

The Square Footer



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GARDEN PRODUCE

How is your garden doing? By now you should have been able to enjoy peas, green beans, spinach and lettuce, as well as radishes and onions from your garden. Have you noticed the purple beans? I like this variety because the beans are easier to see and pick than the green ones. They do taste the same--just a different color while they are growing. As the vegetables quit producing it is important to pull out the remainder of the plant so it does not harbor diseases or insects for next year.

The cool weather has delayed the development of the tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers. At this time of the year it is important to make sure our tomato plants have sufficient moisture. If the plant becomes stressed for lack of moisture a condition called blossom end rot will develop on the fruits--this is a black discolored area on the end of the tomato and the tomato is usually unfit to eat. When watering it is important to water underneath the plant, not over the top of the tomato plant. This will help prevent leaf diseases from developing which can affect the quality of the tomatoes.

On your cucumber plants have you noticed some flowers seem to dry up and not produce cucumbers? This is because cucumber plants have both male and female flowers. Only the female flowers produce fruit, the male flowers are present for pollination only. If you experience a poor crop of cucumbers it could be that the male and female flowers did not appear at the same time.

Now is also the time that you may want to add some more compost to your garden to give those plants a

boost as we near harvest. If you haven't started composting on your own consider doing so yet this summer. We have an excellent bulletin #H885, Composting Practices, that will help you get started. Give our office a call if you would like a copy.

KEEPING CHILDREN INVOLVED

If you have younger children they may enjoy going to the garden often as they may notice plants changing nearly every day. Use this opportunity to play some counting games. You can ask your children how many tomatoes they can find on a particular plant or see who can pick the most beans today.

Consider using these visits to the garden to teach them about various **concerns** to look out for in gardens such as: damage to plants by insects, checking the soil for watering needs, watching for plants that may need some additional support due to wind damage or bountiful harvest. These simple ideas will keep children engaged in the garden in a fun way and make them feel helpful.

FRESH SALSA

- 1-2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{3}$ large onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large green bell pepper, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 whole jalapeno pepper, finely chopped
- 3-4 large Roma (paste) tomatoes, chopped
- 1 small bunch of cilantro leaves, finely chopped
- Juice from $\frac{1}{4}$ lemon



Mix ingredients together and serve, altering the recipe to suit your own taste preferences. Store covered in the refrigerator. To keep calorie and fat content low, serve with baked tortilla chips.

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn584w.htm#Fresh>