Building Gopher-Proof Garden Beds

Before spring gives way to summer, there is still time to build the perfect garden bed. Follow our tips on how to avert gophers, moles and voles with an easy to construct raised garden bed. This type of a bed should last for many years without being invaded from below. Read More...

Growing Tomatoes From Seed

If you love succulent tomatoes, mid-March through April is the time to start your own plants from seed. It's the way to have the best tasting varieties not available at nurseries. The seed starting process lets you watch baby seedlings grow into sturdy plants bearing wonderfully colored, superb tasting fruits.

Here are my guides for starting tomatoes from seed. Tomatoes From Seed... Tomato Tips & Techniques...

March In The Trial Garden

Spring is in the air and we have been busy. Most of our raised beds in the Trial Garden were sown with Renee's Cover Crop blend to protect the soil over the winter. So we have been weed whacking it to the ground, and then we cover it with black plastic for a week or two. This helps to accelerate the breakdown of the cover crop since it heats up with the sunshine. Also, it blocks out light to plants so they will not just continue to grow from the roots. Once all of the cut tops have turned brown, we will incorporate all of the biomass into the soil where it will continue to break down into usable nutrients to the soil and improve the soil's overall condition.

We have transplanted all of the cauliflower, cabbage, and kale that we have started in the greenhouse. Starting early indoors gives us a jump start on the season so we will have produce to harvest early, and then plenty of time to plant a successive crop. We get a lot of pests that like to attack plants in the brassica family like Cabbage moths, cabbage root maggots, and now a new pest called Bagrada Bug. We use insect barriers extensively to keep these pests off of the plants and it helps for us to not have to use pesticides. It will be removed a few weeks before the plants reach maturity.

Now that spring is upon us, we are getting to enjoy fresh blossoms of some plants that are real troopers. Renee's Blue Ensign Morning Glory can overwinter quite well in a climate with mild winter frost. It is coming into full bloom now with its wonder royal blue flowers. Another variety we are excited about is Geum 'Blazing Sunset' which were grown as a trial last spring. The plants have overwintered fabulously and are about to burst with many double, blazing red flowers on tall stems. It is a very sturdy and easy to grow landscaping plant.

Recipe Of The Month

Hearty Portuguese Kale Soup

Serve this soup with warm crusty bread for a complete and

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Best Wishes, Renee Shepherd

satisfying meal.