FOOD AND FITNESS

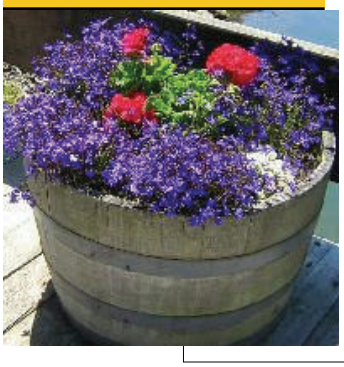
Volume 98
April 2010

Inside this issue:

Not Your Mother's Exercise Program	2
A Closer Look at Leeks	3
Recipe Corner	4
Delight the Grandchildren!	6

Web sites of interest:

- wvu.edu/~agexten/
- exerciseismedicine.org
- own-two-hands.livejournal.com



CONTAINER GARDENING

Do you have spring fever and want to garden but have no place to plant? Container gardening may be just the thing for you! You can grow herbs, vegetables, and flowers in small spaces in containers.

Things you'll need include containers, potting soil, fertilizer, water, and sunshine! Containers can be of all sizes, shapes, and materials. Clay, wood, or plastic serve equally well. However, all must have drainage holes in the bottom and will do best if placed on drainage slats as well.

Containers must be at least 6" in diameter and 8" deep for shallow-rooted plants like herbs, annuals lettuce, or peppers.

Larger bushel baskets, half barrels, or wooden tubs are good for tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and pole beans with a deeper root system.

Soil from the yard is usually too heavy for container gardening unless it is rather sandy and without clay. Commercial potting soil may allow for better drainage.

Fertilize with a water-soluble fertilizer every 2-3 weeks. Or add hu-

(Continued on page 2)

CONTAINER GARDENING

(Continued from page 1)

mus or composted vegetable matter to potting soil. Over fertilizing can burn or kill your plants.

Adequate watering is essential and may be needed once or twice daily when plants are in full sun in the height of summer. However, overwatering can be disastrous. Remember that good drainage is essential. Wooden slats placed under pots can help ensure proper drainage.

Information obtained from WVU Agricultural Extension Service.

NOT YOUR MOTHER'S EXERCISE PROGRAM!

Ladies, do you hate to diet? Do you prefer to exercise to get rid of extra pounds? It could take some time—like one whole hour just to maintain a healthy weight. That means more if we want to lose weight!

Don't you wish this were an April Fool joke? Unfortunately this is the real deal. Research findings published in the March 23, 2010 *Journal of the American Medical Association* indicate that women who are middle aged and older need an hour daily of moderate intensity exercise just to prevent weight gain! These recommendations are directed to women of normal weight who don't want to diet but want to avoid the average 1 1/2 pound per year weight gain associated with middle age.

The study, conducted by Dr. I-Min Lee and others, followed more than 34,000 women for 13 years. The women reported their levels of physical activity and had their weights checked every 3 years. The researchers divided the physical activity levels into three categories: 60 minutes per day, 20-60 minutes per day, and less than 150 minutes per week. Women who exercised an hour per day prevented weight gain, but did not lose weight. Both groups of women who exercised less than 60 minutes daily reported similar amounts of weight gain over the course of the study.

A CLOSER LOOK AT LEEKS

"It is said that Emperor Nero of Rome regularly ate large amounts of leeks in order to improve his singing voice, while the Welsh claim that wearing leeks in their helmets helped them achieve victory in battle. Today, leeks are popular throughout Europe, especially in France, as the key ingredient in vichyssoise, a cold potato leek soup. Offering a milder and sweeter flavor than onions, leeks are wonderfully delicious when cooked until barely tender."

Lifescript, Healthy Living for Women, September 6, 2005.

The **leek**, *Allium ampeloprasum* var. *porrum*, also sometimes known as *Allium porrum*, is a vegetable which belongs, along with the onion and garlic, to the Alliceae family.

The edible portions of the leek are the white onion base and light green stalk. The dark green outside leaves are usually discarded since they are inedible and have less flavor.

One of the most popular uses for the white and light green stalks is for adding flavor to soups and stock. Leeks are also a star ingredient in salads.

The leek has a mild, almost sweet, onion-like flavor. The taste can be described as a mixture of mild onion and cucumber, with a fresh smell similar to scallion.

Selection, Storage, and Cooking

When shopping for leeks choose those that have smaller and shorter stalks. Baby leeks, which are tender and delicately flavored, are also available in some markets.

Farmers' markets are the ideal place to find fresh leeks. The flavor will be far superior to those which are shipped across the country to your supermarket.

The greens of the plant should appear strong, un-wilted, and free from blemishes. Leeks can be stored for about a week in the refrigerator before they will spoil.

Store them loosely in an airtight container. Be sure to keep them contained to avoid flavoring other foods unintentionally!

RECIPE CORNER

Spring Tomato Bisque

1 Tablespoon olive oil

1 ½ cup chopped leeks

2 28 ounce cans diced tomatoes with juices

2 ½ cups chicken broth

3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup fat-free sour cream

1 4 oz. piece sharp white cheddar cheese

Heat olive oil in a large heavy pot. Add leeks and stir until vegetables are softened, about three minutes. Add tomatoes, chicken broth, dill, cayenne and salt. Bring to a simmer. Cook slowly, uncovered, until tomatoes are soft---about 20 minutes.

Allow soup to cool a bit before handling. Puree the soup in small batches in a food processor or blender, returning soup to the original pot. Warm over low heat. Gradually whisk in sour cream. Taste soup, adding more salt and cayenne if necessary.

To serve, ladle soup into 6 bowls. Shave very thin slices of cheddar and place two or three on top of each serving. Garnish each serving with fresh dill. *(Recipe adapted from Sunday Soups)*

Potato and Leek Soup

(A lighter version of vichyssoise)

3 medium sized leeks, white part only, chopped

1 medium sized white onion

2 Tablespoons olive oil

4 medium-sized potatoes

4 cups poultry stock or chicken broth

1 cup skim or 1% fat milk

Salt and white pepper to taste

Dash of Tabasco sauce

Chopped chives or green onions for garnish

Stir and sauté leeks for three minutes in olive oil over medium heat in a 2 quart heavy saucepan. Peel and slice potatoes, then add them to leeks, along with chicken broth or stock.

Simmer the vegetables for about fifteen minutes or until tender. Cool slightly, then use blender or food processor to mash and blend vegetables. Add the milk and season to taste.

Serve this soup hot or chill it quickly by placing it briefly in the freezer. Fresh ingredients make a world of difference in this recipe! Visit your local farmers' market!

RECIPE CORNER

Leek Side Dish or Side Salad

One bunch leeks

One cup chicken broth

Cut off darkest green portion of leeks and retain white stems. Wash thoroughly between layers.

Place stems and chicken broth in a small, covered saucepan and simmer for about five minutes, or until tender. Drain and serve warm with a squeeze

of fat-free margarine for a hot side dish or chilled with a sprinkle of vinaigrette dressing. The leeks could alternately be sautéed in a mall amount of margarine until tender.

Easter Egg Dyeing

Tales abound with regard to the tradition of dyeing Easter eggs. Symbolism of resurrection and starting new life are a common thread running through most of the stories related to this tradition.

After the Easter egg hunt deviled eggs are always a treat! To reduce the big blast of cholesterol from all those egg yolks you can mash half the egg yolks and replace the other half with mashed chickpeas. Add a little light mayonnaise, spicy mustard, pickle relish, cayenne pepper, lemon juice and stuff into the halved egg whites. Decorate with paprika and enjoy!

Spring Lagniappe*

With the cold days of winter mostly behind us, warmer spring weather encourages us to be more creative with nature's bounty. The season is right to take a walk outside and gather a few spring leaves or flowers to adorn your next gift package.

Keep a roll of pretty but inexpensive ribbon handy and use it to wrap and tie up your gift. There's nothing like a personal touch with a fresh flower and a bit of greenery to brighten up your giving! This could also be a festive touch for a luncheon table decoration.

* Lagniappe means a little something extra.

Heartfit/Nautilus Building
3200 Chesterfield
Charleston, WV 25304

Phone:304-744-6466
Fax: 304-388-9422

This newsletter is created by Susan M. Poindexter, MS, RD, LD, CDE, Nutrition Consultant to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services, and is funded in part by The West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services. Contributors: Catherine Townsend and Betsy Greer

wvseniorservices
.gov

DELIGHT THE GRANDCHILDREN!

Are the grandchildren going to be visiting for a few extra days this spring? Some activities—face painting and making animals from terry cloth or fruits and vegetables—never fail to amuse children aged five to ten years old. They may also amuse and entertain you!

Sometimes young children prefer to have their hands painted, and of course, this makes cleaning up much easier. You might want to visit the public library for suggestions on which paints and designs to use. Check out the book "Play with Your Food" to learn how to make bugs and animals from fruits and vegetables. Another book will provide inspiration for animals folded from terry cloth. Or check out www.crafters.org.