



"Farmer Rick" is planting his spring onions. Also, in his plot and sown this past fall are, rear to front: garlic, Kyoto carrots, cilantro, mache and shallots

The Dirt on Soil

There are 4 types of soil: clay, loam, sand and silt. Here at the HOCG we have sandy soil. That means our soil lacks a lot of nutrients and water runs through it very quickly.

To create a healthier HOCG soil we need to amend it. Healthy soil allows the plant's roots to breath better as well as to take up its needed water and nutrients. Healthy soil, with the proper pH, allows fertilizers to work their best, too.

Fall is the optimum time to amend soil. You can apply composted manure and leaf mulch laying it on the top of your existing soil. In the spring you'd mix it into the top 4" of your bed

Also, in the spring, you can add amendments of completed compost or bagged soil but you have to be careful of what type of bagged soil you need. Whatever you add in the spring needs to be mixed into you plot's soil at least 2 weeks prior to planting.

ALERT: Not all bagged soil is the same !!

Checklist for May

- Be aware that the last frost date in our area varies from April 20th—May 23rd. Warm weather plants like tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, etc. should not be planted until after the 23rd of May. Cover these plants if frost is forecast.
- Gently, water direct-seeded beds daily until seeds sprout.
- Water plants at the base to prevent fungus and other disease. Water early in the day so any water on the leaves evaporates before sun leaves them.
- Weed whenever you see a weed in your plot or else you will be battling them for many years once they take hold.

Important Dates To Remember

- May 13 & 14: Master Gardener Spring Garden Days & Plant Sale @ Ag Bldg.4000 Kozloski Rd.Freehold
- **Membership meeting May 18 6:30 PM** at the HOCG
- **Weed Wednesday May 25 6:30** at the HOCG

END OF MAY IRRIGATION WILL BE TURNED ON FOR PAR AREAS OF HOCG

PLEASE CONSERVE WATER

LAST YEAR AT THE HOCG WE USED THREE TIMES THE AMOUNT OF WATER WE USED THE YEAR BEFORE.

That means our water bill was three times higher, as well. HOCG cash reserve has been used to pay for this.

To prevent evaporation as well as fungal diseases:

1. **Water the base of your plants only and as early in the day as possible.**
2. **Mulch your plants.**

Remember to COMPLETELY shut down your hydrant when finished watering.



H.O.C.G. News

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

All I Need to Know About Life I Learned in the Garden

...by Andy Valdes

Start with a plan.
Begin early.
If it doesn't work, try something else.
A good foundation makes a difference.
Dream BIG but don't forget the little things.
Growth takes time. Be patient.
Pruning and thinning hurt,
but they help you grow.
Maintenance and perseverance are key in the
long run.
Don't fight nature.
Weather happens.
Dig deep. You might be surprised.
You need space.
Put down roots,
but don't be afraid to transplant.
Weed out the annoyances.
Little pests can cause big problems.
What you can't see matters -
Stay hydrated.
You reap what you sow.
Call a spade a spade.
Never throw in the trowel.
It's all in how you look at things -
is it manure or fertilizer? Garbage or compost?
Many hands make light work.
Be in the right place at the right time.
Sunshine makes you happy.
It all started because someone planted
a seed...

Weed of the Month

Puncturevine is an aggressive and hardy invasive species. It is widely known as a noxious weed because of its small woody fruit – the bur – having long sharp and strong spines which easily penetrate surfaces, such as bare feet or thin shoes of crop workers and other pedestrians, the rubber of bicycle tires, and the mouths and skin of grazing animals.



Herbal Updates

Andrea Hayes, Herb Garden Leader



Chives and Garlic chives are up in the Herb Garden. Chive flowers and leaves are edible. The flowers make a wonderful pink vinegar. Use white vinegar to show off the color. It's a great way to preserve and add flavors to salads, etc. They are also a great addition to eggs, baked potatoes and a nice way to finish meat and fish dishes. You can, also, make a nice chive salt—a new version of onion salt.

To make the salt, I would try 1 cup coarse sea salt to 1/4 cup chives blended in processor until combined. Let dry a few days stirring occasionally. The nice green colors will fade over time. Ratio depends upon the liquid in the herbs. Should be slightly moist but not wet, if it is add more *salt*.

HOCG 2022 Workshop Schedule

By Sandy Wolfe, Education Leader

There will be FREE educational workshops held in the HOCG March–November this year. Some workshops you will be asked to preregister for. These will have hands-on materials provided. The schedule is below.

May - no workshops

***June 18:** Tomato Pruning Workshop 2-2:15 PM

***July 18:** Insect, Pest & Disease Workshop using Integrated Pest Management 2-2:30 PM

August - no workshops

***September 10:** Putting Garden to bed Workshop 10-10:30 AM

October 8: Fall Soil Prep & 2023 Plot Planning Workshop 10-10:30 AM

Why do a Soil Test?

University of Minnesota



Soil tests measure the quantity of available soil nutrients and are used to determine the amount and type of fertilizer needed for the garden. The test will also measure the pH of the soil. Most vegetables grow best in a range of 6.8 to 7.2. This is important because if the pH is too low, plants cannot absorb nutrients from the soil. In addition, testing for organic matter can be very useful, giving you a starting point for adding fertilizer and organic matter. If the pH of the soil is too low, lime should be added. The analysis will include the recommended amount. Soil tests can be obtained from your local extension office or at local nurseries and garden centers. Further information, including a form requesting soil test kits, can be found at your local Agriculture Extension Office. (4000 Kozloski Way Freehold, NJ)