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Summer – Gardening from June to September

During these months of the year, your spring flower patches can be cleaned and newly sown. The new seeds need daily water, especially during dry periods.

Summer is also the time when pests are active. Leek moths are a danger for leeks, they eat through the leaves and leave a fungus that destroys the entire plant. But what should you do if the helpful creatures you attracted with your flowers don't get rid of the moths? In this case, the best approach is to give your plants some additional protection by covering them with thin nets. You can also use nets for carrots to protect against the carrot fly.



Maintenance

To set up a net

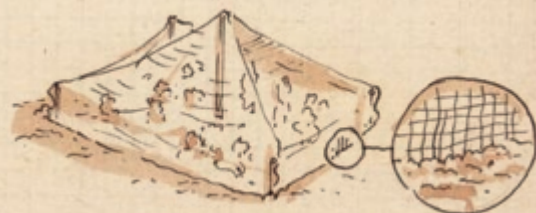
To set up a net, the first step is to loosen the soil in the area around the plants.

Then put a thin layer of lawn cuttings on there. Lawn cuttings fertilize the ground and provide food for essential microorganisms, which support the plants' immune systems.



Then put five sticks in the patch; you need to place one in the middle and one in every corner.

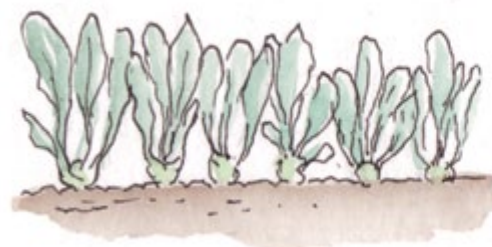
Put the net on top of these sticks.



Make sure the net is nicely dug into the ground to ensure nothing can crawl underneath it. The ideal net is soft enough that it doesn't restrict your plants from growing, and thin enough that it doesn't block out sunlight.

Raking your patch regularly puts oxygen into the soil and helps young plants to develop. It is also easy to remove some weeds while raking – just make sure that all their roots are removed too!

Check your patches for plants that need more space. Always make sure to accommodate your plants' growing demands as this will ensure you gain more harvest from them.



Green peppers will begin to flower now, but it's best if you remove their very first flower. While this might seem cruel, the plants will develop many more flowers afterwards and you will obtain more fruit.

Winter veggies such as savoy cabbage, cauliflower, lamb's lettuce, kale, Chinese cabbage and endive should be sown now. Berry bushes need a lot of water as they begin to develop fruit.



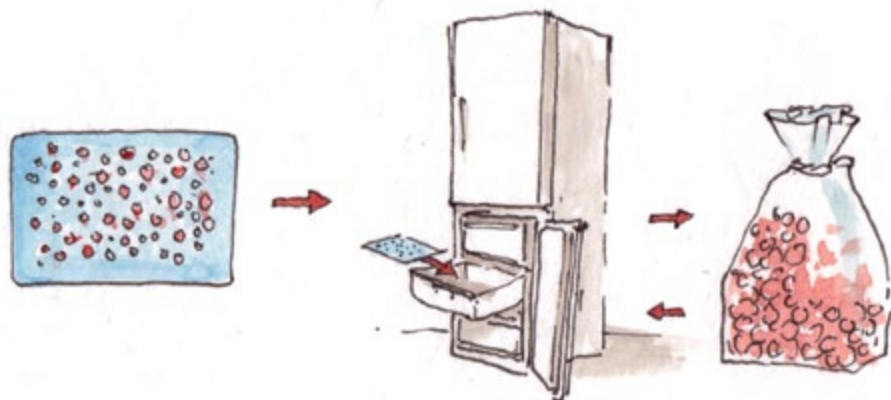


Check whether you have put enough straw on the ground under your strawberry plants, to keep the warmth in the soil. Grapes need climbing aids, and herbs need to be harvested and dried. Withered stems and blossoms need to be removed.

Preservation

We can only consume a small amount of fresh berries and herbs. And their shelf life is short. So we need to find ways to preserve them. Freezing, for example, is a good way to store berries for a long period of time. To prevent them being squashed during storage, use the following trick.

Place the berries one by one onto a kitchen board. The size of the board is important as it needs to fit into your freezer. Leave the board – with the berries still on it – in your freezer for 2 hours. After this period of time the berries will be frozen and you can take them off the board and store them in a freezer bag.

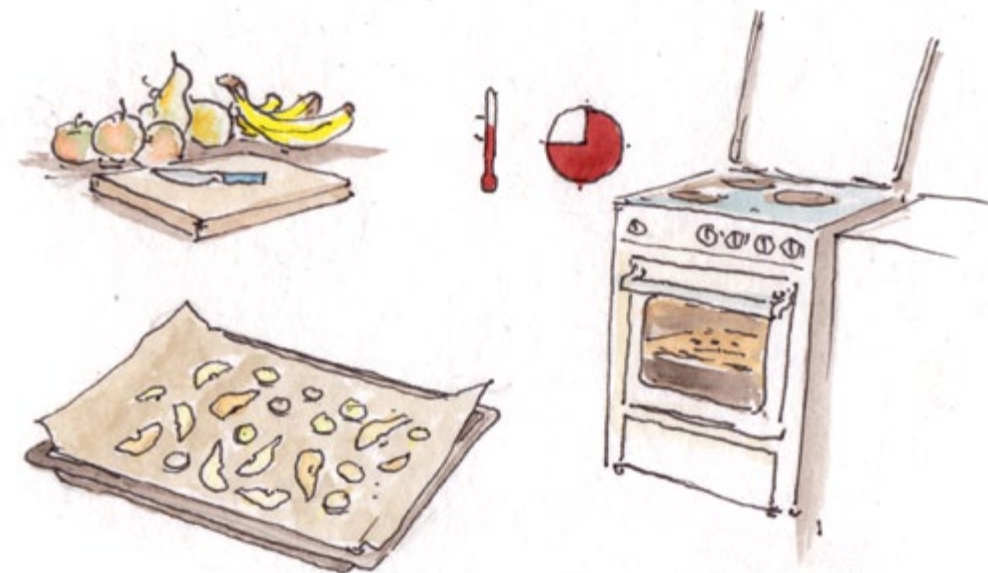


When you're ready to defrost them again you should place them carefully one by one back on your kitchen board, unless you are planning to make a fruit sauce or cook some jam.



Herbs are perfect for freezing too. Basil, parsley, chives and dill are tasty for most dishes and survive the freezing process well, without losing too much flavor. Just put them in a thick freezer bag and use them quickly after defrosting.

Another common way of preserving fruit is to dry it. Apples, peaches, mangoes, bananas or pears can all be dried easily. First cut them into thin slices. Then put them in the oven on some baking paper. Most fruit dries best at a temperature of between 50 and 60 degrees Celsius for 45 minutes. After it cools off you can store your dried fruit in small plastic bags. However, as plastic is not good for the environment you might want to use tins instead.



An alternative way to store your veggies and fruits is by cooking them and placing them in bottling jars.

When doing this it's important that the cooking temperature is around 100 degrees Celsius. After they are cooked, fill the jars with your veggies or fruit. You should also add a bit of vinegar to your veggies, to help maintain their flavors, and sugar water to your fruit, to maintain their sweetness. Close the jar firmly afterwards, to ensure it is airtight.



Drying herbs in salt

Although adding salt to dishes is not healthy, a tiny bit of homemade herbal salt won't harm you. Let your herbs dry out in a warm and sunny spot. The water in their leaves will slowly disappear, but not the essential oils which create their unique flavors.

Use tarragon, thyme and rosemary, and mix them with sea salt. Grind them in a mortar. This homemade herbal salt is delicious on all kinds of veggies, but especially on pumpkin, zucchinis, cabbages and tomatoes.



If you bake veggie pies or casseroles, any leftovers will last longer if they are kept in the fridge. Just make sure to eat some healthy fresh salad every day.

Here are some healthy recipes for you to try. Any leftovers from your cooking can be safely stored for a few days in the fridge

Summer veggie pie

2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 chopped onions
 8 ounces mushrooms
 1 clove garlic, minced
 2 large carrots, diced
 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
 2 stalks celery
 2 cups cauliflower florets
 1 cup fresh green beans
 3 cups veggie broth
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon black pepper
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 2 tablespoons soy sauce

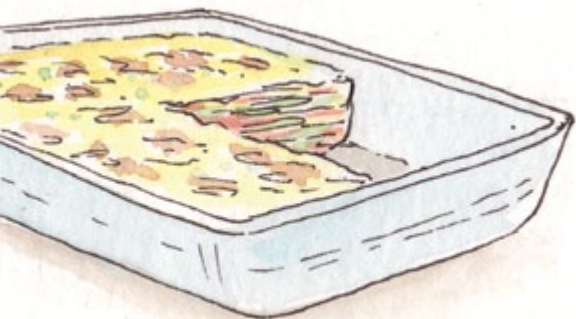


Double crust dough:

2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ cup vegetable shortening, ½ cup water
 Mix the cornstarch, the soy sauce and ¼ cup of water and add all the veggies. Season with salt and pepper.

Sift the flour and salt together in a bowl. Mix in the vegetable shortening until it looks like coarse crumbs. Add water until the dough forms. Roll out half of the dough to line an 11 x 7 inch baking dish. Pour the filling into the pastry-lined dish. Roll the remaining dough and arrange over the top of the filling, then seal and flute the edges. Put everything into the oven for 30 minutes at 220 degrees Celsius.

Zucchini bake



- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 3 gloves minced garlic
- salt and pepper
- 4 large zucchinis
- 5 tomatoes
- ¼ cup butter
- 2 tablespoons of onion
- ¾ cup fine bread crumbs

Preheat the oven to 190 degrees Celsius. Mix the cheddar and the herbs. Now take a pan and arrange the sliced zucchini in one layer. Cover with the herb and cheese mix. Then cover with the sliced tomatoes. Add another layer of the herb mix. On top of this comes another layer of zucchini. Finally, mix the remaining herb and cheese mix with the bread crumbs and put it on top. Bake for about 40 minutes.

Crunchy cauliflower and tomato salad



- 1/3 cup of linseed or olive oil
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- juice of one fresh lemon
- 1 teaspoon of herbal salt and pepper
- 1 large cauliflower, chopped small
- ½ cup red minced onion
- ½ cup minced fresh parsley
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 chopped tomatoes

Mix the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, salt and pepper, and stir until it is smooth. Add all other ingredients, stir well and let it rest for 3 hours in the fridge.