

What's Cookin':

Lori is eager to exercise her green thumb

I'm so excited that planting season will soon be upon us. Once again, I am not at all the gardener of the family— that skill lies firmly in the hands of my husband. However, I certainly am very pleased to head out to the side of the house and reap all the benefits of having fresh food in our yard!

This year we're taking that one step further. Since we have such a small spot on our property that gets the sun needed to plant a veggie garden, we have obtained one of the allotment garden plots at Dominion Gardens. This will be our first year. I haven't seen the size of the plots yet, but I understand from my hubby that we will be able to plant all kinds of good stuff now!

One of the first plants to pop up in the spring is rhubarb— that's why we've got a rhubarb recipe in here this week to get you in the mood! However, although the plant can be harvested soon, it must be planted in early spring so now is the time!

Here are a few bits of info regarding the rhubarb that you'll need to know. I did mention this to you last summer in another article, but I thought you might need a reminder!

If you miss the early spring opportunity for planting, that window of opportunity opens again in late summer.

When it comes to harvesting, don't pick

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



any stalks from first year plants. The second year, pick only sparingly. But third year plants will flourish when picked. Apparently picking actually perks up the production by the plant.

Rhubarb is ripe for picking when the spears appear a rosy red. With a slight twist, pull off large outer spears. Never cut the spears, as the blunt ends are susceptible to root rot. You can pluck up to two thirds of the spears at a time without causing harm to the plant.

During hot weather, the rhubarb plant produces large, fibrous seed stalks. They should be twisted off the plant because if left in place, the stalks will develop seeds, sapping the plant's energy.

Give your rhubarb plants a rest from July 4 until the fall. All edible perennials need time to produce and store its own food supply for the next year. Once fall comes, you can pick lightly only.

Have fun and keep cooking!

Email your questions and comments to Lori and Gerry at whatscookin@independentfreepress.com

Rhubarb Soup

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. red rhubarb (fresh or frozen)
- 8 cups water
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 2 slices lemon (1/4 inch thick)
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 tbsp cornstarch
- 1/3 cup cold water
- 1 egg yolk, beaten
- 1/2 cup heavy cream, whipped

Method

Cut rhubarb into 1" pieces and cook in the water until tender. Drain liquid through sieve, discarding pulp.

Return

juice to sauce pan and cook for five minutes with cinnamon and lemon. Add sugar.

Mix cornstarch with one third cup cold water and stir into hot juice

Just before serving, combine beaten egg yolk with whipped cream and stir into hot soup. Serve hot.

Makes 12 servings (6oz.)



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