

SPECIAL

How to set up a home workshop



Harrowsmith

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SPRING
2023

let the
good things grow

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tomatoes
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PLUS

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FIND OUT HOW TO
MAKE DOUGHNUTS
FROM LEFTOVER
MASHED POTATOES.



On the Cover: There's nothing sweeter tasting than the food you grew yourself.

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Robert Barnard started his summer vacation in Whitehorse, technically. From there, he drove to the river drop in at Duncan's Post, Yukon and loaded his gear on a raft. 12 days and 255-kilometres later, the adventure ended in Dry Bay, Alaska where a plane flew him and his fellow travellers back to Whitehorse. Here's what happened along the way.



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Great gifts

Dear *Harrowsmith* team,
I really appreciated your sustainable gift selections and the ideas in your winter magazine. Because of you, my closest friends received the gifts of CSA (community supported agriculture) food boxes and they can't wait to receive theirs!

— *Toni L*

Editor's note: We're glad you loved them — and that your friends did too! Gift giving happens all year round so find our ideas at www.harrowsmithmag.com/good-gifts.

Fresh Air

Hi Jennifer,
I am going through the 2023 Almanac, back to front. (Dunno why, but I always go through magazines that way.) I liked the Clean Air article, and wanted to share something that really gets to me: the number of cars and trucks in our rural area that sit for 10, 20, 30 minutes with their engines running. I see a person go grocery shopping, while their partner sits in the parking lot, engine running. Parents coming to pick up kids at school, sitting in the school's lot, engine running. People checking their phone for 15-20 minutes, pulled over, engine running.

Worst of all, I see this all the time on beautiful, warm days. Cars with engines running, windows up, driver completely oblivious. I asked one woman why she was doing this and she said, "I want to listen to my music". Good grief. Another time in Toronto, I parked next to elderly man in a big Mercedes. It was a beautiful day, and he was sitting in his car, the engine running. I told him he could be fined if he idled more than 60 seconds and he thanked me. He had no idea! Out here in the hinterland where I live, I see unnecessary idling EVERYWHERE. Nobody seems to give a darn or have any knowledge about the negative effects. How do we get the word out?

— *Madeleine*

Editor's note: Thank you Madeline for making our communities a little greener one idling car at a time. I'm glad you spoke up and I hope others do too. We are only going to make real changes if we're all in this together. P.S. I read magazines from back to front too!

Petal Power

Hello *Harrowsmith*,
I really enjoyed your article, Plate Your Petals in the Spring 2022 edition!

As a retired professional Home Economist, food has always been of great interest. In recent years I have especially enjoyed trying unique things — now I can add magnolia blossoms to my list! I enjoyed trying nearly all of the recipes. They were well written and they worked! It was so much fun learning about magnolias! The trick is finding the magnolias — that I can reach! I have a lead on some other varieties and intend to have one more go before they are done.

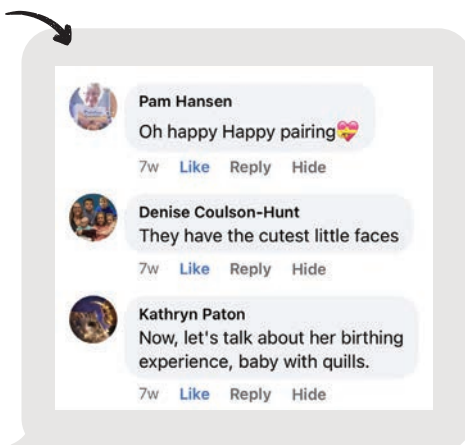
I am excited to try the dandelion pesto, having made wonderful pesto from basil, carrot tops and nasturtiums! Food is so much fun! So glad to have the hard copy magazines again. I could never part with a *Harrowsmith*.

— *Diane*

Editor's note: Thanks Diane. We are always happy to hear that readers save our issues to reread again and again.

Wild Stuff

We shared a fun fact about porcupine mating on our Facebook page and we love that you found it interesting too! Thanks for the comments.



Investing in our Health



AS WE BEGIN TO ENJOY THE EARLY signs of spring, so too do our natural surroundings. From the lush vibrant green leaves on the trees, to the sounds of birds and wildlife echoing through the forest, these experiences offer glimpses of a new growing season and remind us of the vital role healthy forests play in our daily lives.

While it has been well documented that new, thriving forests offer one of the most important, sustainable, nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, less is often written about the incredible health and wellness

benefits our natural landscapes provide.

From declining stress to improved rehabilitation, there is growing evidence that human mental and physical well-being is closely associated with the health of our forest ecosystems. Trees help to reduce smog and pollution in our neighbourhoods by filtering out many airborne pollutants that can negatively impact our health, and forests are an integral part of the water cycle, helping to maintain the quality of groundwater.

The next time you enjoy a leisurely stroll through your neighbourhood park or indulge in an extra-long hike through your favourite forest, please take a moment to appreciate your natural surroundings. At Forests Ontario, our vision for change includes investing in greener communities, which is an investment in our own health. We hope you will join us in taking collective action to grow a healthy tomorrow for our families, our communities, and our planet, for generations to come.



Elizabeth Celanowicz is the Chief Operating Officer of Forests Ontario, the province's leading charity dedicated to the creation, preservation and maintenance of forests and grasslands. Find out more at www.forestsontario.ca.



I'm Inspired!

It's my favourite time of year. I know I say that every spring. I can't wait for the bulbs to pop up in my front garden and I am pretty sure I say that every spring, too.

It's definitely the time of year to dream big and here are 4 things I am looking most forward to this season:

1. Replacing my evergreen boxwoods with evergreen yews. As my back garden gets more and more shady (because I over planted it with beautiful trees that I love, more on that on page 80), the yews are performing much better and are more resilient to pests. I can't image not having a robust evergreen structure in my wildish garden, so I want to plan for it as it starts to have new needs. If you are looking to pick the perfect evergreens for your yard, flip to page 37 to get expert advice from father and son duo, Mark and Ben Cullen.

2. Having a robust cutting garden mostly of pink and white sweet peas, cosmos and some dark crimson zinnias. It seems I'm not alone in wanting this (no wonder the seeds were so challenging to find), more and more people are growing their own bouquets to surround themselves with flowers in a more sustainable way. More on that on page 38.

3. Growing 'Black Beauty' Sunflowers (thank you @the_tattooed_gardener!) for the first time. I have admired this rare variety and hope that I get to enjoy them before the squirrels do. I'll plant them in my front garden, the only place that has full sun, and I am going to bring a few of the seeds over to my Dad's vegetable garden too to see how they do there.

4. Also in my Dad's garden, I am going to sow leek seeds for the first time ever. It's something I've wanted to do and when Mark Cullen mentioned that they are one of his favourite plants to grow, that was just the encouragement I needed. Read more about growing leeks, pumpkins, garlic, kale and more in our Complete Guide to Growing an Organic Food Garden, starting on page 16.

With the sky-high price of food right now and sometimes limited quantities available at the stores, I have been thinking a lot about food gardening, and bet you have been too. That's why we put together our Food Gardening Guide full of advice and specific varieties and expert tips for new and experienced growers.

And when you do go to all of that work to grow and shop for all of your food, we all agree that we don't want to waste it. So, to help make use of everything — and anything — edible, we asked our friends who are savvy cooks, chefs and frugal gourmets to share the ways that they use up all of those leftover peels, scraps, stems, shells and more. Our food editor, Chef Ilona Daniel, dreamed up the most delicious meals you can make with leftover mashed potatoes (page 62) — and one of them is doughnuts! (Page 70.) We also have ideas for sauces, syrups, stocks, breakfasts, lunches, dinners and more, all starting on page 72.

I am proud of the work we did to pack this issue full of so many great tips and ideas and I bet you have some great ones too so get in touch and let me know what's on your mind and your to-do list.



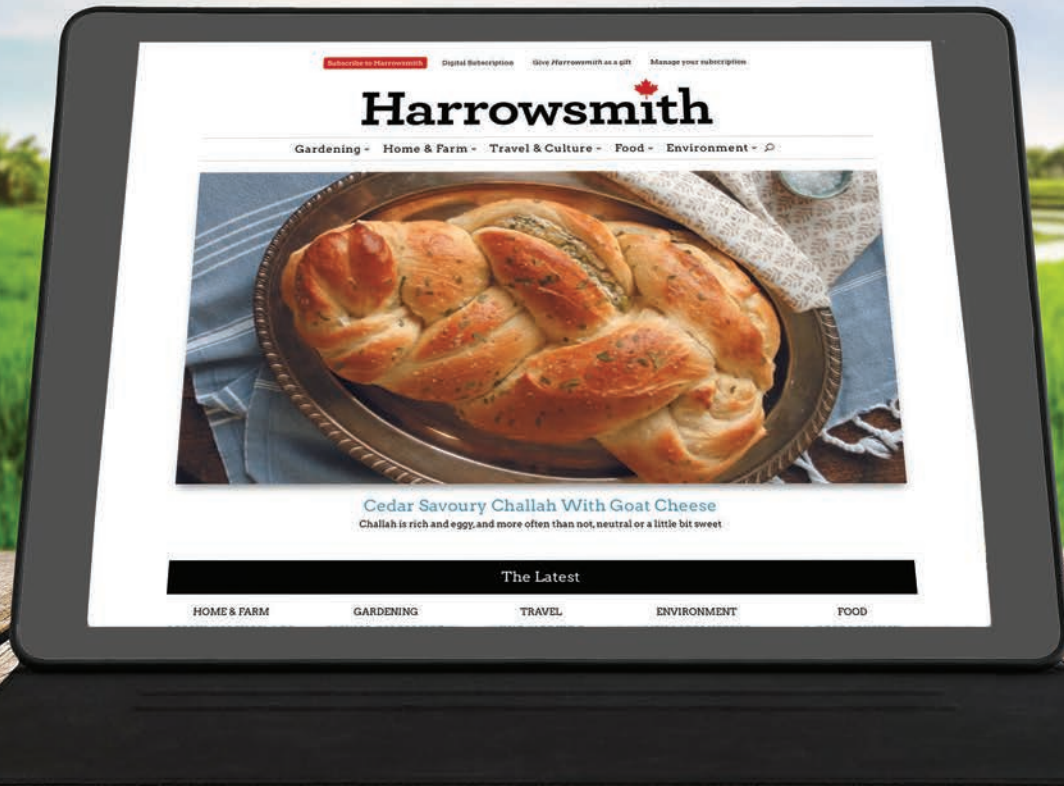
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Every day, when I open my fridge I say “what am I going to make with that?” The last thing I want to do is waste anything and while I believe that all of us *Harrowsmith* readers are very creative, we still need new ideas. That's where the amazing **Andrea Buckett** has inspired me and I wanted to share her golden nuggets with you. If you don't follow her on Instagram, stop what you are doing right now and look for @andreabuckettcooks. You will be inspired, educated and entertained by her video series called “What the hell am I going to do with this?” where she takes food items in your refrigerator that might have seen better days and she turns them into something delicious. Check out this delicious idea and enjoy!

INDIAN TAKE-AWAY LEFTOVER HACK

Place ¼ cup of vegetable or meat curry (best when it's cold straight out of the fridge) in the centre of one slice of bread. Top with a second slice and seal the edges with a fork. Add some Canola oil to a non-stick pan and fry on either side until golden brown. Serve with some chutney, red pepper jelly or whatever you have in the fridge. Voila – hand pies for lunch or snacks. — *Andrea Buckett @andreabuckettcooks*

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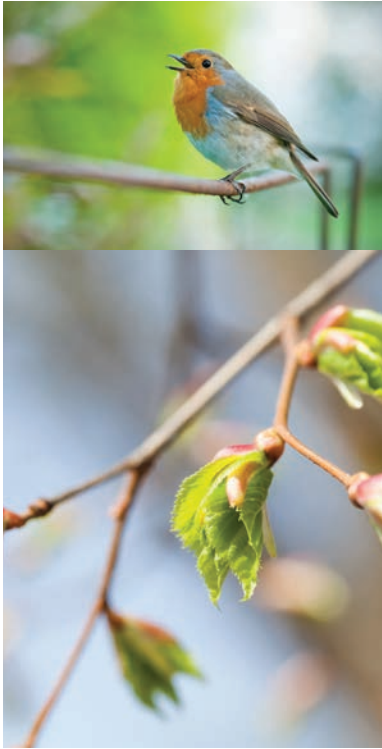
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Harrowsmith Spring

Each issue, we showcase products, ideas and people that we know you'll love too



Welcome Spring!

This year, the official Spring Equinox (first day of spring) will occur on March 20th at 5:24 p.m. EDT for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere. Celebrate this day when the sun crosses the equator line and heads north bringing with it these signs of spring:

INCREASING BIRDSONG.

BUDS GETTING BIGGER ON TREES AND SHRUBS.

EARTHWORMS POPPING THEIR HEADS OUT OF THE GROUND.

Here's what's on our reading list this spring



THE TINY BUT MIGHTY FARM: *Cultivating high yields, community, and self-sufficiency from a home farm* by Jill Ragan (2023). Jill Ragan of YouTube's Whispering Willow Farm teaches you how to turn a typical suburban backyard into a productive mini farm. With Jill as your friendly and encouraging guide, you'll learn how to grow food for your family and, if you want, sell part of your harvest for a profit. From discovering what kind of mini farmer you want to be to selecting the best high-yielding varieties and planning out and preparing your growing spaces, it's all covered in these pages. \$35.99.



THE VEGETABLE GARDEN PROBLEM SOLVER HANDBOOK: *Identify and manage diseases and other common problems on edible plants* by Susan Mulvihill (2023). All-natural solutions to your worst gardening woes are featured in an organized, problem-by-problem manner that makes this a quick and useful reference for both beginner and expert gardeners. \$37.99.



GROUNDCOVER REVOLUTION *How to use sustainable, low-maintenance, low-water groundcovers to replace your turf* by Kathy Jentz (2023). Whether you want to replace the entire lawn or just reduce the amount of land dedicated to turf, Groundcover Revolution will help you usher in a new and improved idea of what a beautiful lawn should be. Included in the book are 40 in-depth profiles of plants that are perfect choices for replacing a grass lawn. \$35.99.



THE CLIMATE CHANGE GARDEN, UPDATED EDITION 2023, is a guide to creating a resilient, climate-wise garden, that will adapt to cope with volatile weather extremes and a rapidly changing climate. Authors Kim Stoddart and Sally Morgan show how to protect the garden against climate extremes, exotic pests, invasive weeds, and more. \$35.99.

Practical No-Till Farming: A Quick and Dirty Guide to Organic Vegetable and Flower Growing by Andrew Mefferd (2022). Ideal for small-scale growers everywhere, this book promises a how-to for each no-till method, including what to do and when.



Drink Happy



Based in Burlington, Ont., Happy Heart Coffee is a new mushroom coffee company. Yes, mushroom coffee. Founded by health and wellness enthusiasts, ethically sourced and vegan, the company has created a line of coffee that has been infused with functional mushrooms like lion's mane, reishi, cordyceps, and chaga that are known for boosting the immune system. Medium roasted coffee beans (Brazilian and Guatemalan) are combined with the mushroom blend to produce a morning wake up "unlike any coffee that you have ever had," says Joel Melnichuk, who co-founded the company with his sister. The coffee, best brewed through a drip machine and looks like what you would expect a cup of coffee to look like, "not only tastes delicious, it will help to improve your mood and give you the mental focus and clarity you need to get tackle any challenge you face in your day," he adds. \$25 for a 12 oz bag (ground). www.happyheartcoffees.com



Feel Good Fashion

We love these vegan leather purses and the Canadian who created them.

"My entire career working in fashion led me to Espe," says Canadian entrepreneur, owner, and designer of Espe, Elizabeth Hardy who spent 25 years as the CEO of an international fashion brand. "Espe was born out of my lifelong love affair with fashion and my love of animals." It is a cruelty-free company that uses premium Peta-approved vegan leather to create unique and timeless designs and Hardy takes pride in maintaining ethical and fair practices every step of the way. Charmain crossbody purse in mustard. \$95. www.espe.ca.

Mix it Up!

The Beast Health Blender is a personal blender with a minimalist design and it's perfect for using up all of your produce to make sauces, purees or single servings of smoothies or frozen drinks.

And, you can even grind coffee beans with it too. We love that it comes with one jar and a matching drinking lid that has a loop for easy carrying. There's also a storage lid so you can safely refrigerate your smoothies if you're not ready to drink them. \$265. www.beasthealth.ca



In the Box

Adding raised beds in gardens, and on patios and balconies is a trend that's here to stay and these boxes from Canadian company, Cedar Planters have us dreaming up all kinds of planting combinations. As much as we appreciate the design and quality of the planters, we're just as enthused about the vision of the company's young founders, Jason & Haley, who remind us that "surrounding ourselves with plants helps us to feel calm and happy;" and how eating produce from our own garden is "sustainable and amazing for our health." Prices vary by size. \$369 and up. www.cedarplanters.ca.



Wildlife photography



Nature awakens in spring and there's plenty of opportunity to get photos of flowers, mosses, buds on trees, insects and, of course, baby animals. Here are some tips for getting frame-worthy shots.

- It goes without saying that you should get to know your equipment and how to use it effectively.
- Be mindful of the light and the time of day when taking photos. Early morning and late afternoon are typically the best times for nature photography, as the light is softer and more diffuse.
- Pay attention to the background and foreground of your photos. Make sure that there is a good balance between the subject and the surrounding environment.
- Try to capture movement or action in your photos, such as a bird in flight or a waterfall cascading down.
- Experiment with different angles and perspectives to add interest to your photos.
- Take advantage of natural frames, such as tree branches or rocks, to focus the viewer's attention on the subject.
- Look for patterns, textures, and colours in the natural world to add visual interest to your photos.
- Give them space, be patient, and blend in. Waiting for the right moment.
- And most of all, remember that you are a visitor in nature's home. Do not disturb fox dens, bird nests, rabbit burrows or any of nature's creations.

Have great nature shots to share? Tag us in your photos @harrowsmithmag.

YOUR POETRY

False Dawn on Bow Lake

BY CAROLYN COOPER

The sun was not up when I arose.
It lay sleeping, the clouds were close.
The sky was shot with pink and grey,
With a hint of promise of a new day.

Spring was coming to Bow Lake,
With a hint of what the day would make.
But now it was a false dawn.
All was silent and still asleep.

A quiet world, but yet
Nature was poised for a great leap
Of bird song, and frog croaking.
Insects humming hungrily and dragonflies gliding.

The wind was calm, the lake mirrored the heavens.
A Special moment of solitude, reflection and wonder.
The loon family emerged, skating effortlessly across the lake,
Fishing so quietly, water the only testimony to their wake.

My coffee in hand with steam and aroma
Awakened my contact with nature.
The sun tentatively sent its first beams of light.
A gentle breeze ushered the clouds.

My moments of reflection leaving me,
False dawn dissolving into a new day,
Full of promise and wonder,
A perfect day to discover.

DO YOU HAVE A SHORT POEM ABOUT NATURE OR
YOUR ENVIRONMENT TO SHARE WITH US?

SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO EDITOR@
HARROWSMITHMAG.COM AND YOUR WORK COULD
BE FEATURED IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE.

Spring Almanac: The Weather Outlook

Harrowsmith's *meteorology expert, Mark Sirois, shares the weather highlights each region in Canada can expect this spring.*

Atlantic Provinces

Slightly warmer than normal temperatures can be expected this spring despite a cool start. Precipitation should be slightly above normal early and then get drier as the season moves along. Many foggy days early on over coastal areas as chilly air battles with warmer sea surface temperatures.

Quebec

Winter conditions will likely stick around into late March. By April we should see a progressive rebound in temperatures. April should be milder than normal followed by seasonable temperatures in May. Precipitation should be close to average, or slightly below for the period.

Ontario

It will start off colder than normal aided by persistent ice cover on the Great Lakes. Temperatures should start to rebound nicely by mid-April. May should be pleasant with slightly warmer than normal temperatures. Frequent storms will bring precipitation levels to above normal levels, especially early in the season.

The Prairies

The season should be rather changeable with bouts of cold exchanging places with milder periods. The changeable nature should make the season rather stormy with more precipitation than normal, especially south. Temperatures should be close to the average for the period.

British Columbia

From north to south, spring should have below seasonable temperatures and precipitation. Early spring should be mild but a transition to cooler temperatures should happen in mid- April.

Yukon & Western Northwest Territories

Colder than normal conditions will continue into spring and the sun will have difficulty making its presence known as stormy conditions are expected to follow. Conditions may be closer to normal the further south and west you go.

Eastern Northwest Territories & Nunavut

A cold and snowy start to spring will slowly transition to more seasonable temperatures. The shifting jet stream should deliver a train of low-pressure systems keeping the precipitation levels much above normal.

Sheridan Nurseries has been growing with Ontario gardeners for 110 years!

Established in 1913 to cultivate the shrubs and perennials required to bring the vision of the ornamental garden to Canada, Sheridan was a pioneer of horticulture in Canada.

With seven garden centres and over 900 acres of farmland, Sheridan Nurseries continues to innovate and inspire with products and services to create dream landscapes and backyard havens. From seed-starting supplies to beautiful blooms of annual colour, show-stopping perennials, flowering shrubs, statement trees, and stunning patio furniture and backyard accessories, Sheridan Nurseries has everything you need to love your time in your garden.

3 things Sheridan loves




1. Annual colour: Annuals are perfect for brightening your gardens, window boxes and containers with a rainbow of colour from early spring through fall. Cold tolerant pansies, ranunculus and primula bring cheery pops of colour to planters as the final days of winter melt away. Flowering tropicals like hibiscus, mandevilla and bougainvillea add an exotic flair to your summer landscape, and classic mums, kale and ornamental peppers keep gardens vibrant up to the first signs of winter.

2. Native Plants for

pollinators: Provide a healthy place for pollinators to thrive in the spring and summer and offer a safe place for winter hibernation. Try adding Nannyberry, Blanket Flower and Purple Coneflower to attract a variety of pollinators to your garden



3. Boxwood: Boxwood adds structure, form and significant visual impact to landscape design with year-round, deep green colour. They are one of the most popular choices for landscaping due to their versatility and easy management.



What Happens During The Spring Equinox?

The spring equinox, also known as the vernal equinox, is the moment when the sun is directly above the Earth's equator, resulting in roughly equal amounts of daylight and darkness for most parts of the Earth.

During the spring equinox, the tilt of the Earth's axis is not inclined towards or away from the sun, so the length of day and night is nearly equal everywhere on the Earth. This is why it's also called the "equal night" or "equal day" event.

The spring equinox marks the beginning of

astronomical spring in the Northern Hemisphere and the beginning of astronomical fall in the Southern Hemisphere. It also marks the time when the sun is rising and setting due east and west respectively, a phenomenon that occurs twice a year on equinoxes (spring and autumn).

In many cultures, the spring equinox is a time of renewal and new beginnings and is often associated with various festivals and celebrations. The spring equinox is also important for agriculture, as it marks the start of the growing season.

Harrowsmith Spring

Spring Almanac: Astronomy

Harrowsmith's astronomy expert, Robert Dick, outlines what you'll see in the night sky this spring.

March

Venus appears very close to Jupiter at the beginning of the month. However, their actual distances from us are 205 million km and 664 million km, respectively. Even with Jupiter's great distance, this giant planet still appears almost three times the apparent diameter of Venus. You can compare their apparent diameters in your binoculars or a small telescope if they are held very steady. During the new moon period around March 21, you can look for the faint zodiacal light. This faint wedge of light will angle up to the left from our western horizon. It may be tricky to see even under a dark sky, as the bright Venus may overwhelm its light. However, modern digital cameras that can take 20 second time exposures may be able to record it in spite of the planet.

It's a Full Moon on March 7

The name Sugar Moon is learned from the teachings of the 13 Grandmother Moons and the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, the naming of the moons also has a cultural teaching that explains the cycle of life and nature within the Indigenous cultures of Turtle Island.

It's also known as the Full Worm Moon, because it's the time of year that the soil is warming up and the earthworms are coming to the surface to expose themselves — a sure sign of spring.

This Full Sugar Moon, at its peak at 7:40 a.m. EST, is certainly something to celebrate because it marks the time of year that the maple sap begins to run for the maple sugar harvest. This significant event is celebrated as the Anishinaabe new year and a time we are encouraged to balance our lives as we would our blood sugar levels. Canada's Indigenous People taught settlers how to tap the trees in spring and now, our country produces about 70-75% of the world's demand for maple syrup — 90% of that comes from Quebec.

April

The month begins with Venus low in the west, Mars high in the west and the waxing gibbous moon high in the south. The moon is always a treat to explore with binoculars or a small telescope. On April 11, Mercury is at its highest above the western horizon, but you may have to look carefully to see it against the bright twilight sky. The longer you wait for the sky to darken, the lower it sinks. Binoculars will help if you scan within a couple of fields of view above the horizon. The sky is pretty much clear of the moonlight within a week centred on April 20. So, in the evenings, you can watch Orion and the winter stars sink lower toward the western horizon each night, and the summer constellations rise higher in the east.

April 6 is the Full Pink Moon

This month's full Pink Moon will not likely appear pink when you look at it even when at its peak at 12:34 a.m. EDT. The name refers to the pink phlox flowers that are blooming at the same time the moon is at its peak. Gardeners will know this beautiful, low (10-cm tall) creeping perennial flower, Phlox subulata (commonly called creeping phlox or moss phlox) as a true garden gem with tiny leaves and masses of brightly coloured flowers.

It's interesting to note that the fourth full moon of the year is known as the Sucker Moon. According to the teachings of the 13 Grandmother Moons and the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition Sucker Moon comes from when sucker goes to the Spirit World in order to receive cleansing techniques for this world. When it returns to this realm, it purifies a path for the Spirits and cleanses all our water beings. During this time, we can learn to become healed healers.

May

Mars and Venus are the planets that dominate May evenings, and the moon "washes out" many of the faint stars for the first week or so. By the second week, you will have about 3 hours of dark sky before the waning (getting thinner) gibbous moon rises in the east. In the late evenings, the Milky Way rises in the east. However, you will need a rural sky to be able to see it. Light pollution from the bright LED street lights and house lights will prevent most urbanites from seeing it. But even a neighbour's unshielded rural lighting can prevent you from seeing it. On May 23, watch for the near-half moon joining Mars and Venus high in the western sky after sunset.

See the Full Flower Moon on May 5

The fifth full moon of the year is known as the Flower Moon according to the teachings of the 13 Grandmother Moons and the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition where the naming of the moons also has a cultural teaching that explains the cycle of life and nature within the Indigenous cultures of Turtle Island. The moon will reach its peak 1:34 p.m. EDT. During the Flower Moon, all plants display their spirit sides for all the world to see. This life-giving energy is one the most powerful healing medicines on Mother Earth. During this moon, we are encouraged to explore our spiritual essences.

Harrowsmith's Complete Guide to

growing

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands, with soil on the fingers, gently holding a small green seedling with several leaves and a clump of dark soil. The background is blurred, showing more of the hands and the seedling.

Whether you're born to garden or still developing your green thumb, follow these fresh ideas for cultivating your own vegetables, herbs, flowers and fruit

BY MARK AND BEN CULLEN WITH FILES FROM THE HARROWSMITH EDITORS



an organic food garden

GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD allows you to have control over the quality and safety of the food you eat. When you grow your own fruits and vegetables, you know exactly what has been used to fertilize and treat the plants so you can avoid harmful pesticides and chemicals. Growing your own food will save you money and best of all, it is a great way to get outside, get some exercise and enjoy the fresh air. It can also be a fun and rewarding hobby that does good for the world by helping reduce your carbon footprint by limiting the need for the transportation of produce.



Why Garden Organically?

While many people garden organically for health, our favourite arguments for organic gardening revolve around the range of environmental benefits. Organic gardening benefits the environment by eliminating synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides which can harm biodiversity and soil health. Non-selective forms of pesticides and herbicides often kill more than just their intended target, which contributes to the decline of beneficial insects and plants. From a climate change perspective, organic gardening produces more food per energy of input mostly by eliminating energy-intensive synthetic fertilizers. Using generous compost and cover cropping will build a healthier soil that gives plants access to a greater diversity of micronutrients, giving you better tasting and more nutritious produce than the typical “Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium” fertilizer diet of conventional gardening.



How to Get Started

Focus on soil quality. Apply compost generously as a source of nutrients and consider cover cropping between vegetable crops to build soil nutrients and structure. One effective method of weed control in new organic gardens is by putting down a layer of uncoated cardboard to act as a barrier between the soil and a generous layer of mulch above. Over time, the cardboard and mulch will break down and contribute additional carbon to the soil.

Select tried and true varieties of plants. These plants will give you an advantage against insects and disease, which is one reason why classic heirlooms are so popular among organic gardeners – they are generally evolved to thrive without excess inputs.

Work within your planting zone.

Considering local climate and weather patterns while choosing what to plant and when.

Be attentive. Like any problem in life, garden problems are best dealt with early so walk your garden daily and keep on top of small weeds and insect larvae before you find them on top of you.

Be creative. If your space and lifestyle permit it, integrate livestock into the garden ecosystem, such as using chickens for pest control and manure for fertilizer.

Incorporate conservation and preservation of natural resources. Save water and energy by listening to your garden. Allowing plants to stress a bit between watering will train them to put down deeper roots and better withstand droughts.

Breathe! Just as it benefits us to consciously stop and breathe deeply from time to time, it is important to consider how air flows through the garden. Many common diseases, especially those fungal borne are the product of insufficient airflow. Using built structures for your tomatoes, zucchinis, and squash is a great way to get them off the ground with a gentle breeze blowing through their leaves.





CREATE A DRAWING OF THE PLOT YOU PLAN ON PLANTING. A SIMPLE PENCIL DRAWING WORKS BUT YOU CAN USE A COMPUTER AND EVEN OBTAIN ACCESS TO DIGITAL DRAWING TOOLS IF YOU WISH. THE IDEA IS TO HAVE A PLAN OF WHAT YOU WILL SOW AND PLANT WHERE. KEEP IN MIND SUN EXPOSURE, ABOVE ALL. KEEP THE TALLEST PLANTS AT THE BACK SO THEY DON'T SHADOW THE SHORTER PLANTS.

The Importance of Planning

If you want to go on a vacation, a trip, what is the first thing you do? Determine where you want to go, right? Squeezing the most out of your food garden is much like that and much of the success you will enjoy from your new or established garden will come from your execution of the plan. Knowing what you want to grow is a great place to start and that should include your favourite food plants that you can grow. There are some practical limits to this. We love sweet corn but growing it in our urban gardens makes no sense when it is a space hog and there's so much of it available locally in late summer.

Other vegetables that are space hogs, but can be fun to grow, are pumpkins and winter squash. Plants that make efficient use of space: that produce lots of food for the area that they take up in your garden, include tomatoes (stake them high), peppers, all bean plants, peas, leaf lettuce, mesclun mix, all root crops, and herbs. The productive use of space is an important consideration when drafting a list of the food plants that you wish to grow this season.

Order your seeds early, as we have learned in recent years, some are in short supply and obtaining your favourites is a matter of first-come, first-served. Browse the retail seed racks in February and March, even though you may not sow some seeds until May or early June. Best to have them on hand when you need them.



IF YOU PLANT IN ROWS, RUN THEM NORTH/SOUTH TO MAXIMIZE SUN EXPOSURE AND DO NOT FORGET TO USE A FENCE OR WALL FOR SUPPORT OF CLIMBING VINES, LIKE RUNNER BEANS AND NASTURTIUMS AND FOR THE RADIANT HEAT THAT BOUNCES OFF THE VERTICAL STRUCTURE. THIS WILL PROVIDE AN EARLIER START AND HARVEST FOR MANY HEAT-SEEKING FOOD PLANTS.



BE SURE TO PLAN ON PROPER SOIL PREPARATION
(TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS).

Succession planting

Succession planting is a way to spread out your harvest period by staggering your planting in the spring, which will prevent all your produce from maturing at once. This allows you to enjoy your harvest more and inevitably results in less waste. Bush beans, peas, and salad mixes such as spinach, leaf lettuce, mesclun mix and arugula are great for succession planting starting in early May, with repeat plantings every two weeks until early July. You can start up again for a fall crop by planting in mid-August and every two weeks into early October. Carrots, cucumbers, and melons follow a similar pattern but can be spread out by 21 days because of their longer harvest window, while summer squash and Swiss chard can be spread out by 30 days.

If you want to save yourself the work of succession planting, focus on crops that store well like root vegetables (potatoes, carrots, and onions), winter squash, apples, and dried beans. They can be stored in a cool, dark, and dry place for several months. Other crops like garlic, cabbages and other leafy greens can be stored for a shorter period.

We recommend planting indeterminate varieties which will continue to fruit from the same plant. Some popular varieties of indeterminate food crops that are easy to grow and produce a bountiful harvest include:

TOMATOES: Heirloom varieties such as 'Brandywine' and 'Cherokee Purple.'

PEPPERS: 'California Wonder' and 'Jalapeno.'

CUCUERS: 'Lemon' and 'Burpless.'

EGGPLANTS: 'Black Beauty' and 'Rosa Bianca.'

CANTALOUPE: 'Hales Best Jumbo' and 'Athena.'

WATERMELON: 'Sugar Baby' and 'Crimson Sweet.'

BEANS: 'Kentucky Wonder' and 'Blue Lake.'



REMEMBER THAT YOUR PLAN IS MERELY A GUIDE.
BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED AND ENJOY THE
SURPRISES THAT NATURE PROVIDES ON YOUR JOURNEY.



It's All About the Soil

We say that 90% of the success you achieve in your garden is the result of good soil preparation. It could be less than that, and it could be more. The fact is, you would not build a house in Canada without a proper foundation, and so too, with your garden. Compost and natural nutrients are the base of a productive garden.

Healthy soil is the basis for every garden. Nutrients, water and oxygen are all building blocks of plant life that are provided by the soil through the roots. Here are some of the most important things to know before you plant your food garden.

Learn what healthy soil is. All soil will represent some mix of sand, silt and clay, but the healthy soils are teeming with microbial life and abundant organic matter (carbon). Low till, or no-till, gardening is becoming more popular every year as Canadians learn that disturbing the soil by turning it over (manually or with a rototiller) disturbs essential microbial activity in the soil and actually promotes greater weed growth.

Evaluate the quality of your soil. It's helpful for every gardener to do a soil test at least once every few years to get a better understanding of what their gardens might be lacking. The structural elements of soil — that is, the composition of sand, silt or clay — can be determined by feel or through at-home experiments. Begin by digging a hole about 30 cm or a foot deep and examine the quality of the existing soil.

- If it is clay based and heavy, add lots of sharp (play) sand to open it up and allow water to move through it.
- If it is sandy, add lots of moulded leaves and finished compost to retain moisture and add nutrients.
- If it is typical topsoil or loam, add 1.5 inches (3-4 cm) of finished compost or composted cattle/sheep/horse manure. No need to dig it in, as earthworms will move it deep into the existing soil. This will boost the natural goodness of your soil and help support everything that you grow.

Invest your time in composting (and it will pay dividends)

Compost is de-“composed” organic matter, which is to say, anything containing carbon that has had the opportunity to rot down under the right conditions. Ideal compost will contain diverse source material — kitchen scraps, animal manures, fallen leaves — that has spent at least a season rotting down and is teeming with active microbial life. These bacteria, actinomycetes, fungi, protozoa and nematodes mobilize to turn kitchen scraps into compost and to make those nutrients available to plants. Compost is the least expensive and best fertilizer for your garden.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN COMPOST

Getting a good mix of “green matter” and “brown matter” will allow the magic of compost to unfold without simply rotting. Green matter is the high-nitrogen kitchen scraps; brown matter is the high-carbon wood chips, cardboard or newspaper. One-to-one is fine; one part nitrogen/green material to five parts carbon works even better. Once you have your “recipe,” add it to a well-ventilated container — ideally one that sits on the ground where earthworms can find it.

DURING THE GROWING SEASON, FERTILIZE WITH COMPOST TEA.

Avoid the use of chemical fertilizers throughout the growing season and feed your plants with compost tea. To make this homemade organic fertilizer, find an old pillowcase or cloth sack and fill it to one-third with finished compost. Next, soak it in a large bucket of water for 48 hours. Use the solution to water your garden and empty the pillowcase of compost onto your garden.





Planting Time

Some gardeners like to start all of their new plants by seed in the later winter and then harden them off and transplant them outside when the soil warms up in the spring. If you are starting seeds indoors, find our guide online at www.harrowsmithmag.com/start-seeds-indoors. Others will find all of their plants at the market or nursery and get growing the same day. Whichever way you start, it's important to start off with the following key tips.

Warm Season and Cool Season Crops

Warm season and cool season crops are terms used to describe the optimal temperature range for growing different types of plants. Many Canadians wait until the long May weekend to start planting; however, this is not necessary as many food plants thrive in the cooler temperatures of April and early May. We sow our carrots the second week of May in our zone 5 gardens. Onions, lettuce, beets, and peas will germinate and grow when sown late in April, in most Canadian gardens.

Some plants are tolerant of light frost and will grow well when planted out in late April or early May. These include all the brassica family (cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, kale etc.) and Swiss chard.

Other crops should be left until the soil warms to about 18°C and the risk of frost has passed which may be early June in many parts of Canada. These “warm season” crops include tomatoes, peppers, corn, and squash (winter and summer). These crops are typically harvested in the summer or early fall.



HOW MANY PLANTS TO GROW? FIND OUR GUIDE TO POPULAR FOOD CROPS AND THEIR YIELD AT WWW.HARROWSMITHMAG.COM/FOOD-CROP-YIELD.

How to Plant Directly into the Ground in 7 Easy steps



1. Ensure the planting area is free of weeds.
2. Plant in a pattern, ideally in a row. Knowing where you plant your seeds will help you identify what a seedling is and what a vegetable is. It helps to set a guide string tied to short stakes in the ground and add plant markers, so you remember where everything is planted — and what it is.
3. Plan your space. If you bought your seeds in a package, it would tell you how far apart to space the plants and the rows, though generally, you want to leave 12 inches between rows to allow for careful weeding and a little pathway to get through your garden.
4. Choosing the right depth is very important for germination success. Seeds planted too deep could fail to germinate or be very weak when they do. The general rule is to plant seeds at a depth of about two to three times the size of their width, but it's best to check the seed package before you get started. For tiny seeds like lettuce, put them on top of the soil and then press them down gently, tucking them in (the soil should be firm but not compacted).
5. Water carefully. If there's too much water over the top of the seeds, they may wash away or pop up in another part of the garden where they may be mistaken for a weed. A "sprinkle" or "shower" setting on the hose end will give a good flow.
6. Keep the soil moist.
7. Plan a small area for extras. It happens to all gardeners — you plant a row, and some seeds fail to push through. This is why it is a good idea to plan a small area with extra plantings that can later be transplanted in the rows with missing plants.



Favourite Food Plants to Grow

If you know, you know so we asked Mark and Ben to share what their favourite crops to grow are and why.

KALE

I enjoy growing kale mostly as it produces for such a long time. I begin harvesting the largest leaves at the bottom of the plant in late July and pick my last leaves in late November, even early December. That is a four-month harvest! I have lots of friends who really enjoy kale (smoothy anyone?), but I wish I liked eating it more. — MC



LEEKS

Another productive crop that is insect and disease-resistant, leeks are easy to grow and fun to watch mature throughout the season. While they need a long season to grow into something useful, I sow leaf lettuce, arugula and mesclun mix near or around my leeks early in the season. This is an efficient use of space. Leeks and kale are the last crops that I harvest from my garden each year — a great way to spread out the fun of growing food. — MC

TRY THESE LEEK VARIETIES

'Giant Musselburgh' Also known as American Flag or Scotch Flag, it's a delicious heirloom leek with thick, juicy stalks an amazing 15 inches (38 cm) long.

'Bleu de Solaise' Extremely hardy, this is a French heirloom whose blue leaves turn a beautiful shade of violet in cold weather.

'Lancelot' Perfectly upright, with slender white stalks 8 to 13 inches (20 to 33 cm) long. Winter hardy.



PUMPKINS

The large, sprawling leaves of a pumpkin plant can take up a lot of space but also serve well to shade out weed pressure throughout the garden. Plant a diversity of pumpkins and squash to serve culinary purposes, such as the 'Early Sweet Sugar Pie' for baking or delicata squash for easy veggie side dishes. For fall displays, choose 'Cinderella' pumpkins.

Direct sow your seeds in rows 6-10 feet (1.5-3 metres) apart, in 6-12 inches (15-30 cm) spacing in late spring when the soil is starting to warm up. Spraying the tops and underside of the leaves with a 50/50 mix of milk and water is a home remedy for the common powdery mildew, and make sure to rotate your pumpkins and squash as they mature to avoid "flat spots" where disease can occur. — BC

GARLIC

Simple to grow, stores well, and is so much better than anything you will find at the grocery store. People who like garlic tend to love garlic, and I find that it is always well-received as a gift. Don't worry about varieties too much. Simply go to a farmers' market to find the biggest, healthiest bulbs late in the summer and select the best-looking cloves for planting that fall. Plant pointy-side up, 2 inches (5 cm) deep, 6-8 inches (15-20 cm) apart, and top dress generously with compost as garlic is a "heavy feeder." Come mid-late June, prune your garlic scapes down to the top leaf. The "scape" is the thing that looks like a pigtail, which can be fried or mashed into a zesty, garlicky pesto. When the lower leaves start turning brown in late summer, pull your garlic and leave them to cure somewhere warm and dry for 10-14 days. — BC





TOMATOES

I am a happy fan of the #1 food crop in Canadian gardens, tomatoes. Tomatoes are easy to start indoors from seed, grow quickly, and once they begin producing fruit, don't stop for up to 12 weeks. Look for varieties best suited to home growing, not mass production, for the best flavour and keeping qualities. — MC



TRY THESE TOMATO VARIETIES

'Sweet Million' A standard cherry tomato is found at every nursery, it produces in abundance and starts early.

'Montreal Tasty' A Canadian red beefsteak heirloom; produces clusters of absolutely enormous fruit about four inches in diameter.

'Stupice' A largely forgotten small tomato with amazing flavour.

'Green Zebra' This exotic heirloom doesn't look like its red cousins but tastes better; indeterminate.

'Brandywine' A pink heirloom is known for its superior flavour.

10 Tomato Growing Tips

1. When transplanting tomatoes, dig a hole big enough to bury the transplants up to their necks. Remove the bottom foliage, leaving as little as the top four branches.
2. Space bush varieties as close as a foot and a half apart, but do not crowd heirloom and indeterminate varieties.
3. Pinch off suckers (secondary branches growing from the crotch of a main branch) every four days or so. Not necessary with determinate plants.
4. Once the first fruits set, feed the plants with manure tea or diluted fish fertilizer. Repeat every two weeks for best results.
5. Oddly shaped tomatoes are caused by a cold snap during pollination.
6. "Blossom-end rot" (ugly wound-like patches on the bottom of the fruit) are caused by a period of drought followed by copious rain. To prevent it, mulch heavily and ensure each plant gets an inch of water (rain included) each week.
7. Discoloured and wilted leaves may be caused by a fungus called verticillium wilt. Rotate your crops and, if needed, buy resistant cultivars.
8. Don't pick tomatoes until they are fully ripe.
9. For best flavour, stop watering a week before you want to harvest your last tomatoes. They'll ripen more quickly.
10. When the first frost threatens, pick all the green tomatoes. The whitish ones can be ripened indoors, wrapped in newspaper or stacked in a cardboard box with a lid. Transform the rest into green-tomato chili sauce.



Best Fruit Trees for Small Gardens

It's possible to grow fruit trees in a small garden. Depending on the size of your garden, you can choose from a variety of fruit tree options that are suitable for smaller spaces. Some popular options include dwarf fruit trees, which are smaller in size. Another option is to choose fruit trees that are well suited for espalier, a technique where the tree is trained to grow flat against a wall or fence, taking up less space. If you garden on a small lot and want to enjoy fresh fruit from your own property, look for the following fruit trees:

Dwarf apples There are countless varieties to choose from. Be sure that your favourites will perform in your growing zone by checking with your supplier. We love Granny Smith apples, but they require a longer growing season than our zone 5 gardens afford.

Peaches and nectarines While not dwarf, per se, these trees lend themselves to severe pruning come early spring. Peaches are winter hardy to zone 6 (Toronto) and Nectarines to zone 4 (Montreal/Ottawa).

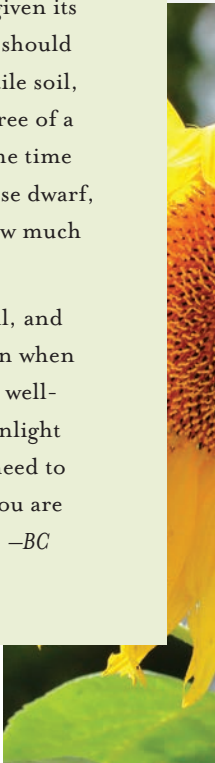
Most other fruiting trees will mature to about 21 feet (7 metres). If you have the space for one tree that will produce fruit and some shade in years to come, consider a pear, plum or cherry tree.



APPLES

Apples always seem like a miracle, and a productive apple tree can become a property-bound family heirloom. 'Liberty' is a good choice for organic growers given its strong disease resistance. A Liberty apple tree should be planted in full sun, in average to moist, fertile soil, within 165 feet (50 metres) of another apple tree of a different variety which blooms around the same time mid-season to ensure pollination. You can choose dwarf, semi-dwarf, or full-size trees depending on how much room you have to grow.

It is important to think about the climate, soil, and the amount of sunlight available in your garden when choosing fruit trees to grow. Fruit trees need well-draining soil and at least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day in order to thrive. In addition, they need to be pollinated to produce fruit so make sure you are attracting lots of pollinators to your garden. —BC



How to Plan for Pollinators



It is a popular stat that bears repeating: one-third of our food supply depends on pollinators. That is because approximately 75%-95% of flowering plants need help moving pollen from the male to female parts of the plant to produce genetically healthy seed, nuts, and fruit. Without viable seed, many of those species cannot be re-propagated.

“Pollinators” represent a diverse cache of wildlife we find in the garden such as bees, butterflies, birds, bats, beetles, moths, flies, and wasps which are all attracted to floral displays throughout the season. Pollinators stop off to feed or rest, and in a moment, they can pick up enough pollen for transfer on their next stop.

Sadly, many of these populations are driven to decline by pollution, agricultural chemicals, and loss of habitat, but thankfully all three of these forces can be mitigated through thoughtful organic gardening. You can help promote the pollinator population by planting species of plants that are specific hosts to them, such as many native flowers that serve as primary host plants, and by creating habitat in the form of trees, shrubs, standing water, and rotting natural materials.

7 WAYS TO ENCOURAGE POLLINATORS TO THE FOOD GARDEN

1. Plant a variety of flowers. Pollinators are attracted to a wide range of flowers, so planting a variety of flowers in your garden will provide a diverse food source for them. Some good examples include wildflowers, clover, lavender, and sunflowers.
2. Avoid using pesticides. Pesticides can be harmful to pollinators, so it's best to avoid using them in your garden. Instead, use natural pest control methods such as companion planting, hand-picking pests, or using beneficial insects to control pests.
3. Provide nesting sites. Some pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, need specific nesting sites. You can provide nesting sites by leaving some bare ground in your garden, creating a rock pile, or installing nest boxes specifically designed for pollinators.
4. Provide water. Pollinators need water to survive, so providing a shallow dish with pebbles or rocks to perch on will help them stay hydrated.
5. Time your planting. Try to have something blooming in your garden throughout the growing season. This will ensure that pollinators have a consistent food source throughout the year.
6. Group similar plants together. Pollinators are more likely to visit a garden if they can find several plants of the same species together.
7. Avoid mowing your lawn frequently. Leave some areas of your lawn unmowed, this will encourage wildflowers to grow and also provide a habitat for pollinators.

It's important to note that different regions in Canada will have different types of pollinators and different ways to attract them. It's worth researching the type of pollinators that are native to your area and what type of plants and nesting sites they prefer.

Delight your Senses

Food gardening engages the senses. The process of planting, nurturing, and harvesting fruits, vegetables, and herbs help us to connect with nature and experience the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of fresh, locally grown produce.

PLANT A FOOD RAINBOW

Thanks to standardization in the food industry, we've been accustomed to the same old orange carrots and white cauliflower. But if you look beyond the usual supermarket fare, you can find vegetables in unusual and unexpected colours: blue potatoes, red scallions and purple snow peas. These exotics are usually descended from heirloom stock from disparate lands, almost forgotten but now making a comeback among enthusiasts. These days, gardeners can find more and more of them in seed catalogues, while they are popping up at farmers' markets more frequently, too.

Look for these colourful varieties of seeds and starter plants.

GROW HERBS

Herbs are used for cooking, as a natural remedy, for beauty and grooming, and as an addition to many traditional rituals like smudging to purify and cleanse spaces. In the kitchen, these fragrant plants can be used fresh or dried to add flavour to a wide range of dishes, from savoury to sweet. They can also be used to make herb-infused oils, vinegars, and butters.

Many of the herbs we use often are perennials in most parts of Canada, meaning if planted in the garden, they will return year after year. Common perennial herbs include chives, thyme, mint, lavender, oregano and sage.

Annual herbs produce in abundance during the growing season and then die with the frost. Some examples of annual herbs are basil, cilantro, and parsley (though it can withstand a few frosty days).

Photo caption: The beauty, fragrance and usefulness of herbs earn them a spot in every garden. They can be grown in small garden spaces or arranged beautifully in pots.



VEGETABLE	VARIETY	COLOUR COMMENTARY
Carrot	'Viola Red'	Brilliant, almost vermilion thanks to extra beta-carotene
Potato	'All Blue'	Grows big and abundantly with blue skins and flesh
Swiss Chard	'Bright Lights'	Stems are multi-coloured, with a milder flavour and looks great as an ornament plant
Brussels Sprouts	'Red Bull'	Beautiful burgundy with a delicate, nutty flavor
Kohlrabi	'Purple Vienna'	Purple skin with greenish-white flesh and lots of flavour
Cauliflower	'Veronica Romanesco'	Very large heads are formed from clusters of swirling chartreuse-green spires
Snow Peas	'Desiree'	A purple novelty variety that not as sweet as green peas but popular with culinary chefs
Lettuce	'Merlot'	With crisp, waxy leaves, it is red as the wine it's named after
Bush beans	'Royal Burgundy'	Unusually dark purple on the vine with pods that turn dark green when cooked
Beets	'Burpee's Golden'	A sweet, golden heirloom favourite
Tomato	'Banana'	A paste tomato reminiscent of the orange/yellow colour of persimmons



Cultivate Flowers to Eat

Many flowers are safe to eat and can be used as a garnish or ingredient in cooking. Some of our favourite edible blooms are also easy to grow.

- **Nasturtiums:** These brightly coloured flowers have a slightly spicy flavour and can be used in salads or as a garnish.
- **Pansies and violets:** These flowers have a sweet, mild flavour and can be used to decorate desserts or as a colourful addition to salads.
- **Calendula:** Also known as pot marigolds, calendulas have a slightly bitter taste and can add colour to salads or as a substitute for saffron.
- **Roses:** The petals of some varieties of roses can be used to make rose water or used to flavour desserts.
- **Squash blossoms:** These large, showy flowers are typically stuffed with soft cheese and fried in a batter and can also be used in omelettes or soups.
- **Chamomile:** Chamomile flowers are often used to make tea and have a mild, apple-like taste.

Not all flowers are edible; some may be toxic, so make sure you know what you are consuming.

The Art of Watering, Weeding and Caring for Your Food Garden

GET THE WATER RIGHT WITH THESE TIPS

Avoid over-watering. This is our #1 Watering tip. After seedlings are established, which generally takes up to a month from planting, reduce the watering frequency.

Do the finger test. Push your finger into the soil up to the second knuckle. If the ground is cool, it is damp and does not need water. If it does not feel cool, it is dry enough for a good soaking. Better to water infrequently but deeply than too often and with just a shower. Approached this way, plants put down deeper roots and are more drought and heat tolerant.

Listen to your garden. This is where timers and robots go wrong, always over- or underwatering, as the weather is simply too variable. Pay close attention to signs of drought stress, such as wilting leaves or browning, then water deeply at the root zone to minimize wasted runoff or evaporation. Allowing plants to stress a bit between watering will help them to put down those deeper roots.

Watering in the morning is generally better.

The water droplets on the foliage of plants, like tomatoes, will burn off in the morning sun, minimizing the chance of disease. However, we encourage watering at any time of day if you are time stressed. Note that midday watering in the sun can evaporate, losing up to 30% before it benefits your plants.

Rainwater is always best. It is softer than municipal water, contains no chemicals and is oxygen charged as it falls from the sky. Collecting rainwater has the obvious benefit of reducing flooding or drawing down aquifers. Mileage can vary by application method, but getting closer to the root zone generally results in the least amount of wasted water. In a draught, we use a lot of soaker hoses.

Watch potted plants closely. Especially as plants start to get big for their containers, they will dry out quickly. Periodically stick your finger into the potting mix to check for moisture before signs of stress. When it feels dry halfway down your finger, water thoroughly.



Mulch, Mulch, Mulch

Mulch is any protective layer over the soil's surface to prevent erosion, minimize weed pressure and retain moisture. There are plastic and polyester mulches, but we only use wood bark mulch or straw, which breaks down into the soil, adding nutrients rather than plastic pollution. Not to mention, it looks better too.

A layer of mulch 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) thick will reduce water loss by up to 70% and weeding by up to 90%. Ben prefers straw, as it forms a nice mat and breaks down annually, and Mark prefers pine or cedar bark mulch for the look and availability in his area. One layer often lasts 2 or 3 years. In rural areas, straw can be cheaper and easier to come by, while in cities, it's often the reverse.

Weed 'em Out

Weeds rob the soil of moisture and nutrients that would otherwise benefit our desirable plants, and they take up the real estate that our food plants need to mature. To prevent weeds, do not till your garden come spring. Add mulch instead. When weeds pop up, nothing works better than a sharp garden hoe for removing unwanted plants. However, perennial weeds like Canada thistle and twitch grass need to be dug out, roots and all.



*Mark Cullen is an expert gardener, author, broadcaster and tree advocate and holds the Order of Canada. His son, Ben, is a fourth-generation urban gardener and a graduate of the University of Guelph and Dalhousie University in Halifax. Follow them at markcullen.com, [@MarkCullen4](https://twitter.com/MarkCullen4) (Twitter) and [@markcullengardening](https://www.facebook.com/markcullengardening) (Facebook) and look for their latest book, *Escape to Reality*.*

How to Create Container Gardens

with Year-Round Colour & Interest



- 1 Pick Good Partners** Group plants with similar water and light needs together in the container to make it easier to care for them.

Planting tip



Select a container that is large enough for the shrub to grow comfortably and has drainage holes at the bottom and add a high-quality potting mix that is well-draining and rich in organic matter.

- 2 Mix & Match** Choose a mix of plants with different bloom times. Consider spring-blooming bulbs, summer-blooming annuals, and perennials that bloom in the fall.
- 3 Size 'Em Up** Use a variety of container sizes and shapes to add scale and interest.
- 4 Favour Foliage** Use plants with colourful foliage — like purple, silver and lime green — to provide interest even when they are not in bloom.
- 5 Create Interest with Shrubs** Incorporate shrubs to provide structure and interest throughout the year. Find our favourites on the right.

New, smaller shrubs are a perfect addition to containers. Standing alone or under planted with colourful annuals, they provide year-round interest when added to gardens and placed on patios.

6 Shrubs Perfect for Pots



Little Quick Fire® Panicle Hydrangea

Flowers about a month before other hydrangeas with white flowers transforming to pink-red as summer progresses. Height: 36 - 60 inches. Spread: 36 - 60 inches. Light: Part sun to sun.



My Monet® Weigela

Pink spring flowers and green and white variegated (and deer resistant) foliage all season long. No need for pruning. Height: 12 - 18 inches. Spread: 18 - 24 inches. Light: Part sun to sun.



Tuff Stuff Ah-Ha®

Reblooming Mountain Hydrangea

This plant devotes its energies to creating flower buds on its new growth so that you have a constant supply of blooms. Height: 24 - 36 inches. Spread: 24 - 36 inches. Light: Part sun to sun.



Anna's Magic Ball® Arborvitae

This evergreen with cheerful yellow foliage was developed in Canada and hardy all the way to Zone 3a. Height: 24 - 38 inches. Spread: 36 - 48 inches. Light: Part sun to sun.



Let's Dance® Blue Jangles®

Reblooming hydrangea

A big-leaf hydrangea with compact blooms on old and new wood. Flowers are blue in acid soil and pink in alkaline soil. Height: 12 - 24 inches. Spread: 24 - 36 inches. Light: Part sun to sun.



Bobo® Panicle Hydrangea

The flowers are held upright on strong stems and continue to grow and lengthen as they bloom — with no flopping. Height: 30 - 36 inches. Spread: 36 - 48 inches. Light: Part sun to sun.

Why Proven Winners?

Proven Winners ColorChoice Flowering Shrubs are bred, tested and selected to bring you more success with less effort. From longer bloom times and easy-care petite sizes to lush foliage and grand blossoms on sturdy stems, the most enviable gardens begin with our distinctive whitepot. provenwinners-shrubs.com



8

Things to **DO** in the garden this spring

And 1 thing not to do



DO Expect there to be lots of action in your garden, even if you can't see it. Many types of wildlife overwinter in the garden and are ready to welcome you in spring. Look for birds like chickadees, nuthatches, and cardinals who have never left the garden if they've had access to food, water, and shelter. Squirrels, chipmunks and rabbits have been foraging through your garden all winter and may be using thickets or brush piles for shelter. And, if you pull back some leaves on a warm spring day, you are likely to notice caterpillars, spiders, pill bugs, snails and other insects under the leaves. Frogs and toads may be waiting for you at a pond or other wetland area that doesn't fully freeze.



DO Consider swapping your lawn for a meadow garden.

As appreciation for lawn alternatives continues to grow, meadow gardens are seeing a sharp rise in popularity. These landscapes consist of drought-tolerant and pollinator-friendly plants that come together with a relaxed design that echoes the rhythms of nature. When you're ready to remove some — or all — of your grass, Mark and Ben Cullen advise that the easiest way to build your bed over your lawn is by adding a layer of uncoated cardboard directly on top of the existing grass. To get started, thoroughly soak the cardboard in a rain barrel before putting it down. Doing this will allow it to tear easily into various shapes to fit the desired form of your new bed. On top of the cardboard, add a thick layer of wood mulch. Leave the cardboard and mulch in place for one season to smother the grass below and add organic matter to the topsoil. Or, to save yourself a year of waiting, you can add a layer of fresh topsoil between the cardboard and the mulch, and plant directly into the fresh soil in your first year.

DO Use natural materials. Nature gives us the most beautiful designs and so much of it is free. Continue augmenting your landscape with natural mulch on pathways, uneven rocks lining a garden bed and fallen sticks and stumps to support and encourage climbing plants.



DO Plant evergreens.

Classified as perennial, along with all the plants that we rely on to return from dormancy each spring in the Canadian garden, evergreens attract a lot of attention. True evergreens: spruce, pine, fir, and the like hold their foliage year-round. Not only can they look attractive in your yard year-round, but they also provide habitat and protection for songbirds and cones and seeds that support wildlife (we won't mention squirrels). When they are located thoughtfully, they protect buildings from wind and sun where we live and work, saving energy costs for heating and cooling. Mark and Ben Cullen's favourite evergreens vary according to their use in the landscape though the following five are always good bets.

Native white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*)

For hedging, nothing comes close for great looks, fast growth, and durability. On the Canadian prairies, a hardier alternative is Brandon cedar (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Brandon'). Trimmed into a formal hedge, cedars will mature at two metres, up to several metres, depending on how aggressively you prune them. Cedars need at least six hours of sunlight to perform at their best.



Fir

Of all the "Christmas tree" shaped evergreens available for Canadian gardens, fir (*Abies*) tops our list. They grow straight, feature soft needles (easy on the touch), grow quickly, and many are native. Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) populates much of the Maritimes, while Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) is one of the giants of the B.C. forest. A bonus: all fir have a lovely, relaxing "evergreen" scent. When you buy a sachet of evergreen fragrance, it is likely filled with Balsam fir needles.



Junipers (*Juniperus*)

For the foundation planting around your home, junipers are winter-hardy and often colourful as they can feature hues of blue, grey, and deep green. Their growth habit varies widely from low-growing prostrate varieties to tall, spire-shaped giants that mature to about three or four metres. All junipers lend themselves to pruning in late May through early June to keep them looking neat, thick, and tidy. If a juniper grows in front of your favourite viewing window, do not be afraid to cut it down to size. Junipers tend to come back from severe pruning over time. However, be sure to wear long sleeves while pruning your junipers, or your forearms may get "juniper burn," a short-lived irritation that turns your skin red.



Yews (*Taxus*)

This is a large family of evergreens. It includes Hill's yew (*Taxus x media* 'Hillii'), which is suitable for short hedges, and Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), for a feature plant in any garden. Yews are shade tolerant and grow well in dry, sandy soil. Sadly, they are generally not hardy in growing zones above zone 4 (Ottawa/Montreal). Perhaps you would consider moving to a milder climate so you can enjoy yews?

White spruce (*Picea glauca*)

The native *Picea glauca* is a great choice where there is lots of space to fill, and a grand tree is most suitable. The broad, sweeping branches of White Spruce are gorgeous any time of year, but especially when burdened with soft snow. Birds love them for foraging and nesting. Matures to 20 metres and about 8 metres at the base.

DO Prune but do it cautiously.

Some shrubs are best cut in late winter or early spring. If this is the case, then keep an eye out for chrysalises and cocoons that could be attached to plant stems. If you come across one, don't disturb it.

DO Watch your step. It's tempting to walk through flower beds to check on emerging plants but don't. Early spring soil is wet and compacts easily. Stepping on it will damage plant (leaves and buds) growth and could unsettle ground-dwelling native bees. Instead, add pebble pathways when designing a new garden or retrofit existing beds with larger stepping stones that will guide you through.

DO Keep a logbook with you while you garden. Record dates, plant names (common and Latin) and weather patterns along with general observations about plant combinations and growing habits.



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DON'T Clean up.

Leave some decaying plant material on the ground. Despite looking life-less, leaves and old stems provide important habitat that gives food and shelter to insects and other wildlife.

DO Plan a space for a cut flower garden.

Cut flowers not only make our home beautiful but they are essential for our mental wellbeing. A behavioural research study conducted by Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, reveals that people feel more compassionate toward others, have less worry and anxiety, and feel less depressed when fresh cut flowers are present in the home and we're taking this as a sign to grow our own bouquets. Some favourite and easy-to-grow plants for cutting include the following sunshine lovers:

Giant zinnias. Be sure to plant the varieties that grow 80 cm to one metre (31 inches to three feet) high. The short-stemmed ones may bloom earlier, but they are difficult to arrange in a vase.

Cosmos. There is nothing easier to grow from seed, so don't waste your money on transplants. Cosmos will germinate in seven days in warm soil. They may not bloom until late July or early August, but they are worth the wait. Once they start to bloom, they do not stop until late frost.

Nigella. A beautiful baby blue flower that produces lots of blooms on light, airy foliage (that looks like fennel).

Bee balm (Monarda). A well-known, native plant that attracts bees, naturally, bee balm also cuts and holds its petals well in a vase of water indoors. This plant will spread in the garden, so be prepared to dig and divide it every few years.

Peony. The flowering time for peonies is short but the sweetly scented full blossoms are worth the wait and the space (they can grow the size of a small shrub) they take up in your garden.

SAVE OUR SOIL - SAVE OURSELVES

We sometimes call it dirt, forgetting how much we depend on soil for our food, water and environment.

We have to stop taking soil for granted.

An easy first step to create healthy soil is based on a simple equation:

What you take out, you must put back in.

Adding compost restores our soil's vitality.

Compost provides texture, structure and nutrients.

The result: healthy soil and plant growth.

Plus, compost stores carbon in the soil to help calm our climate.

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planet friendly

ACTIVITIES



Fun and easy
ways to
live sustainably



BY JENNIFER REYNOLDS

Sustainable living means we prioritize the use of natural and renewable resources instead of creating excess waste and depleting environmental resources for future generations.

On the surface, it can be incredibly daunting to reduce our environmental footprint, especially when we see that others around us are not doing their part. But when we break it down into small steps, we realize we have more power than we thought. The accumulation of these choices from turning off your lights to save energy, to protecting endangered birds, to choosing products that are made with sustainably-sourced ingredients — that can make all the difference.

To make sustainable living more accessible, we've created hundreds of planet-friendly activities and tips to help us all connect deeper with nature, and live cleaner and healthier. These are activities you can adopt any day and every day so when you're looking for more inspiration, visit our website at www.harrowsmithmag.com/planet-friendly.

Remember that when we all make small changes we can have big impact. Let's get started now!



Green your home and garden

**PLANT A TREE, GROW A GARDEN,
OR START A TERRARIUM.**

Making a terrarium is fun and, when you are repurposing your glass jars you can make one at any size. Terrariums add greenery to small spaces and are an easy way to bring a little bit of nature indoors and learn about plants. These beautiful gardens can be made with a variety of different plants like ferns, polka dot plants, baby tears, African violets, air plants and more and as they become established, can range from small, simple containers to large, complex ecosystems. Low maintenance, they can be left alone for weeks or even months at a time. Additionally, terrariums can improve air quality by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen, they can also be a source of natural humidifiers and can help to create a relaxing and peaceful environment.

Make sure you add a 1-cm layer of gravel to the bottom of the jar and choose a good quality organic potting soil.

Upcycle

Upcycling is the process of taking an existing material or product and repurposing it into a new, higher-quality item. The goal of upcycling is to create a new item that is of greater value or usefulness than the original material, rather than simply recycling it into a lower-quality product.

MAKE A HOOK FROM AN UNWANTED METAL SPOON.

To do this, hold the spoon handle with pliers and gently bend it to the desired shape of the hook. Using a hammer, further shape the spoon handle to make it sturdier. Test the hook by hanging a lightweight object from it and then drill it securely into place.



MAKE NEW FURNITURE OUT OF WOOD PALLETS.

With a little creativity and some basic woodworking skills, you can create beautiful and functional patio furniture that is both unique and sustainable.

Carefully take apart the pallets using a saw and/or a pry bar, being mindful of any nails or staples then clean the wood with a stiff brush and sand it down to remove any rough spots or splinters. Decide on the design and layout of your furniture and arrange the wood accordingly. Use screws and a drill to assemble the furniture, making sure that the pieces are tightly secured together. Sand, paint or stain and enjoy for years to come!





MAKE A VERTICAL GARDEN FROM TIN CANS.

Painting a tin can is a great way to repurpose it to use as a planter, a vase, a vessel for holding desk supplies and many more uses. I love the effect of grouping a variety of colourful cans together on a garden shelf or drilling into a fence or wall. It's a beautiful and affordable way to add greenery to a small space. If you are using your cans for plants, make sure you use a bottle opener (or a drill) to add a couple drainage holes to the bottom. Prepare the can by washing and drying it and then chose your favourite colours of non-toxic, no-VOC paints to brush on top. Secure to wall before planting. For maximum wow-factor, choose trailing plants like ivies, potato vine, spider plants, fuchsia and trailing geraniums.



Take Care of Nature

Overall, birds play a critical role in maintaining the health and integrity of our ecosystems.

Birds are important pollinators and seed dispersers, helping to maintain biodiversity and promote the growth of plants through pollination. Our feathered friends also help with pest control, by eating insects or by controlling the population of a number of insects and even rodents.

Taking care of birds is essential for maintaining biodiversity and the overall health of the planet. These planet-friendly activities will help you to do that this spring.

ADD A BIRD HOUSE ... OR A FEW

The best time to put up a birdhouse for most species is in the spring, ideally before the start of the nesting season. This allows birds to find and claim the birdhouse before other birds. Site your birdhouse in a good location, such as a tree or post away from predators, with a clear flight path and facing the sun.

- Some species, such as purple martins, prefer to have their houses up as early as possible in the spring, to ensure that they are the first to claim a site.
- Bluebirds prefer to have their houses up later in the spring, after they have returned from migration.
- Tree swallows will not use a birdhouse until late summer

PROVIDE WATER FOR THE BIRDS

Providing water improves habitat for birds and other animals, and increases your chances of observing them up close. You can attract more birds to your patio, balcony or yard by including a homemade birdbath made out of a water bottle like this.

Three important things to remember when you hang your water feeder:

1. The water should not be deeper than 1 inch (2 cm) so that the small birds don't drown.
2. Change the water regularly.
3. Hang the feeder out of reach of cats and other predators.



Birds are important indicators of the health of the environment. Changes in bird populations can signal changes in the health of an ecosystem.

Think Twice Before Shopping

“Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” is definitely retro, but the sentiment is as important today as ever. Every product we purchase has an environmental footprint, from the materials used to create it to the pollution emitted during manufacturing to the packaging that ends up in landfills. Shockingly, 80% of all toys end up in landfill, incinerators, or the ocean. This stat from The World Counts, a global awareness organization, is staggering. So, before you buy, ask yourself if you really need something new, consider what you already have or maybe you can make it out of materials you already own.



USE YOUR RECYCLING BIN AND YOUR IMAGINATION TO CREATE NEW TOYS.

Cleaned boxes and packages of all shapes and colours plus a some art supplies make for fun a craft afternoon and endless hours of play. And remember, for the countless toys that already exist, reuse and sharing models are pivotal to prevent them from becoming waste.

Take
our

Earth Month Challenge



UNPLUG FOR A
WHOLE DAY

PICK UP TRASH

UNPLUG APPLIANCES
YOU AREN'T USING

SKIP THE SHOWER

ADOPT A HOUSE PLANT

BYOB (BAG)

PLANT SOMETHING
OUTSIDE

START A
COMPOST PILE



BUY ORGANIC MEAT
AND PRODUCE

TRADE PAPER NAPKINS
FOR CLOTH

BRING A REUSABLE
WATER BOTTLE
WITH YOU

RECYCLE

GO FOR A HIKE IN
NATURE

LEARN ABOUT THE
BIRDS YOU SAW TODAY

VOLUNTEER IN YOUR
COMMUNITY FOR A
FEW HOURS

BUY IN BULK

CHOOSE TO
THRIFT OVER BUYING
SOMETHING NEW

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How to
set up
your

Home workshop

4
TIPS

& LOTS OF TRICKS FOR CREATING A HOMESTEAD WORKSPACE

BY STEVE MAXWELL

As a *Harrowsmith* reader, you probably have an interest in hands-on skills for creating and repairing things in your life. And the first step to making skills a bigger part of your situation involves establishing an organized workspace. It needn't be fancy, just effective. Let me share what works in my experience with real-life examples of how a workspace can be set up.

1

BE CREATIVE WHEN LOOKING FOR A GOOD PLACE TO WORK

I've had some home workshop space on the go for more than 40 years, and these spaces have helped me make beautiful and useful things over the years, plus, I do extensive repairs. Besides being fun, a good workspace and the tools you'll use can make financial sense if you manage things properly.

My first workspace was in my parents' basement furnace room during my high school and university years. This "workshop" was less than 200 square feet, but it worked well for the woodworking I was doing then. In the end, that little space let me earn most of my university tuition building furniture for a handful of repeat customers.



Attic

After the shed shop came to my attic workshop phase, with my house now mostly built and livable, the walk-up attic was a dry and serviceable workshop space. Though far from convenient for bringing materials up and completing projects down, the attic was the best space I had for working, so I used it for more than ten years. That's where I built most of the furniture and milled all of the trim for my house.

Shed Shop

My next space was even smaller. I call it my "shed shop." It was just one end of a 10x20-foot shed that I built on the house-free land where we began our rural adventure after moving from Toronto to Manitoulin Island, Ontario. My folding cot, a 1953 Frigidaire, a hot plate, and a water jug sat right next to my table saw, mechanic's tools and chop saw on my workbench/kitchen table. (Yes, there was a time when I slept in a fold-up cot next to my chainsaw, woodworking tools and mechanic's tools.) Today, the shed is still a valuable part of the homestead. We use it for storage of all kinds, and I still use the bench for repairs, sharpening chainsaws and other small tasks.

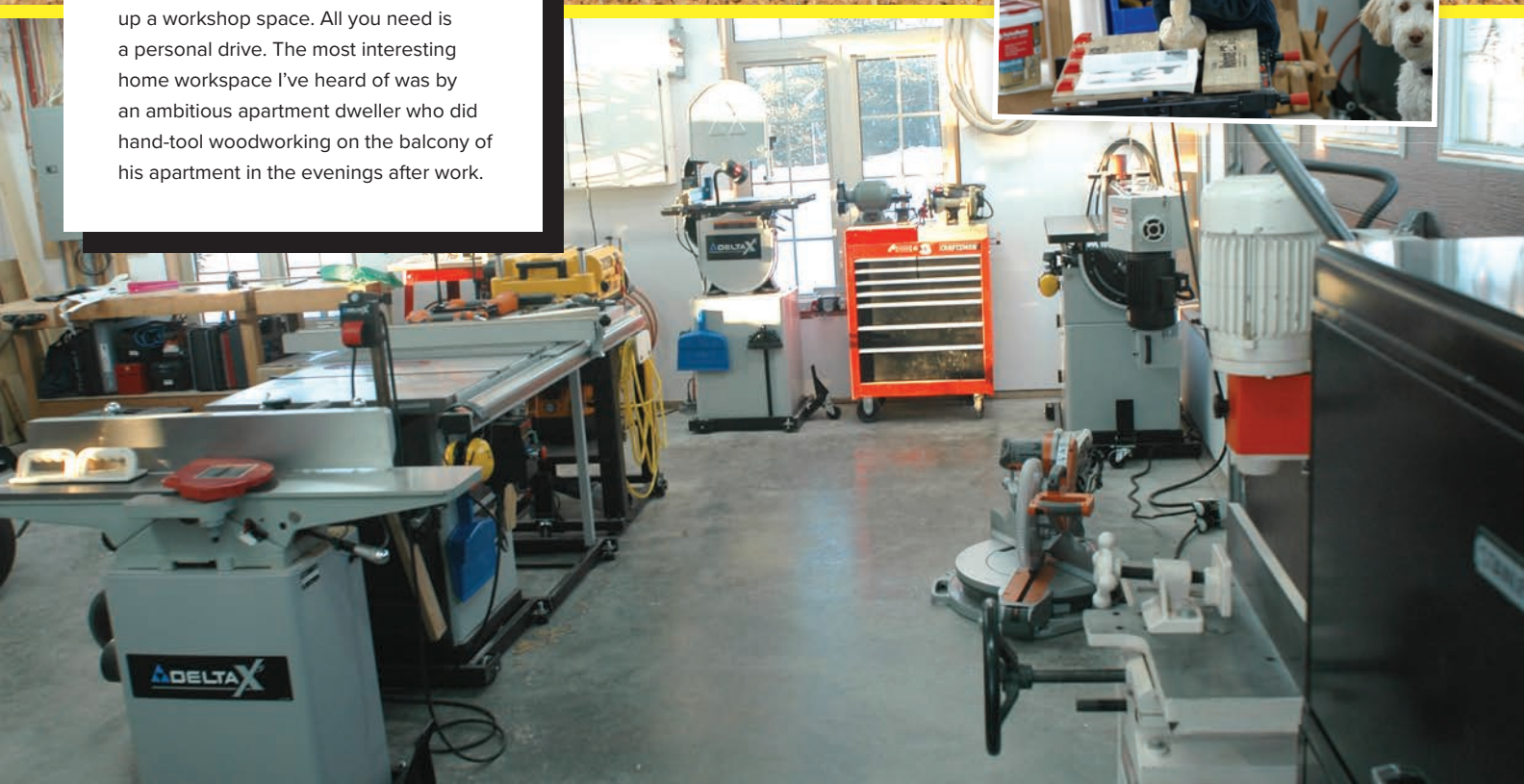


Two-storey workshop

Finally, in 2007, I began constructing a separate, two-storey workshop where I am now. Writing and editing happen upstairs, while woodworking, metalworking and machine repair happen on the ground floor. The “shop,” as we call it, has been a great place to create and fix, and our kids have also made full use of this space.

Right now, there is “long-term temporary” asphalt shingle siding on the building, and I plan to replace it with a brick design like this rendering.

The reason I’m telling you all this is to convince you that anyone can set up a workshop space. All you need is a personal drive. The most interesting home workspace I’ve heard of was by an ambitious apartment dweller who did hand-tool woodworking on the balcony of his apartment in the evenings after work.





Reset Saturday

In my experience, you need to spend 10% to 20% of the time it takes to tackle most projects, cleaning up, organizing and replenishing workshop supplies. Cleaning up is not all that interesting when you have your heart set on progress. That's why I set aside Saturdays for tidying the workshop and dealing with all the loose ends around the property. I can't always keep up with the advance of disorganization as soon as I'd like, but Reset Saturdays are a big help.



2

INVEST IN YOUR SPACE

No matter what space you have to get ready for making and repairing things, it'll need time and money to make it useful during setup and time spent regularly tidying and straightening things. In this case, investment means these things

- **A clean, tidy and well-lit situation: Most spaces used for working need help with organization and lighting, especially at the start.**

- **Storage spaces for all tools and materials: Shelves, racks and storage boxes are exceptionally good at keeping things neat and tidy, especially when you hope to accomplish a lot in a small space. Almost every bit of wall space in my shop has a shelf, cabinet or rack for storing wood, metal and tools.**

A workbench or rolling workstation is essential, but you needn't get fancy, especially at the beginning. Suppose this is your first workspace, make-do with homemade options rather than buying solutions to all your challenges immediately. Purchased solutions can come later when reality has taught you the difference between solutions that work and solutions that look like they'll work. If you're a beginner, you don't know enough to make wise purchases, so don't waste your money.

- **Take the long view: Nothing worthwhile in life is ever accomplished quickly, which goes for your home workshop space. If you decide to buy some wire shelving, for instance, consider what type might be easier to move to a larger space someday. Aim to address the best guess of your future needs in a year or two rather than current needs.**



Steve Maxwell and his wife, Mary, live on a 90-acre modern homestead on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, in a stone house they built with local materials, beginning in 1985. Steve is Canada's longest-running home improvement and how-to columnist. He divides his time working on the land, building things large and small, and creating articles and how-to videos that teach sustainable, self-reliant, hands-on living skills. Steve's BaileyLineRoad.com website is named after the rural road where he and Mary live with their five kids.



What tools to buy

3

REMEMBER THAT STRUGGLES TEACH LESSONS

Choosing tools and workshop equipment is one place where many people make mistakes, and the reason is enthusiasm. While enthusiasm is attractive and necessary, enthusiasm can also cause you to buy the wrong kind of tools in the wrong order. This is where intentionally allowing yourself to struggle with inadequate tools (or none at all) is worthwhile as you start. Don't struggle forever, of course, but a period of struggle with less-than-ideal tools offers an unbeatable advantage for one simple reason. It lets you come to a complete understanding of the problem so you can more easily recognize tools and equipment that addresses that problem.

It's not uncommon to struggle a bit without ideal tools until you have a better idea of what makes sense for you and your work. I've noticed common patterns in tool purchasing, so here are my top recommendations.

WOODWORKING TOOLS

If your focus is woodworking, consider these important tools in this order as you develop your skills:

- Chop saw
- Table saw
- Jointer
- Thickness planer
- Drill press

METALWORKING TOOLS

If metalworking is more your thing, then you'll probably find this buying order makes sense:

- Drill press and metal-capable drill bits
- Metal-cutting chop saw
- Angle grinder
- Bench grinder
- Welder

4

"KAIZEN" YOUR WORKSPACE

"Kaizen" is a Japanese word that I like a lot. It means "incremental improvement," and that's an excellent way to look at your workspace and how you manage it (and life in general). If you have the workshop bug, I probably won't have to tell you to continually envision ways to make your space more efficient and more effective. This is the same thinking that moved me from one workspace to another over the years, mostly getting better results each time. You can always do things better, and pursuing "better" can be pretty engaging. **H**

Engage your inner night owl

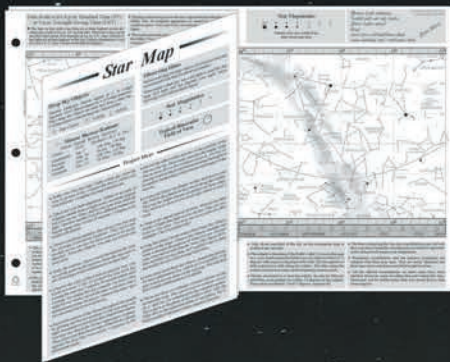
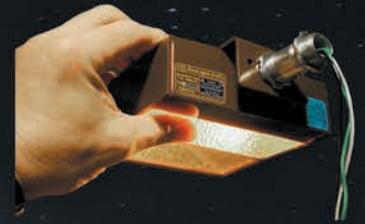
Track down a celestial eagle cruising the milky way

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WORDS AND PHOTOS BY ROBERT BARNARD



THOUSAND YEAR OLD
ICE IN ELSEK LAKE

Robert Barnard started his summer vacation in Whitehorse, *technically*. From there, he drove to the river drop in at Duncan's Post, Yukon and loaded his gear on a raft. 12 days and 255-kilometres later, the adventure ended in Dry Bay, Alaska where a plane flew him and his fellow travellers back to Whitehorse. Here's what happened along the way.

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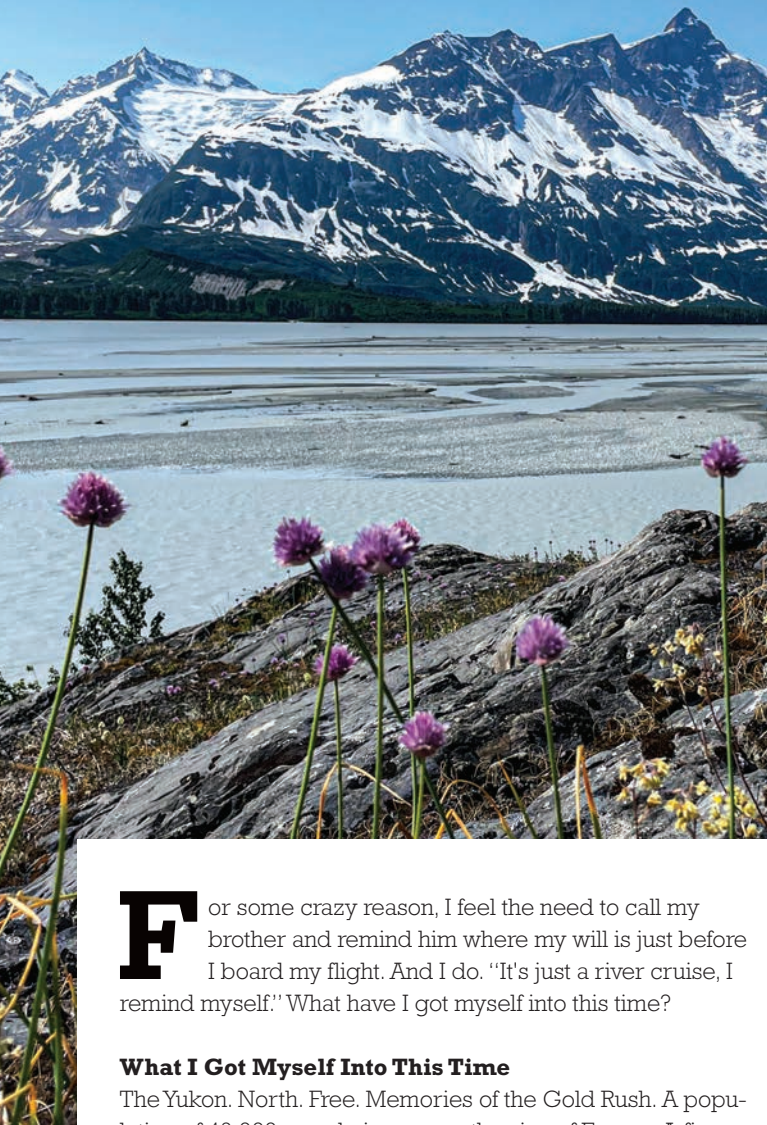


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For some crazy reason, I feel the need to call my brother and remind him where my will is just before I board my flight. And I do. "It's just a river cruise, I remind myself." What have I got myself into this time?

What I Got Myself Into This Time

The Yukon. North. Free. Memories of the Gold Rush. A population of 43,000 people in an area the size of France. A finger on the Arctic Ocean and nestled next to Alaska. My cruise to Alaska starts at Dalton Post a few hours west of Whitehorse on the summer solstice. My route is the Tatshenshini River. Total crew: 3. Number of guests: 8. My boat is a bright sky-blue raft with yellow letters displaying the expedition company, Canadian River Expeditions. A four-person tent (which as we all know only really fits two, but I'm solo so it's roomy) is my suite on the ground floor. Windows at both ends, far exceeding any port hole in size.

It's 8 am. I'm in a dry suit, the less stylish version of a wetsuit. Snug around the wrist and neck. I snicker at the mosquitos. Outta luck suckers! The other benefit is zero body odour. Why does that matter? I'm nervous.

Trip guides Ursula (our lead guide) and Ken are in the midst of our safety briefing. The last one I experienced was on my Air Canada flight with beautiful pictures of Canada's national parks and calming music, smiling people. (*Bravo, BTW. Most creative airline safety video I have ever seen.*) "So, if you fall in the water" (shift to Psycho soundtrack) grab the rope that hugs

the circumference of the raft as quickly as you can. Swim fast! If you can't get to the raft, get your feet up in front of you. It's a shallow river up here and if you are going to hit something on the bottom you want your butt to take the hit." (*Hmmm... not just my butt down there. OK focus!!*) Trees hanging over the river are your enemy. Use your hands to steer you away from danger. Keep looking for rafts."

"How cold is the water?" asks one of the other guests, as we all think the same thing.

"About 3°C," Ken answers calmly. "Ok let's go get our helmets on."

Predictably, It Was Unpredictable

Leading up to my 55th birthday, a friend jokingly suggested I am now old enough to go on a cruise. The last cruise I'd been on was with my mom when I was about ten or twelve. I fell in love with Julie McCoy. Issac mixed me up a mean cocktail. It lasted an hour with commercials. *The Love Boat... exciting and new... set a course for adventure...* or something like that. You probably recall the tune.

That was 45 years ago and maybe cruising was an exciting new adventure back then. My mom, a youthful octogenarian, went on a cruise when she was in her early 70s. She came back saying she would never do it again. She felt old. Everything was so contrived, planned, organized and predictable. Most people want that, my mom surmised, but she didn't and neither did I.

You know that saying that there are two types of people in the world? Well, when it comes to travel you could drop people into predictable and unpredictable. If you ask my children I want different. I want spontaneity. I want my curiosity to be kicked into overdrive. I want to be challenged to do something I've never done. I want my mind to be opened. I guess I want the *unpredictable*.

Of course, it bares noting that tons of people love cruises and they do create good jobs and when you put 3,000 people on a boat it reduces the price to go and see places. I get it. They are certainly not charities though. Don't you have to walk through the casino to get to dinner for the all-you-can-eat buffet every night? I think I only hear about cruises when something goes wrong. Covid anyone? In fact, as I write this a cruise ship hit an iceberg en route to Alaska and had to cut its voyage short. On my voyage I swam next to icebergs ...oh, I'm getting ahead of myself.



SETTING UP CAMP ON
THE SHORES OF THE TAT



THE MERGE - TATSHENSHINI
MEETS ALSEK RIVERS AT 1030PM



Back on the Raft

I'm with our guide and captain for the day, Brad (think of Captain Merrill Stubing and then think of the absolute opposite — that's Brad, thankfully) and two other guests from Saskatchewan. One of them is 83. *Yes, I got the numbers in the right order.* Brad's age is closer to the reverse.

Helmets, dry suits and personal floatation device all on. We are 10 minutes into our maiden voyage. It's the canyon run that's next. Level 3 or 4 rapids depending on the water level. All the guides agreed it was high. No time to get mentally prepared. Brad had been down the Tat 5 years ago so he knew the River. *Well only kinda knew it.* Every year it's different and the water level makes the rapids different. Fallen

trees, gravel patches, and new braids of river confront every trip. There are no two alike.

As we entered the Canyon guest and guide eyes were equally glued on the water ahead. Brad with the big oars and us with our paddles. I could see the first white water coming up as Brad yelled, "here we go!"

I got splashed and jostled. 3°C is cold! Twists and turns. Narrow misses and ducks to avoid those trees along the banks. All in all, it was a slow and then mostly go two hours down the River.

In the middle of it, I recalled the two most prominent messages on my Instagram when my friends found out I was going to do this trip: "Be Safe!" and "Have Fun!" I would say that "Be Safe" was more prominent. While we need to be safe that doesn't mean we need to be boring.

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—RM, North Carolina

THE TATSHENSHINI RIVER IS A RIVER IN CANADA'S BOREAL FOREST, IN THE SOUTHWESTERN YUKON AND THE NORTHWESTERN CORNER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.



Adventure Found

To prep for my trip, I watched the 1983 Farley Mowat-inspired film *Never Cry Wolf*. It's All filmed in the Yukon and Atlin BC. There is a scene at the beginning where the main character Tyler, sent from Ottawa to research wolf's role in caribou population decline, is being flown in an old beater to his destination by an old pilot named Rosie. All of a sudden the engine cuts out mid-flight. Tyler gasps as Rosie freaks out searching for a tool in his toolbox and then screams at the top of his lungs as the plane starts to descend. He finds his tool – a wrench – and holds it up to the stressed-out Tyler. "You know what the problem is with this world Tyler?" shouts Rosie. "Boredom. Boredom! We've lost our sense of adventure." Then Rosie opens the door and goes outside the plane to fix it mid-flight.

I'm not sure if that line is in the 1963 book of the same name by Farley Mowat. I'm on a river in the middle of nowhere. How can I call Ms. Google to check? Yes, that's right, no way to search online for anything. No weather forecast. We were about 50% accurate by assessing the clouds. If you said it with conviction people would believe you. Or we would just ask the professor. Professor Emeritus in Physics at MIT. *Ya, he was on the trip.* He answered everything with conviction.

I lay there in my tent after our first day on the Tat. The rushing river provided the soundtrack to the film of the day in my head. That first big wave. The deluge of rain, just after I opted to take off my rain gear. The mid-river raft rescue. The tight curves and vast landscape. Day 1 was wildly unpredictable. I was alive. What would the next 11 days bring?

Well, you know what, I'm not going to tell you. Go do it yourself. Don't live vicariously through me. Get out there. Your experience will be yours alone. Just like mine was.

Okay, one more teensy weensy little story about when we crashed into an iceberg.

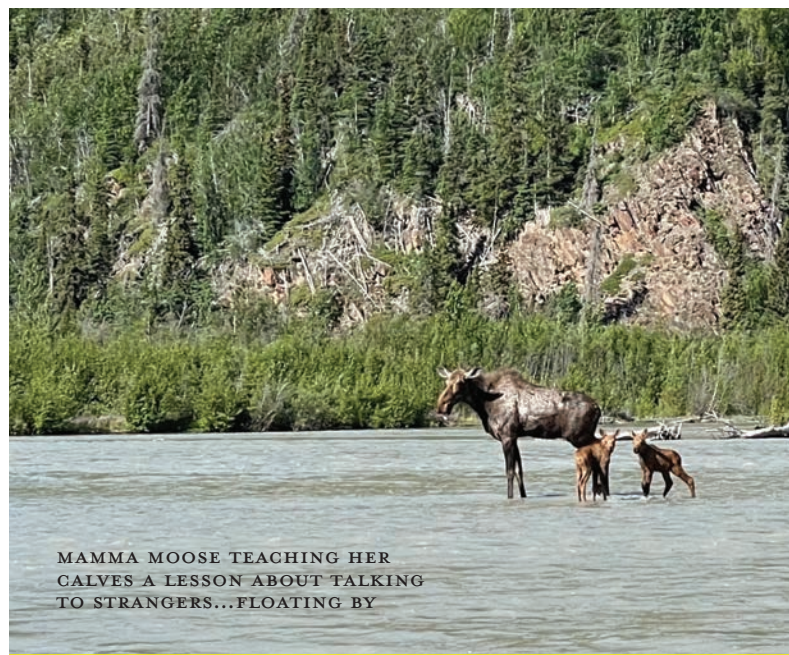
At the end of the Tatshenshini River, it merged into the Alsek River that drained to Alsek Lake near Dry Bay Alaska. The River's gray water pushing into a glacial gray blue lake fed not by one, but three glaciers emanating from the stunning peak of Mt Fairweather.

It was filled with icebergs. Dive in? Of course, I did! When

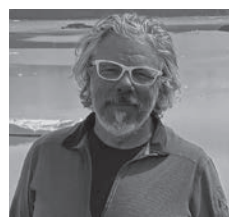
would I get another chance to go swimming amongst icebergs?

But after that, we hopped in the rafts and rowed out to a big iceberg near our campsite. It honestly looked fake. It was a blue I'd never seen before. As we approached Ken leaned over the edge with a small hammer. He chipped off a chunk that fell into the boat. "That's going to go well with our cocktails tonight!" Ken chuckled. "Thousand-year-old ice."

Take that Issac. **H**



MAMMA MOOSE TEACHING HER CALVES A LESSON ABOUT TALKING TO STRANGERS...FLOATING BY



Robert Barnard is the father of two independent boys, an author, a social entrepreneur, and a champion of youth and youthful adventure. Find him on Instagram at @rnbarnard.

Mashed potato

Do the
...and make these twists with the leftovers

Turn last night's mashed potatoes into today's breakfast, dinner or even dessert. These recipes are so good, you won't even think of them as leftovers!

RECIPES, TEXT, STYLING AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHEF ILONA DANIEL



There is plenty to love about the humble potato: It's inexpensive, comforting and oh so versatile.

A member of the nightshade family, the potato is one of the world's most popular staple starchy food crops and in Canada, potatoes comprise 52% of all the fresh vegetables we consume year-round. This shouldn't be too surprising because we've been growing these mighty tubers for a long time — the first potato crop was planted in the late 1700s.

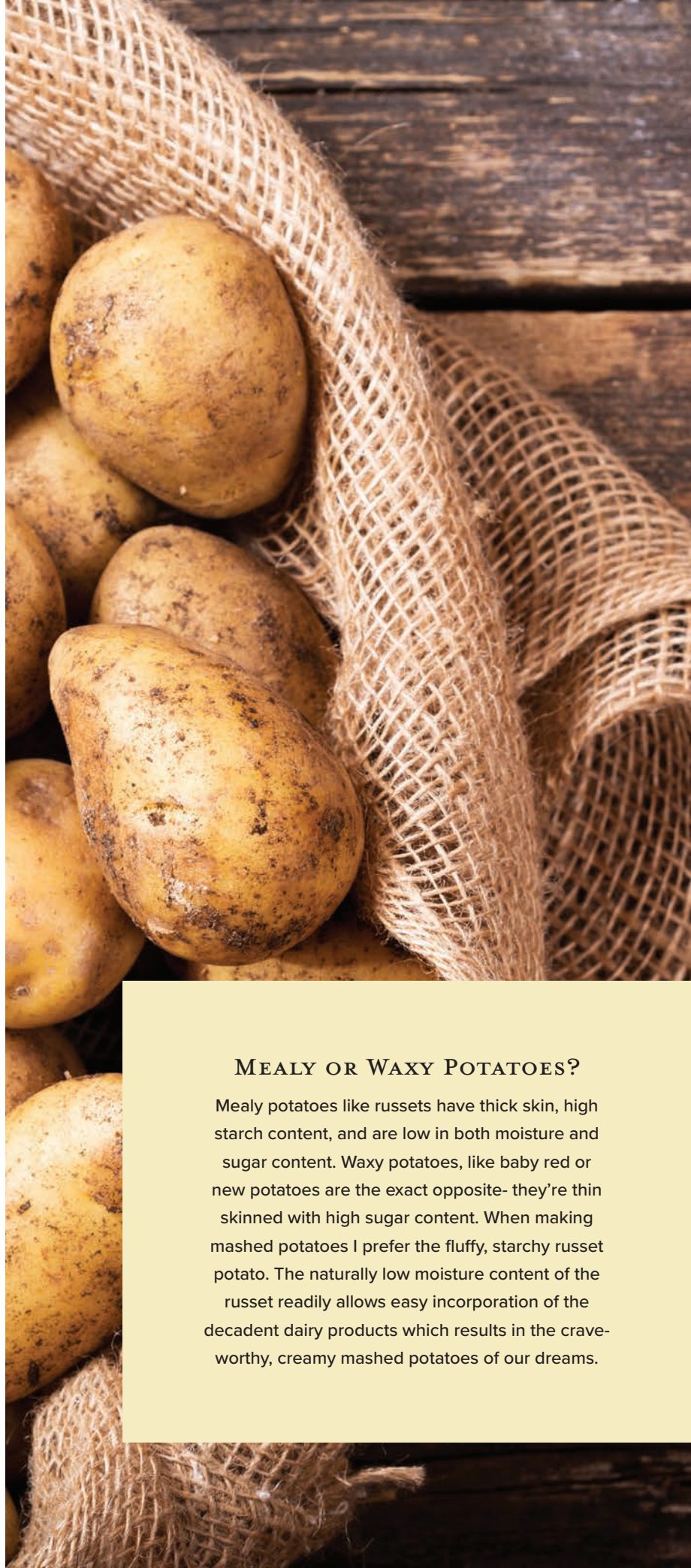
More than 200 years later, potato production in Canada has become a \$1 billion industry, with over 4.3 million metric tons of potatoes produced in 2019 alone. Canada is the world's fifth-largest producer of potatoes, and the majority of Canada's annual potato production is concentrated in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Alberta.

Adaptable, affordable and naturally gluten free, potatoes are versatile to assume any role on the table from salads to stews, casseroles and desserts and they are a great addition to omelets, tacos, pizzas, and oatmeal. With so many ways to prepare potatoes, mashing them with butter is always a dish everyone can agree on. After all, there's something about this creamy, buttery side that just feels like a warm hug any time of year.

When you love this side dish as much we do, you may find yourself making a little too much. No problem, we've found a way to eat mashed potatoes for every meal with these delicious recipes.

Ready to grow your own potatoes?

Find our growing tips at www.harrowsmithmag.com/growing-potatoes.



MEALY OR WAXY POTATOES?

Mealy potatoes like russets have thick skin, high starch content, and are low in both moisture and sugar content. Waxy potatoes, like baby red or new potatoes are the exact opposite- they're thin skinned with high sugar content. When making mashed potatoes I prefer the fluffy, starchy russet potato. The naturally low moisture content of the russet readily allows easy incorporation of the decadent dairy products which results in the crave-worthy, creamy mashed potatoes of our dreams.

The potato ricer is the secret to creamiest, lump-free mashed potatoes. The tool forces cooked potatoes through the tiny holes via a hopper and plunger construction. This method also incorporates air into the potatoes as it pushes them through, giving them amazing texture.”

— Chef Ilona Daniel



The best Mashed Potatoes

Serves 4 Yields 4 ½ cups approximately

2 lbs (1 kg) russet potatoes, scrubbed but unpeeled
Kosher or sea salt

Kosher or sea salt

1 cup (200 g) unsalted butter, cut into cubes, softened

1 cup whipping cream or whole milk, scalded
½ tsp ground nutmeg

Put the potatoes and 1 tbsp of salt into a pot and cover with enough cold water to have the potatoes completely submerged.

Simmer the potatoes until they are cooked through; approximately 30 minutes.

Drain the potatoes and peel them.

Using a ricer, mill the potatoes into a bowl.

Stir in heated cream, butter, 2 ¼ tsp salt and nutmeg.

Serve immediately. Leftovers can be used in the recipes on the next pages.

YOU CAN STORE MASHED POTATOES IN A SEALED CONTAINER FOR UP TO FOUR DAYS.





Mashed Potato & Honey Biscuits

Yields 12 biscuits

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ cup butter, refrigerated
- 1 cup leftover Best Mashed Potatoes (recipe on page 65)
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 1 egg whole and 1 egg yolk for brushing
- 1 tbsp honey

Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large mixing bowl.

Cut in butter until mixture is like coarse crumbs. I use my hands to do this, but feel free to use a pastry blender if preferred.

In another bowl, combine the mashed potatoes, buttermilk, egg and honey mixing with a spoon.

Add the potato mixture to the dry ingredients.

Mike can you add a box/sidebar with an arrow to this part of the instructions with this info:

Change up the flavours by folding in one of the following combinations:

1 tbsp of Italian seasoning and 1 cup grated of Parmesan

3 tbsp chives, snipped and 3 tbsp of flax seeds

Zest of an orange and 1 cup dried fruit, such as currants or cranberries

Use a rubber spatula and gently stir together until the dough just comes together.

On a floured surface, tumble out the dough and press the dough into a ¾-inch rectangle.

Fold the dough in half and press out the dough into a ¾-inch rectangle. Repeat the press and fold method two more times.

Using a sharp knife, cut the dough into 12 even squares and place onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Brush the tops of the biscuits with egg yolk using a pastry brush.

Bake in a 400°F oven for 12-15 minutes or until the biscuits are an even golden brown and cooked through.

FREEZER-FRIENDLY INSTRUCTIONS

The biscuits can be frozen, unbaked, for up to three months. They can be baked without thawing; they may just take a few extra minutes in the oven.

FREEZER FRIENDLY TIP:

Uncooked fishcakes can be frozen for up 3 months.



Any Occasion Fishcakes

Makes about 12 fishcakes

- 1 lb boneless haddock filet or other white fish, cooked
Substitutes: 1 lb chopped, cooked shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab) or 2-3 cans of tuna, well drained.
- 2 tbsp horseradish
- 1 tbsp whole grain Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp hot sauce such as Sriracha, Sambal Oelek or Gochujang
- 2 cups leftover Best Mashed Potatoes (recipe on page 65)
- ¼ cup fresh herbs (I usually opt for dill or parsley, but cilantro works well too)
- 2 eggs
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 cup breadcrumbs, fresh ones are the best for this, but feel free to use what you have

FOR BREADING:

Approximately 1 cup flour

- 4-6 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups seasoned breadcrumbs

In a large mixing bowl, add all the ingredients except for the breading ingredients, and gently incorporate.

Allow the mixture to rest in the fridge for 15 minutes. This allows the moisture in the mixture to redistribute evenly.

Shape the fishcakes into patties and place them in the freezer for 15 minutes to set.

Bread the fishcakes by first dredging flour, then dipping them into egg, and then into breadcrumbs.

Pan fry the fishcakes in a skillet with a 2 cm layer of oil at medium heat.

Cook on both sides until they reach a deep golden brown; approximately 4 minutes on each side.

Serve with tartar sauce.




Tangy Dill Tartar Sauce

Makes 1 ½ cups



- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 tbsp minced onion
- ¼ cup tangy dill relish
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 3 tbsp chopped dill

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Stir all ingredients to combine and serve.



Mashed Potato
Doughnuts



Makes 12 doughnuts Turn savoury mashed potatoes into sweet, delicious doughnuts with this easy recipe.

1 cup leftover Best Mashed Potatoes (recipe on page 65)

1 cup sugar

1 cup milk

2 tbsp butter, softened

1 large egg

3 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling

2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp nutmeg

½ tsp salt

canola oil, for cooking

For the glaze:

2 cups confectioner's sugar (sifted to remove any lumps)

2-3 tbsp whipping cream, hot

½ tsp vanilla extract

In a large bowl, mix together the mashed potatoes, sugar, milk, butter and egg.

In a separate bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, nutmeg and salt.

Stir in the dry ingredients into the mashed potato mixture until you have a thick, sticky dough.

Place dough in a covered container and refrigerate for at least an hour, or overnight.

To make the doughnuts, generously flour your countertop, and place the dough on the counter and dust the surface of the dough with flour.

Pat the dough out to a 1/2-inch thickness.

Cut into rounds with a doughnut cutter while you heat 2 inches of oil in a heavy pot to a medium-high heat, close to 350°F.

Cook the doughnuts a few at a time, without crowding the pot, until golden on both sides. This should take approximately 2 minutes per side.

Note: The first batch may take 30 seconds to a minute longer to cook as the oil heats up.

Transfer the doughnuts to a paper towel-lined tray to drain off excess oil.

While the doughnuts cool, prepare the glaze by mixing hot whipping cream, vanilla and icing sugar together.

Dip the cooled doughnuts in the glaze and then in sprinkles, nuts or other desired garnishes.



Waste Less, Eat Better, Save Money

BY THERESA ALBERT, BOB BLUMER, ANDREA BUCKETT, IRENE MATYS, ALLYSON MCGRANE,
LIANNE PHILLIPSON, CLAIRE TANSEY AND ANNABELLE WAUGH

We asked the experts to weigh in on practical ways to transform leftovers into delicious new dishes

SAVE THE SCRAPS

My favourite way to prevent food waste, when it comes to produce, is to save all my scraps — leek tops, onion roots, shiitake stems, carrot tops, celery ends, tomato cores, etc. — in a zipper bag that lives in my freezer door. Once it's full, I empty it into a slow cooker, cover with water and 8 hours later, I have the most delicious, and free, veggie stock ever.

— Annabelle Waugh, freelance recipe developer, editor, food stylist and culinary instructor who has spent over 20 years working in the country's top test kitchens. Her passion is creating trustworthy, delicious recipes that anyone can tackle.



FIND THE RECIPE
FOR ANDREA
BUCKETT'S
INDIAN TAKE-
AWAY LEFTOVER
HACK ON PAGE 8.

Sixty-three percent of the food Canadian households waste is considered “avoidable,” according to Love Food Hate Waste Canada. This means it was edible at some point prior to being thrown away or composted.

PLAN AHEAD

Planning meals is one of the most effective ways you can reduce food waste and save on your food bills. Try these tips to stay on track:

- Keep your pantry and fridge organized and labelled (you won't remember that it's cornstarch on that jar in less you add a label).
- Create a weekly menu.
- Keep a shopping list in your kitchen or on your phone so it's handy to add to.
- Shop more realistically and buy what you know you'll eat.
- Cook in reasonable portions for your needs.
- Eat those leftovers you saved.
- Treat expiration dates as guidelines but don't take any big risks, nobody wants food poisoning.
- Freeze food you won't be able to eat in time.

ZERO-WASTE STIR-FRIED RICE

The best fried rice comes from cast-offs, extras and the stems, leaves and tops of your veggies. Don't worry too much about the nitty-gritty details of this recipe, you can create your own spin with what you have.

I used bacon fat, chopped ginger skin, chopped sprouting garlic, thinly sliced green onion tops (or use the next 3 inches of a leek, after the bottom 1/3 has been used), cauliflower leaves, carrot peels, beet tops, red bell pepper bits, peeled and julienned broccoli stems, kale stems (cut into

¼-inch pieces), mushroom stems (cut into ¼-inch pieces), left-over take-out (or home-cooked if you have it) rice, tired cauliflower (pulsed in a food processor and added to cooked rice). I also used leftover tea (or tea brewed from a couple leftover mint tea bags) for frying (in place of extra oil), 1 or 2 just-expired eggs (beaten) and hot sauce and soy packets.

To make: Heat a wok or sauté pan on medium-high heat. Add a couple tablespoons of bacon fat. Add ginger, garlic and onions. Stir

for one minute, then add veggies and stir-fry until cooked. Add rice, pulsed cauliflower and ¼ cup of tea. Stir until heated. Push rice mixture to one side of the pan so that some of the bottom of the pan is exposed. Stir in eggs and mix until eggs are cooked. Add hot sauce and soy to taste and serve immediately.

— *Bob Blumer, international television personality and author of Flavorbomb: A Rogue Guide to Making Everything Taste Better*

NO WASTE PESTO

Turn veggie scraps into a versatile sauce. To a food processor, add 2 cups each of carrot tops, radish and beet greens or wilted spinach, arugula or kale. Add 1 cup of your herb of choice and 3 garlic gloves. Pulse a few times. Slowly pour in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of extra-virgin olive oil while the processor is running. Season with salt and pepper. Add to pasta, salad dressing, stir fry, frittatas, stews and more. A delicious and nutritious way to reduce food waste and elevate flavour in your dishes.

— Irene Matys, Recipe Curator, Local Farm-to-Table Advocate, On-Air Expert on CTV's *The Marilyn Denis Show* and contributor to *LCBO Food and Drink*



HEALTHIER PASTA OR PIZZA SAUCE

In a medium saucepan, combine up to 2 cups of any leftover vegetables and one large tin of plum tomatoes. Add fresh, roasted, or black garlic, and a medium diced onion. Bring to a boil, then simmer until all vegetables are soft. Puree with a hand blender and freeze in ice cube trays. Use for individual pizza or pasta topping, or large family meals over meatballs and pasta, spaghetti squash, or cauliflower rice. — Lianne Phillipson

MIND THE JARS

I never waste the dregs of condiments left in the jar. To my Dijon, I add vinegar, shallots, herbs, oil, salt and pepper and shake it to make an instant salad dressing. To BBQ sauce or ketchup, I'll add minced ginger, garlic, soy sauce, chili flakes and sesame oil and shake it up for a quick and easy tofu or shrimp marinade.

— Annabelle Waugh



PHOTO CREDIT (PESTO) IRENE MATYS

PHOTO CREDIT SUECH AND BECK

VEGGIES FOR DAYS...

Day 1: Cut up enough colourful vegetables like peppers, carrots, zucchini, broccoli, and purple cabbage into long narrow slices to fill a 4 to 6 cup container. Lay strips in the container in the order of a rainbow. Dampen a rice paper wrap, lay it on a plate, pile veggies in the center, and top with protein-rich tofu, smoked salmon, shrimp, or leftover chicken pieces. Fold the wrap over at the ends and roll to encase the filling. Serve with a sauce of soy and lemon juice.

Day 2: The next day, dice half the leftover veggies and add to a two-egg omelet and sprinkle with cheese.

Day 3: Add what is left to a bowl of drained and rinsed adzuki beans, and 1 cup of grated cheese. Sprinkle filling between two wraps and toast in a frying pan until the cheese is melted, flipping once.

— Lianne Phillipson, Author of the award-winning *Sprout Right Family Food*, host of *EAT THIS* with Lianne radio show and podcast, and Registered Nutritionist. liannephillipson.com





Bubble and Squeak

Stir about 1½ cups leftover mashed potatoes (or any cooked vegetables) with 2 chopped green onions and a pinch of curry powder. Shape into 4 patties and cook in a little melted butter in a non-stick pan until golden on each side. Top with poached eggs, smoked salmon or bacon.

— Claire Tansy, Cookbook author,
@tanseyclaire



WHAT DO I DO WITH...

Here are 3 tried-and-true ideas from *Allyson McGrane* our Head of Special Projects, an amazing thrifter and all-around food ninja.

SOGGY SPINACH

Add it to lasagna instead of the frozen stuff.

LEMON RINDS

Turn lemon rinds into lemon syrup. In a large mixing bowl, combine the rinds of 6 to 10 lemons with a cup of sugar and cover tightly for up to 12 hours (at room temperature) so the sugar can dissolve. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve and then put the rinds in a rice and squeeze to release any extra liquid. The resulting liquid is your lemon syrup, which can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a month. You can use it to sweeten drinks, dressings, marinades, and as a baking ingredient.

Also try this with pineapple cores and mango peelings.

OLD GRAINS

Grains are the gold of brew masters and add sugar to beer (what feeds the yeast and allows beer to become beer). When the barley and wheat has done its job, it still has plenty of fibre and protein to offer, as well as a distinct nuttiness that works quite well in baked goods, especially bread. While they are still wet, use the grains to make pancakes. When they are dry, grind it into flour with a coffee grinder and use in your baking.





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ZERO-WASTE WEEKEND FREE-TTATA

This Weekend Free-ttata is an effective way to use up every bit of the tired veggies, cuttings, and miscellaneous bits that lurk in the crevices of your fridge, and turn them into a hearty zero-waste breakfast that is gratifying on many levels. Flexibility, creativity and resourcefulness are the hallmarks of a well-made Free-ttata. No two are ever the same—which is part of what makes Free-ttatatas the Stone Soup of egg dishes. Once you discover how easy they are to make, you will instinctively become more proactive about repurposing your unloved ingredients and scraps, instead of automatically tossing them.



PHOTO CREDIT SUZIO VARRIN

THESE ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A WEEKEND FREE-TTATA:

Oil rescued oil from the dregs of a sun dried tomato jar, jarred artichoke hearts, canned fish, or from anything else stored in olive or vegetable oil—or any mix thereof.

Protein leftover bits of cooked ham, sausage ends, sandwich meats, smoked or cured fish—or any mix thereof

Allium sprouting garlic or a hand full of the neglected teeny center cloves, the unloved middle section of a leek, or that last bit of an onion—or any mix thereof

Greens beet tops, radish tops, turnip tops, celery leaves, fennel fronds, or any tired wilted greens such as spinach, kale, or swiss chard—or any mix thereof.

Fresh herbs Whatever you've got that pairs appropriately with your chosen ingredients

Veggies Cherry tomatoes, bell peppers, broccoli, mushrooms, potatoes...

Cheese leftover ends of stale cheese from your fridge, or the last grating of a Parmigino Reggiano rind— or any mix thereof

8 eggs

2 teaspoons Harissa (optional) or an appropriate amount of your favorite hot sauce—or nothing

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Set rack in center position and preheat oven to 425°F

In an ovenproof sauté pan over medium-high heat, add a couple tablespoons of oil, and a palmful of your chosen allium, chopped. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until it brown. Add a handful of chopped protein and stir for a couple of minutes. Add 2 – 4 cups of greens, a cup or so of veggies, stemmed herbs and a splash of water. Cover with a lid and let steam for 3 minutes. Remove lid and continue cooking, stirring occasionally for another few minutes until greens reduce in volume by about half.

While greens are cooking, in a large bowl, whisk together eggs, harissa, salt, pepper, and cheese.

Pour egg mixture overtop and poke around the pan contents with a wooden spoon so that the egg mixture is spread out evenly and sinks between the pan contents. If you have any extra grated hard cheese leftover, sprinkle some of it overtop.

Transfer immediately to oven and bake for about 12 minutes, or until eggs are cooked throughout. If eggs seem cooked throughout, but still loose on top, finish under a broiler for 2 minutes, or until top is fully cooked and nicely browned.

Cooking Time < 45 minutes Yield Serves 4 – 6

– Bob Blumer

ARE YOU THROWING SOMETHING OUT AND THEN PAYING MORE TO BUY IT BACK AGAIN?

The average Canadian eats about 242 eggs per year — that's a lot of leftover eggshells and extra calcium that can be used in your smoothies or dug into your garden. To prepare the shells for their second use, boil them for 15 minutes to sterilize completely then bake at 225°F for 20 minutes to dry them out. Grind into a powder. Half of a teaspoon of the powder has about 400-500 mg of calcium

11 QUICK ZERO-WASTE FOOD HACKS

There are lots of things we can do that can make an impact on the amount of food we waste like buying less and finding creative ways to use up food that isn't perfect. Try these ideas:

- Freeze extra smoothies into cubes and use those as popsicles or to cool down your next smoothie.
- Freeze wine for sauces, herbs in olive oil with garlic for stir fries and extra soup for sauces.
- Wash produce peels like zucchini well and eat or peel into veggie noodles or purée for your next soup.
- Keep the ends of Parmesan and other cheeses to incorporate into soups and broths — especially chicken noodle soup.
- Don't throw away mouldy bread or slightly bruised fruit. Just cut off what has browned instead of throwing the whole thing away.
- Have salmon skin? Crisp it up in an air fryer or in the oven and sprinkle on salads.
- Save the crusts of your bread to make French toast, breadcrumbs and croutons. You can do the same with stale bread.
- Cook soft strawberries and blueberries in water with lemon juice and a little corn starch for a yummy fruit sauce to use on toast or ice cream.
- Blend mushy avocados and use them as a substitute for oil in baked goods.
- Pulse mushy tomatoes and add them into sauces.
- Leftover rice? Make fried rice or add an egg, a tbsp of flour, some salt and rice vinegar and fry it into a rice cake.



PHOTO CREDIT BOB BLUMER

SHRIMP STOCK

Save your shrimp heads and shells and make this quick and easy stock. This no recipe recipe is basically shrimp heads boiled in some fennel detritus (or celery), a bit of old onion and some peppercorns. It's great for risottos, paellas, etc. To make it, combine all ingredients in a large pot and add enough water to cover everything. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Strain through a large strainer, let cool completely then store it in jars in your fridge for up to 3 days or in resealable bags in your freezer for up to a year.

— Bob Blumer

NOT-RUBBISH CANDIED ORANGES

Don't throw away those wee oranges rolling around in the crisper. They may have shriveled from dehydration but as long as they aren't mouldy, they are not done yet. Citrus fruit has a second sweet life as candy and all you need is sugar, water, cinnamon sticks and time.

A dehydrator is excellent if you have an herb garden and wish to keep your own fresh flavours over the winter. It really is just a nice to have item, though, because your oven with oven light will do almost the same job (a la easy bake.) Simply turn on the heat to its lowest temperature preferably on convection setting to move the air but even this is a luxury. Any herb will dry nicely on a cooling rack, in the oven like

this for an hour and then just left overnight with the oven light on and the door closed. These candied oranges can be done this way too or in a dehydrator.

Wash about 6 mandarin oranges in a vinegar and water solution and dry with a paper towel. Slice as evenly and thinly as possible, squeezing any juice from end pieces into a large low pot. Into the large low pot add 1 ½ cups water and 1 ½ cups sugar.

Lay orange slices into water and bring to a boil. Turn down and simmer uncovered for 1 to 1 ½ hours until white pith becomes translucent. Place wax paper on the counter and lay cooling rack or dehydrating rack on top.

Lift oranges from syrup and lay either onto a cooling rack and let drip onto wax paper for 10 minutes. Place either into dehydrator at 105 °F for 8 to 12 hours or into oven at 140 °F convection method for 12 hours with the light on.

Store in the cupboard in an airtight jar for up to 3 months and use as candy, cake toppers, garnish or on charcuterie plates. Save the syrup too — it is great as a sweetener for iced tea, topping vanilla ice cream, pouring over pancakes, or dip flower petals into the syrup and lay on top of orange slices and allow to dry with the fruit.

– Theresa Albert, Innkeeper, Rosehurst Stratford, www.rosehurststratford.ca



My Garden Retreat

Jen Reynolds shares why her 1,200 square-foot urban backyard is her happiest place

My garden is a work in progress, and it has been for a long time. This year I am celebrating two decades in the home I never thought I would be in for this long but now can't imagine being anywhere else. I love my vibrant community, my fun and supportive neighbours, my imperfectly perfect 130-year-old Victorian house and best of all, my ever-changing urban garden.

The transformations in my backyard (that was a sand pit when I moved in) have been well documented in other magazines and on several HGTV shows. Every time I look back on those images, I can't believe that the ginkgo trees were so small, that there were no birds (because I hadn't planted the crabapples or the firethorn yet) and that at one time there was a small lawn for my toddler to kick a soccer ball around.

That baby is all grown up and that sunny lawn is now shady because I planted too many trees and then added an underplanting of ferns, Liguria, heuchera, hydrangeas and an assortment of ivies (that are not supposed to overwinter in our climate, but they do because they are so sheltered).

As I continue to reminisce about the evolution of the now-wild back part of my garden, I can't help but think how grateful I am today for the 15 square-foot space I designated as my "holding bed." Between late fall and early spring, the bed is jammed packed with the hostas, hydrangeas, small cyprus, astilbe and other perennials I enjoy in pots throughout the growing season (I love the look of robust foliage plants and planting them in pots saves money from buying annuals every year). I tuck my perennial herbs like sage, thyme, oregano and mint in there too and leave space for two white oak trees I bought six years ago and have been taking in and out of that bed ever since. Each spring these trees get planted into large pots — one on my upper deck and one on my lower garden-level patio. It's funny that every year I think it's a miracle that all of these plants survive the my constant transplanting efforts but they do. It's amazing!

Nature is incredible and I love watching it up close while I'm in my backyard where there's always something new. For instance, last year was the first time I saw a black swallowtail butterfly. If you want to hear more about that and all of the projects and ideas that happen in my happy place, you can find me on Instagram either at @JNReynolds or on our @harrowsmithmag feed where there's always lots to share. **H**



What's happening in your backyard? Send your story (300 words or less) and photos to editor@harrowsmithmag.com and you could be featured on the back page of an upcoming issue.



**NEVER
STOP
GROWING**

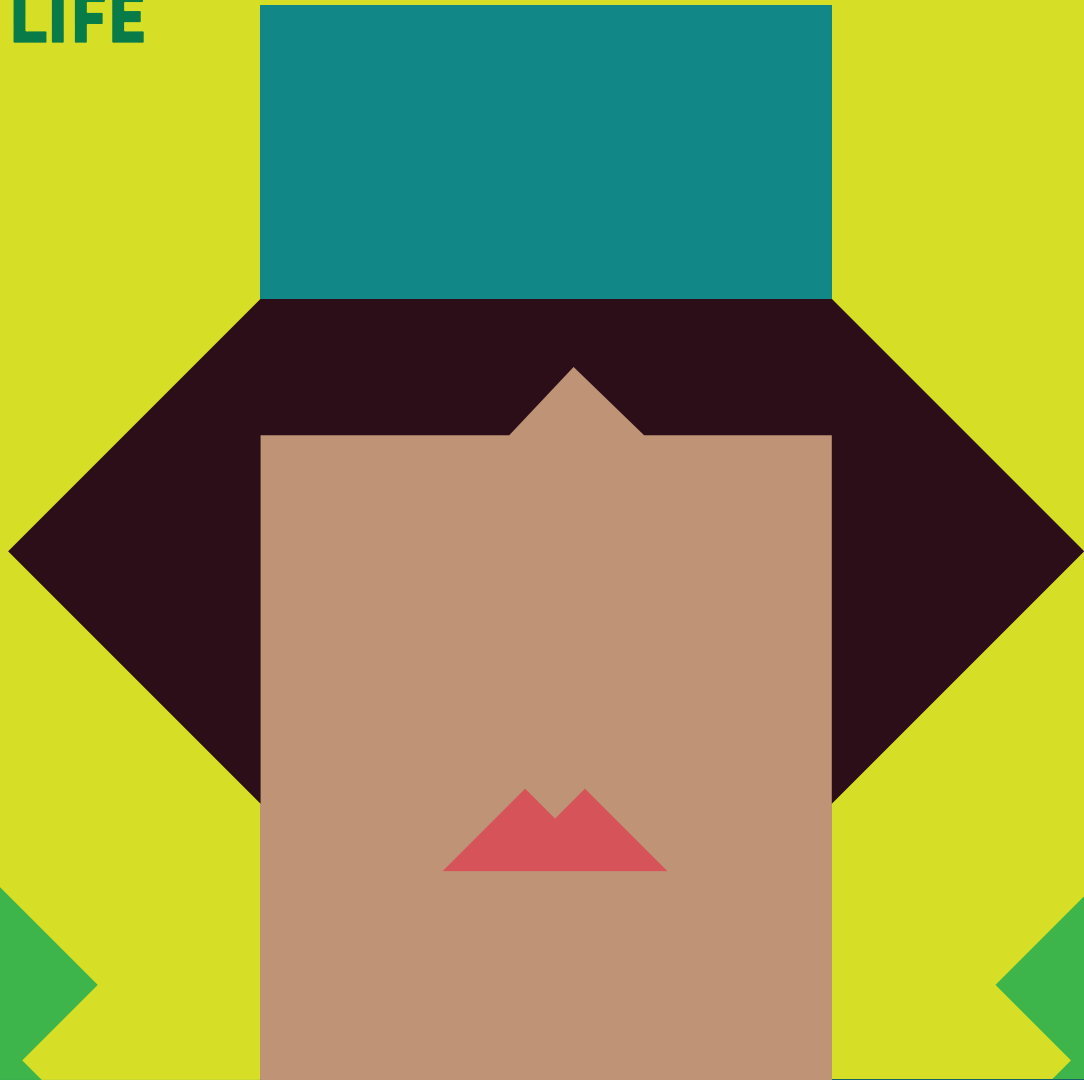


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