

Still In The Gardens

Even though it is the middle of December, I am still finding myself in the gardens. It's somewhat hard to believe, but I am grateful for the extra time that I am being allowed by mother nature. I am always grateful for extra time in the garden. You might be asking yourself what can I possibly be doing. Well, we got back from our trip and I hit the ground trying to catch up.

I have finally been able to find a block of time to get my garlic planted. Yes, I finally got that garlic planted Thanksgiving weekend. I might have luck on my side, because even though I had to break up bits of frozen earth to get it in the ground, we have had good rains. Until very recently, the ground hasn't been frozen for long periods of time, so I am hoping that I am getting good root growth and all will be fine come spring. I did add a layer of compost after planting, so hopefully that will also help.

such nonsense. The barn has also been cleaned and the muck has been added to the raised beds to break down during the winter, leaving amazing worm casting in the spring.

On one of those amazing stretches of days we had not that long ago, we were able to blow the leaves in the orchard into the aisles and get them mowed in. It seems that every year we are ankle deep in leaves and after a good few hours of pushing the mower, they have all been chopped up. By spring there really is nothing left and it all goes toward making organic matter for my rocky land. Mind you, even after all these years, we still mow the tops off the resident rocks, at least one wheel shimmies itself off and gets lost for a brief moment, and one needs to wear body protection to protect oneself from ricocheting acorns. Darn, they hurt when they hit you!

So today was for emptying out a compost bin so I have space this winter for new compost. Not that we have much compost – chickens get vegetable and fruit scraps (there is not much of that either). Our counter has a chicken bucket and a compost bucket that both go out for chores in the morning. But when I was emptying the compost bin, the number of worms just blew me away, so they have all gone into the gardens to do their work. I did find one of my missing paring knives that was buried in the bin, so it has been scrubbed and put in the dishwasher. The paint in the wooden handle looks a little worse for wear but, hey, it still looks good otherwise. Psyched.

May you all have a fantastic holiday, filled with food from the garden, family, cheer, joy, some rest and health. Till 2018.

Allison Kerwin is the owner of The Enchanted Garden, a garden design and maintenance company. The Enchanted Garden is based in Hancock.

Winchester Home Provider Wins Statewide Award

Esther Beverly of Winchester has been named Statewide Home Provider of the Year for 2017. The award is presented by the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities.

state finalists. She was given the award recently at the DSP Conference in Portsmouth.

Beverly was one of 11



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Woods and Gardens

with Allison Kerwin

So with the garlic in the beds, I have been able to start cleaning up the garden beds themselves. The leeks, beets, turnips, and celeriac have all been dug, sorted, and are stored in the spare refrigerator. That took a while, but at least they aren't sitting in a bucket in the dirty room or piled up on the kitchen counter, which is typical for me. It is one of those "round tuit" things. The asparagus fronds have been cut down as well as the sunflower stalks, and I gave those to the chickens to do what they want. There's not much left of them, I must say. Maybe they have eaten any hiding beetle eggs and other

Holiday Recipes From Our Readers

Mehaney Date Nut Bread Mehaney Tea Room Circa 1840 – Traverse City, MI

The family began baking these for every teacher since 1958. It always received rare reviews.

- Ingredients:**
 1 cup pitted dates (cut in thirds)
 Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon baking soda
 Cover with 1 cup boiling water
 Set aside night before
 1/2 stick butter, softened
 Cut into 2/3 cup sugar, blend
 Add 1 beaten egg
 Combined with date mixture blend into
 2 cups unbleached flour
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 Add when mixed, 1 cup pecans

Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour in a greased and flour-dusted bread pan. Before cooling, cover with melted butter to give top a shine.

Taya Seligman
Keene

Cranberry-Pineapple Relish

- Ingredients:**
 12 oz. can crushed pineapple, in its own juice
 2 12-oz. packages of cranberries
 1 1/4 cups sugar
 1 cup chopped walnuts (about 4 oz.)
 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Drain pineapple thoroughly in a sieve, set over a cup (large 1). Add enough water to juices in cup to measure 2 cups liquid. Place liquid in large non-aluminum saucepan. Add cranberries and sugar. Stir over high heat until sugar dissolves and mixture comes to a boil. Continue to boil until most berries burst and mixture is thick, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Mix in drained pineapple, walnuts, lemon juice, and cloves. Transfer to bowl and divide into gift jars. Canning jars with new caps and lids are the best, or put in a container and refrigerate. Makes 6 cups

Shirley Clark
Swanzy

Chocolate Peppermint Bark

- Ingredients:**
 12 oz. white chocolate
 12 oz. dark chocolate
 1/c cup crushed candy canes

Line a 12x9-inch pan with parchment paper. Place dash chocolate in a glass bowl and melt in microwave. Cook for 30 seconds, stir, and repeat until smooth. Pour the melted dark chocolate on the parchment paper, and use a spatula to spread the chocolate evenly in the pan. Melt the white chocolate following this same steps. After this, white chocolate is smooth. Pour it onto top of the dark chocolate and spread evenly. Place candy canes into a heavy-duty zip-lock bag, using a hammer to crush the mints. Sprinkle Sprinkle on top while the white chocolate is still melted. Let chocolate harden in the refrigerator for 2 hours. Then break the candy into pieces.

Carol Ryan
Rindge

Smoked Sausage Skillet

Serves 4-6. Total time to make is 10 minutes.

- 1 package smoked sausage, sliced diagonally
 2 cloves garlic, crushed (or already prepared)
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1 large red, sweet pepper, sliced thin
 1 package frozen broccoli, thawed, or use fresh broccoli which has been cooked
 1/2 cup chicken broth (or water)
 1 small yellow onion, sliced thin
 1/2 cup tomato sauce
 2 cups instant rice
 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese

Heat olive oil and garlic in skillet. Stir in cooked sausage slices and cook until browned. Add peppers and onions, broccoli, broth, and tomato sauce and simmer for 10 minutes until vegetables are tender and the liquid is absorbed. In the meantime, prepare rice according to package instructions. Stir rice into the skillet. Sprinkle with cheese and serve.

Shirley Clark
Swanzy

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