

Timely Turf Tips

February 2012

Groundhogs may not like to see their shadows, but we do! The sun is out, the weather unseasonably warm and our daylight is noticeably longer. Even if this month brings record snowfall we are on the back side of winter and spring planting is right around the corner. Harkening to the self-sufficiency of previous generations, resolve to **plant a vegetable garden!** Food prices were up 11% last year and continue to rise. Shoppers can't have failed to notice the dramatic rises in basic food costs. Growing your own vegetables is economical, yielding better taste and more nutrients than factory farmed foods. We'll help you! We will take you month by month on the "how to" and "what now" of vegetable gardening; providing tips and techniques for beginners and experienced gardeners. We'll include links on how to build a raised bed, planting instructions, instructions for installing a drip irrigation system with a water- and time-saving timer, how to deal with pests, when to harvest and how to store your produce.

Victory Gardens

Victory Gardens were gardens planted both at private residences and on public land during World War I and World War II to reduce the pressure on the public food supply brought on by the war effort. In addition to indirectly aiding the war effort these gardens were also considered a civil "morale booster" — in that gardeners could feel empowered by their contribution of labor and rewarded by the produce grown. These gardens produced up to 41 percent of all the vegetable produce that was consumed in the nation. In 1943, 20 million gardens were producing 8 million tons of food.



Grow what you eat...eat what you grow

Whether it is a modest container of tomatoes on a patio deck or a full fledged self-sufficient garden now is the time to plan your garden. Determine the size of your garden and choose foods that you like. If you're new to gardening, start small. Suggested vegetables for Minnesota home growers: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1425.html>

Winter Seed Sowing

If you don't have the space inside to start seeds, winter (or spring seed) sowing may be the answer. It's too early to start most vegetables with this method however it's a great time to start perennials. How to start seeds in containers outdoors in freezing temps. http://www.northerngardening.com/winter_sowing.htm
http://www.kare11.com/life/lifestyle/grow/grow_article.aspx?storyid=850050

Late February and March is the best time of year to have large shade trees and fruit trees pruned.

Sign of Spring: Chickadees are starting to sing their spring song! Listen here: <http://tinyurl.com/4zh862h>

Help Track Spring's Journey North! When the groundhog wakes up on February 2nd to look for his shadow, he'll find people across the Northern Hemisphere are already on the job. Members of the public are welcome to participate in this spring's 19th annual global study of wildlife migration and seasonal change. Help track monarch butterflies, hummingbirds, robin, and other backyard birds; the blooming of plants; changing sunlight, temperatures, and other signs of spring. Participation in Journey North is free. <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

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