLUS
THE HARVEST FEAST FOR
\$250 PP + TAXES AND
GRATUITY**

Space is limited. To reserve
your place call Michèle Bosc at
905.262.4219 ext. 26 or email
michele@chateaudescharmes.com

VISIT WWW.CHATEAUDESCHARMES.COM
FOR COMPLETE EVENT DETAILS

1025 York Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON 905.262.4219



CHÂTEAU
DES CHARMES