

THE GARDEN BUGLE

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BACK TO BROWN

As cold weather blows into the northeast, the garden falls asleep around us. In recent weeks, we watched residents-in-chrysalis of our Caterpillar Motel spin tight cocoons, where they will likely remain until spring. As the caterpillars spun, students helped us plant daffodil bulbs around the garden. The bulbs may send down roots soon, but like the caterpillars, they'll await spring's siren song to emerge.

As the natural world slows down we're busy laying cover crop, cutting back perennials, and otherwise weather-proofing the more vulnerable parts of our garden.

Ruminations on next spring transport me to the early days of our season. Our most productive year to date, we harvested over 4,800 pounds of produce this season. Our heaviest crop? Cucumbers! We harvested over 650 pounds of crisp, delicious cukes and ate them a myriad ways. We donated over 800 pounds of produce to three different pantries based in Lower Manhattan, sold to five vendors on Governor's Island, and welcomed almost 10,000 weekend visitors!

While we are proud of our productive season, we are



even more proud of our educational programming. This year we taught over 5,000 students from all over New York City. Students visited us from four of the five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx. During lessons, students planted seeds, sifted compost, ate vegetables, and explored our one-acre garden.

DANA'S DISH ON DIRT

There's plenty of winterizing work to be done at the Teaching Garden, but we're saving some time by joining the growing "Lazy Gardener's" movement. That is, we're leaving our garden a bit messy in order to provide both habitat and food for birds and pollinators.

The Habitat Network, in partnership with Cornell and the

Nature Conservancy, provides suggestions to gardeners who wish to create a wildlife haven over the winter. So-called Lazy Gardeners should hold off on cutting back perennials, instead leaving seed heads on plants. Dead plants should be left in the ground, too: their roots hold onto soil, and dead plants often offer birds protein-filled snacks

like insect larvae.

LG's can also skip raking leaves—leaf litter is both a habitat for insects and a free fertilizer! Fallen branches and other plant parts should be added to a brush pile and left over the winter. This will provide shelter for birds and other animals.

Here's to a lazy winter!

EVENTS

- *Mark your calendar! Spring 2019 registration opens on March 13th*
- *Want to stay involved? For upcoming volunteer events visit GrowNYC.org*



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GROWN NYC'S TEACHING GARDEN

GrowNYC's Governors Island Teaching Garden is a 21,000 square foot urban farm that aims to engage, excite, and educate its visitors in all aspects of urban farming. Field trips are available from April through November for NYC students (K-12), who have the opportunity to plant, water, harvest, and taste the garden's wide array of vegetables, herbs, and fruits.

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!

@TEACHINGGARDENNYC



ASK EVE

Dear Eve,

How do I prepare my herbs for winter?

Curious in Coney Island

Dear *Curious*,

My answer depends on the types of herbs you are growing. Annual herbs will not survive the first frost, but perennial herbs, with a little preparation, will return next spring. Take time to say goodbye to basil, cilantro, dill, and parsley before winter arrives, but expect mint, rosemary, thyme, sage, and oregano to reappear in warmer weather.

To prepare your perennial herbs for winter, I would advise you to remove any delicate baby leaves and insulate plants' roots with a thick layer of mulch or straw. Plants may also benefit from moving indoors during cool months.

All the best,

Eve

SWEET [POTATO] CAROLINE, GOOD TIMES NEVER SEEMED SO GOOD

Like much of October, the day of our sweet potato harvest was unseasonably warm. Overwarm and overexcited, we shed our coats and shoes, then dug into the potato bed with bare hands.

Drops of rain began to fall when we were up to our elbows in dirt. Soon thereafter, rain blurred the lines between mud, gardener, and sweet potato.

But our unclothed toes, aided by rain, acted as tot-hunting dowsing wands. They unearthed behemoth tater after tater; the spoils spilled out of buckets and

filled a wheelbarrow to the brim. We broke for lunch rain-soaked and euphoric.

In total, we bagged about 150 pounds of sweet potatoes—our last big harvest of the year. I can't think of a better way to bring the season to a close.



A sweet potato is a geophyte: a perennial plant with an underground food storage organ, such as a bulb, tuber, corm, or rhizome. In the US, we usually eat the roots of the sweet potato, though the leaves are also edible—and delicious!

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

SPC cuts a stunning figure on any Thanksgiving table. Beneath towering peaks of mallow hide sweet depths. Though some do not appreciate the muted textures and vibrant flavors of SPC, others wait all year for this seasonal treat.

Ingredients

- 1 giant sweet potato, or 2 medium
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- Miniature marshmallows (vegan available at Trader Joes)

Process

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Bake sweet potato until soft, about an hour. Let cool a bit.
2. Mash potatoes with sugar, oil, and vanilla. Fold in half of the chopped pecans. Put mixture into an 8x8 baking dish, then sprinkle with remaining pecans. Top with marshmallows. Bake for about 25 minutes, or until mallows are

