



SET THE TABLE FROM YOUR GARDEN

July 2012

Why Compost? Feeding the Soil to Feed the Plant



If you can only do one thing to improve your garden this year, build a compost pile. No matter your soil type, your climatic zone, or your choice of crops, composting will enhance your garden soil, resulting in stronger plants and healthier produce. Organic gardeners have long regarded compost as the cornerstone of garden soil fertility. Compost builds healthy soil, producing robust plants that are more resistant to pests and disease.



Building soil is an essential concept for good organic gardening, best summed up by the adage: "feed the soil to feed the plant." In adding compost to the soil, you are replenishing the reserve of organic matter and nutrients that are taken out by the garden crops. Essential to all soil ecosystems, organic matter is the food for soil organisms. By composting, you are feeding the soil creatures, from the tiniest bacteria to the longest worm, who in turn make nutrients available to your garden plants.



[Read the Home Composting Guide](#)

Time to Plant a Second Season Garden

Mid to late summer months are perfect for sowing seeds of short season varieties which tolerate cooler nights and shorter days and provide tasty fall harvests. We call this "Second Season Gardening." Read this month's feature article [Gardening for a Second Season](#) for planting information to extend your garden's production this year. For fall planting suggestions, also refer to our [Kitchen Garden Plans](#) for both short and long season areas.



[Cut and Come Again Mesclun](#)



["Wasabi" Arugula](#)

Vegetables and Herbs for Second Season Planting:

Herbs	Vegetables	
Arugula	Beets	Lettuce
Borage	Broccoli Raab	Mache
Chervil	Broccoli	Mesclun Mixes
Chives	Carrots	Pak Choi
Cilantro	Chard	Peas
Dill	Fennel, bulbing	Radishes
Parsley	Kale	Salad Greens
Watercress	Kohlrabi	Scallions
	Leeks	Spinach



["Neon Glow" Chard](#)



["Gourmet Golden" Heirloom Beets](#)



["Crispy Colors Duo" Kohlrabi"](#)



[Easter Egg Radishes](#)

July in the Trial Garden

by Lindsay Del Carlo, Trial Garden Manager

Not everything we evaluate in our Trial Garden meets our expectations. We had high hopes for this heirloom cabbage variety with a unique shape – the heads form up into points so they look like huge green candle flames. But in the garden, the heads were very slow to mature, taking 5 months from seed. In the kitchen, leaves of this particular selection have an extremely pungent flavor, so strong it could not be eaten raw. It just does not even compare to the sweet and delicious early varieties that we know and love. We are sure there are other varieties of this old-fashioned pointed cabbage available, because we have tasted some delicious ones purchased at our local farmers market. I'm going to ask the farmer which one he's growing so we can track it down!



On the other hand, there are serendipities like the spring sown species poppies we are evaluating. We planted each color separately, so we could really look at the shades of their huge double flowers in deep pink, salmon, deep violet, purple and cream. These old-fashioned flowers don't make good bouquet flowers as they don't last in a vase, but they are really spectacular in the garden where their full blossoms look like frosted peonies.



We are also enjoying some graceful Larkspurs in bright pink and purple, although we will not choose them for adding to Renee's Garden because they aren't different enough from colors we already carry. We have recently sown many new selections of summer flowers like zinnias, marigolds and sunflowers which are sure to put on a spectacular show later in the season.



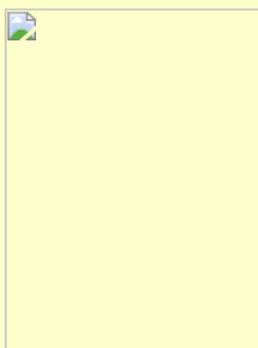
We recently harvested onions grown from our new onion plant line. We chose the Mid-Tier Rainbow Onion Sampler, planting them in early spring. This mix of three varieties - Red Candy Apple, Super Star, and Candy- was easy to grow, taking a little over 90 days from transplanting. We pulled the mature bulbs out of the ground to dry in the sun with their leaves layered over each other to avoid sunscald. After they were dry and papery, we snipped off the tops and brushed off any loose soil. Now we have an abundance of delicious onions to store in a dark and cool place for salads and cooking all summer.

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Best Wishes,
Renee Shepherd

What's On Renee's Blog [Summer in Seattle.. At Last](#)



Recipe of the Month [Orange Scented Chocolate Zucchini Cake](#)



This moist cake is not too sweet and has enticing highlights of chocolate and orange



[Join our Community Garden](#)