



SET THE TABLE FROM YOUR GARDEN

May 2012

Attracting Beneficial Insects to the Garden



We design our gardens for beauty, drought-tolerance, shade tolerance — why not the ability to nurture beneficial insects? These native helpers are an ideal method of pest control, both environmentally safe and free of cost.

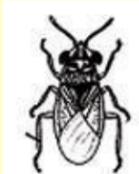


Fig.2: Big-Eyed Bug (Geocoris)

Beneficial insects, like any animal, need a favorable habitat to thrive. For insect predators and parasites, this is a garden with plants and flowers that provide moisture, shelter, alternative prey and immediate nutrition from nectar and pollen. Managing garden bio-diversity in this way is a fascinating and relatively new aspect of pest control. This illustrated article describes the major beneficial insects that are especially attracted to flowers and the types of plants and flowers that they favor. ... [Read the article.](#)

View Renee's Garden varieties that [Attract Pollinators and Beneficial Insects](#) and our [Wildly Attractive Bee Plants](#)



Fig.1: Minute Pirate Bug (Orius)



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What to Plant in June

Gardening is an ongoing process and while timing is important, don't be overwhelmed by a sense of being too late to plant by some arbitrary date. Read [June is Still Prime Planting Season](#) for details.

View "[When to Plant Renee's Garden Seeds](#)" for a reference guide of planting time for our seed varieties.



May in the Trial Garden

by Lindsay Del Carlo, Trial Garden Manager



Organic Lettuces

Many of the spring sown varieties in our trial garden are starting to grow actively; there are lettuces in a myriad of different shapes and colors like our tall, crisp romaine lettuce 'Jericho', and sweet, tender butterhead lettuce 'Kagraner Sommer', frilly red Lettuce 'Redina' and Heirloom Cutting Mix, all varieties in Renee's Garden organic seed line available this fall. The organic leeks have tall, deep green tops and long, juicy white shanks. We just started to harvest them. There is such an abundance that the ones we do not make into soup, quiche or some other tasty dish, we will be slicing up to freeze for later use.



Heirloom Lettuce Cutting Mix



Broccoli "Gypsy"

One of the most impressive trial varieties so far this spring is a fine broccoli variety, 'Gypsy'. It is ready to harvest just three months from sowing and transplanting, producing gigantic, sweet and tender blue-green broccoli heads. After the huge initial head is cut, plants will continue to produce many side shoots. We will also grow Gypsy again for late fall harvest to see how it does at the other end of the season.

In another part of the garden, we are gearing up for main crop summer tomatoes. We first amend the growing beds with compost, and with each plant we add 1 cup of Sustane, our favorite organic granular fertilizer, and 1/4 cup of earthworm castings for extra nutrients. Each plant is buried half way up the stem which causes it to sprout roots where it is underground. This helps the plant uptake more nutrients because it has more roots, and aids it's stability in the wind.



Lots of Organic Leeks



Tomato planting, burying the stem half way up

We will then train them onto our tomato fence, a method that we tried last season that worked brilliantly. We planted our tomato seedlings in one long row, then ran a roll of 6 ft tall wire fencing that rests at the base of the plants, then lays diagonally and rests on sturdy posts, with the fencing supported every 5 ft with bamboo. This helps these large plants spread out, provides better air circulation and sun exposure, and, very importantly, makes harvesting a snap.



Tomato fence

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Best Wishes,
Renee Shepherd

What's On Renee's Blog

[Beth's Guide for Growing the Cucurbit Family: Cucumbers, Summer and Winter Squashes, Pumpkins, Melons & Gourds](#)



Our expert Garden Advisor Beth Benjamin has summarized her advice for successfully growing these mainstay garden vegetables

Recipe of the Month Gingered Cucumbers



The flavors of spicy ginger and cool cucumber go perfectly together.



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