

Healthy Communities Food Gardens Network

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Summer 2015

What's inside.....

1. Welcome letter
2. In season
3. Sowing seeds
4. Healthy recipes
5. Garden safety
6. Resources

Next Time.....

Fall Harvest

Healthy Communities Food Garden Network Newsletter



Welcome to the first edition of the Healthy Communities Food Gardens Network (HCGFN) Newsletter! For nearly three years now, the development of the HCGFN continues to foster networking opportunities by promoting community garden education, and strengthening knowledge about the benefits of gardening in the areas of where we live, where we work, where we learn and where we play.

In working to raise awareness and advocate for a healthier community the Yuma County Public Health Services District, Health in Arizona Policy Initiative (HAPI), the Arizona Nutrition Network (AzNN) in collaboration with the U of A Cooperative Extension, developed a supportive system for community members to share resources for funding opportunities, garden development resources, educational resources and technical assistance for policy implementation. If you would like to learn more about this initiative feel free to contact the Yuma County Public Health Services District at (928) 317-4580.

This newsletter brought to you by:



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND LIFE SCIENCES
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Yuma County – Urban Horticulture



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Page 2

In Season:

By Stacey Bealmer-Jones, Urban Horticulture Agent, U of A

As June gets underway, the number of crops to plant is limited due to the impending summer heat. The best option is to plant a cover crop, which helps to nurture your garden soil by adding nitrogen and building organic matter when turned under. This is important because nitrogen is depleted during the growing season and desert soils naturally lack organic matter.

Cowpea (black eyed pea) is a recommended cover crop for the low desert. It's a legume and fixes nitrogen to the soil. Cowpeas are great for gardeners because it is small and easy to incorporate back into the soil. You can grow cowpea

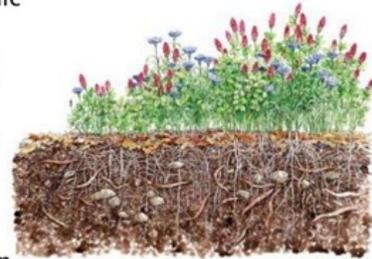


Cowpea (black eyed pea)

from March to September, but be sure to disk it under before it goes to seed. Seeds will create volunteer cowpea that will compete with your fall crops.

Cover crops can:

- ▶ Increase soil organic matter
- ▶ Increase nitrogen balance in the soil
- ▶ Suppress pests (weeds)
- ▶ Provide habitat for beneficial insects
- ▶ Enhance soil biological activity
- ▶ Control erosion
- ▶ Prevent compaction



What do you want your cover crop to do?

Warm season crops planted in February though April are in full production right now! It's harvest season for artichokes, beans (green and dry), corn, cucumber, eggplant, melons (all types), okra, pepper/chilies, squash (summer and winter) and tomatoes.



Honey Dew Melon



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Page 3

Sowing Seeds:

By Suzanne Cooper, Program Coordinator, Arizona Nutrition Network (AZNN)

Food gardens provide environmental support for the healthy choices people make by increasing access to and consumption of healthy food, increasing opportunities for physical activity, promoting social networks and providing hands-on skill-building opportunities. Holding to these objectives, Yuma County's Arizona Nutrition Network (AZNN) sought to work with sites within Yuma County that could benefit from such garden projects.

With funding from a local community reinvestment grant and the linkages provided by the Healthy Communities Food Gardens (HCFG) network, Housing America Corporation's Valle del Desierto in Somerton was selected as one of the sites for a garden.



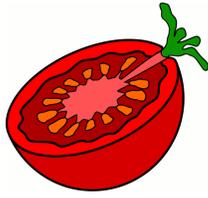
Valle del Desierto

Housing America was present at the first roundtable meeting of HCFG. Valle del Desierto residents have been participating in nutrition and physical activity education provided by AZNN for some time, including garden workshops to build skills and knowledge about gardening, and a garden was an important next-step in order to encourage and support the residents' healthy lifestyle choices. The



Valle del Desierto

garden proposal was enthusiastically embraced by both the residents and the staff, and the project got underway. Currently, the project is nearing completion, with several beautiful raised beds complete with pergolas, benches and work tables already in place. Next steps will include educational programs for the residents about injury prevention, heat-related safety, and food safety, before the full planting season arrives in the fall.



Healthy Communities Food Gardens Network

Page 4

Healthy Recipes:



Zucchini Zowie

Ingredients:

- 2 medium zucchini
- 14.5 ounce can diced tomatoes with juice
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap.
2. Wash fresh vegetables before preparing.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
4. Wash and slice the zucchini.
5. Lay zucchini in a pie pan and pour tomatoes with juice over the top.
6. Sprinkle garlic powder, salt, and parmesan cheese on zucchini.
7. Bake uncovered for 35 to 40 minutes.
8. Cool slightly then serve. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Servings:

Makes 8 servings, Serving Size: approximately ½ cups

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1-800-352-8401. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and



Nutrition Information:

Per Serving

Calories, 16.41; Carbohydrate, 2.76 gm; Protein, 0.77 gm; Total Fat, 0.19 gm; Saturated Fat, 0.11 gm; Trans Fat, 0 gm; Cholesterol, 0.55 mg; Fiber, 0.46 gm; Total Sugars, 1.60 gm; Sodium, 161.14 mg; Calcium, 15.81 mg; Folate, 0.79 mcg; Iron, 0.34 mg; Calories from Fat, 10%.



Healthy Communities Food Gardens Network

Page 5

Garden Safety:

Enjoy the benefits of physical activity.

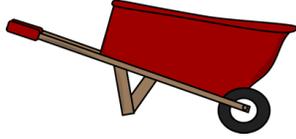
Gardening is an excellent way to get physical activity. Active people are less likely than inactive people to be obese or have high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, stroke, depression, colon cancer, and premature death.

- Be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Include activities that raise your breathing and heart rates and that strengthen your muscles. Help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.
- If you have been inactive, start out with just a few minutes of physical activity each day. Gradually build up time and intensity.
- Vary your gardening activities to keep your interest and to broaden the range of benefits.

Know your limits in the heat.

Even being out for short periods of time in high temperatures can cause serious health problems. Monitor your activities and time in the sun to lower your risk for heat-related illness.

- If you're outside in hot weather for most of the day you'll need to make an effort to drink more fluids.
- Avoid drinking liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar, especially in the heat.
- Take breaks often. Try to rest in shaded areas so that your body's thermostat will have a chance to recover. Stop working if you experience breathlessness or muscle soreness.



Healthy Communities Food Gardens Network

Page 6

Garden Safety cont.

- Pay attention to signs of heat-related illness, including extremely high body temperature, headache, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, confusion, or unconsciousness.
- Watch people who are at higher risk for heat-related illness, including infants and children up to four years of age; people 65 years of age or older; people who are overweight; people who push themselves too hard during work or exercise; and people who are physically ill or who take certain medications (i.e. for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation).
- Eat healthy foods to help keep you energized.



Resources:

To learn more garden health and safety tips please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening/>

To learn more about Healthy Recipes please visit AzNN at:

<http://www.eatwellbewell.org/>

To learn more about the Air Quality Report please visit ADEQ at:

<https://www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/assessment/hpa.html>

To learn about local Yuma County health resources please visit:

<http://www.yumacountyaz.gov/departments-and-services/health>