

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO BY Cheryl Armstrong

The Master Gardeners' Annual Plant Sale was held earlier this month. A variety of vegetables were offered for sale and inquiries were made to Master Gardeners about many of the vegetables. Following is a sampling of questions asked:

Q. What is the difference between onion sets and onion transplants?

A. When it comes to planting onions, you have three options: you can start with seeds, seedlings (transplants) or sets. There are advantages and disadvantages that go along with each method. Although many Texas gardeners use these terms interchangeably, there is a difference. An onion "set" is actually a small bulb, generally 1/2

to 1 inch in diameter. An onion set is produced under conditions which caused young onion plants to rapidly make a small bulb which, when planted in the garden, will produce a larger bulb. An onion transplant (also known as onion seedling) is an onion plant typically ranging from 8-to-10 weeks old which has not gone through the bulbing process and, if planted at the right time will produce a large bulb. Now through mid-

Gardening can go far beyond providing vegetables, fruits or flowers. Wellness gardening is about making positive choices to give us the best mental, physical and spiritual life we can live.



PHOTO BY Cheryl Armstrong

Onions are easier to grow in the fall/winter garden and they're a great plant for tucking into spare corners and along the edges of garden beds.

November is an excellent time to plant transplants. Gardeners may be surprised to learn that onions can be grown from seeds but doing so requires an investment of time and effort that most gardeners would not likely provide. Onions are easier to grow than you might think, and they're a great plant for tucking into spare corners and along the edges of garden beds.

Q. Are broccoli leaves



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edible?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact, most people would have a hard time distinguishing between the young leaves of broccoli and those of collard greens. Harvest and prepare only young and tender leaves as older leaves of broccoli become tough and often develop a somewhat bitter or off-taste.

Q. Are ornamental cabbages or kales edible?

A. There are certain varieties of cabbage and kale that produce decorative, non-heading plants with green or purple leaves and colorful white, cream, pink, red or purple interleaves. These are sold as "flowering cabbage" and can be attractively used as edging or for low, colorful accent plants in flower beds. Ornamental cabbage, like other members of the kale crop family, does best when it matures under cool weather conditions. While the leaves are edible, they are rather tough and strong in flavor.

Q. I am growing cauliflower for the first time. I read somewhere that it must be blanched to reach its best quality. How does one blanch cauliflower?

Blanching of cauliflower means protecting the heads from sunlight. Unblanched heads will be yellowish green while blanched heads are pure white. When the head begins to enlarge, pull the outer leaves over the head and tie them with a rubber band or soft twine.

Start checking your plants about 30 days after transplanting your seedlings. The cauliflower heads develop quickly and it's that development that tells you when to blanch. Start blanching cauliflower heads when they are about the size of a chicken egg.

AT a Glance . . . "Wellness Gardening"

Wellness is about making positive choices to give us the best mental, physical and spiritual life we can live. Gardening can go far beyond providing vegetables, fruits or flowers. Master Gardener Tim Jahnke will provide a presentation on "Wellness Gardening" and will discuss the positive impacts that gardening can have on our lives. Tim's presentation will be conducted on Tuesday, October 28, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street, FM 519) in La Marque. Pre-registration is required (phone 281-534-3413, ext. 12 or e-mail GAL-V3@wt.net).

Some of my favorite childhood memories include the days I spent with my Father and Grandfather planting the family garden. From selecting which seeds to buy, to tilling the sandy loam soil, to dropping seeds in rows or small planting holes, to watching the delicate green spouts emerge from the soil, and of course, to eating the fresh vegetables we had grown.

Gardening as a youngster provided memories that still warm my heart. I still recall with great fondness planting and harvesting heirloom tomatoes that ranged in color from pink to yellow to orange. Remembering the juiciness and flavor has motivated me to plant tomatoes in the gardens I planted over the years in Virginia, Maryland, Oklahoma, Louisiana as well as Texas.

There is just something about gardening that has the power to enhance health and wellness. Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke for many gardeners when he wrote that "All my hurts my garden spade can heal." The beneficial effects of gardens and gardening on emotional, mental, and physical health are grounded in spirituality and hard science. Come learn about the history of gardens and gardening in enhancing health and well-being and about innovative ways that gardens and gardening are being used to promote health.

