From The Ground Up

Happy New Year! With the beginning of a new year, how about a new newsletter design! A thank you is in order to everyone who has signed up and promoted my newsletter and has made it grow over the past two years. Looking forward to a great growing season. Happy Gardening!

Jessica Bessin,
Mercer County Extension Agent for Horticulture

New Years Resolution for Gardeners

1. If you are not a gardener, become one. It is scientifically proven that gardening wards off depression: it is difficult not to enjoy life when surrounded by flowers, vegetables and the resulting wildlife they attract. In addition to culinary and health benefits, a garden increases property value and saves money.

2. Test your soil. Whether you have an established garden or are starting a new one, this is a great way to begin the gardening year. Pick up soil test bags from the Extension Office and bring us back a soil sample. We will process it and make a fertilizer recommendation for free!

3. Remove diseased plant parts. Many diseases and some insects will hang out on infected plants all winter only to infect new plant growth in the spring. Good sanitation goes a long way in preventing plant problems.

4. Reduce your lawn area. Lawns are high-maintenance and not always environmentally friendly depending on how they are maintained. Furthermore, the quest for the perfect lawn leads to high nitrates and other pesticides in our water supply. Replace some of your grass with shrubs, perennials and vegetables.

5. Think herbs and veggies. If you haven’t done so before, plant herbs and use them in cooking. Try growing annual herbs such as basil or dill, or some perennial herbs like sage and oregano. Herbs add color and scent to the garden and they taste so much better than store-bought.

6. Order seeds early. As the seed catalogs pile up on your coffee table, it’s time to inventory the seed packets you already have. Then make a plan for your 2017 vegetable garden, rotating the crops to minimize the buildup of soil-borne diseases. Order seeds early and you won’t have to accept substitutes on the order. You may not need all the seeds in a packet, so it’s a good idea to split them with a neighbor or friend.

7. Encourage good bugs. Insect predators and parasites help you in the battle of the bad bugs, so plant flowers that will attract them. To entice lacewings, ladybugs, and hoverflies, for example, plant yarrow, dill, butterfly weed, and sweet alyssum.

8. Save your muscles and joints. Resolve to save your muscles and joints from the abuse of repetitive motions by taking regular breaks or switch movements every 15 minutes or so. Labor-saving techniques include limiting the number of shrubs that need pruning, using soaker hoses, weeding when the soil is moist, and choosing long-blooming perennials that don’t need deadheading.

9. Don’t let weeds go to seed. “One year’s seeding equals seven year’s weeding.”

10. Enjoy! Finally, resolve to enjoy your garden more this year by taking regular walks around it, petting more bumble bees, and sniffing more flowers. Sources: Penn State Extension and University of Illinois Extension Horticulture

Notice

Public Notification of Procedure for Filing a Complaint:
The Cooperative Extension Service prohibits discrimination in its programs and employment on the basis of race, color, age, religion, gender, disability, or national origin.

To initiate a complaint at the college level, contact Tim West in the Business Office at 859-257-3879. At the University level, Terry Allen and Patty Bender in the UK Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity (859-257-8927) may be contacted. Additionally, employee or clientele complaints involving any research or extension sponsored program or activity may be directed to the USDA, Director Office of Civil Rights, Room 326 W Whitten Bldg., 14th & Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250 (202-720-5964).
Kentucky Proud
Bourbon Braised Beef Stew

2 lbs Kentucky Proud chuck, cut into small pieces
Kosher salt and pepper, to season
1 tsp vegetable oil
1 large or 2 small Kentucky Proud onions, diced
1 clove Kentucky Proud garlic, smashed
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 tsp Kentucky Proud bourbon
4 cups beef stock, divided
2 tbsp tomato paste

Kentucky Proud peas
1 lb new potatoes, quartered
1 lb Kentucky Proud carrots
1 sprig rosemary
2 cups of the beef stock (or enough to simmer until vegetables are soft and potatoes begin to fall apart,
add the onions, garlic, tomato paste, 2 cups of the beef stock (or enough to cover the meat), bourbon, and rosemary. Bring to a simmer and cook,

转移到 another plate and continue to brown the meat in batch-
if it is not, continue to simmer until it is. Lastly, add the peas to warm
season well with bourbon salt and pepper.

If necessary, dry the chuck pieces well with a paper towel and season
with salt and pepper.

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven or large pot over high heat and brown 1/3
of the meat, allowing it to get a nice, dark sear on all sides.

Transfer it to a separate plate and continue to brown the meat in batches.
Once all the meat has been browned, add it all back to the pot and
add the onions, garlic, tomato paste, 2 cups of the beef stock (or enough
to cover the meat), bourbon, and rosemary. Bring to a simmer and cook,
partially covered, until beef is almost tender, about 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Add the remaining beef stock and the carrots and potatoes and continue
to simmer until vegetables are soft and potatoes begin to fall apart,
about another 45 minutes. At this point, the beef should be very tender.

Disease Management
- Improve air circulation by providing adequate tree spacing and
  thinning as needed.
- Avoid pruning wet foliage to reduce spread of pathogens.
- Practice good sanitation; rake and discard dropped needles from
  beneath trees.
- Fungicides are seldom recommended, but applications may be
  justified for specimen trees and young plantings. Apply fungicides in
  spring as new shoots begin to expand (usually mid-April), and follow with
  a second application 3 weeks later. Confirm needle cast disease through a
diagnostic laboratory or county Extension office before using fungicides,

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