

# Gardening

by Patricia VanBruggen

Imagine, if you can, a world without onions. Onions, *Allium cepa*, are so easily grown they can be raised by just about everyone - with or without a garden. With the price of onions soaring, many more green thumbs will be raising pots of green onions on windowsills to last them through next fall and winter.

Four species of onions are of particular interest to the vegetable gardener. Onion, garlic, leek and chives.

Onions have a long period of production since they can be harvested when they are young and green or when they are mature and fully ripe for storing. Available varieties include white, yellow and red.

Because of the onion's shallow root system, the soil should be well enriched with compost or rotted cow manure. A generous amount of peat moss worked into the soil will help to maintain the constantly moist condition necessary for top quality bulbs. The crop may be propagated from seeds, sets or seedlings. It takes about 100 days for the seed to produce ripe onions. Onion sets are year old bulbs harvested when small and stored over winter. These are much easier to plant, and they mature earlier than plants from seed.

Seedlings can be started in flats and transplanted into the garden 8 to 10 weeks later. Success with Spanish and Bermuda type onions requires the use of seedlings grown from seeds sown during february.

**HARVESTING:** Green onions are harvested as needed. Mature onions for storage are allowed to ripen fully. The neck shrivels first and the leaves fall over while they are still green. This process can be hastened by pushing or bending over the leaves with a hoe. The bulbs are cured by leaving them in the garden on top of the soil after pulling. Final withering of the foliage will take a week or so, and then cut back the withered tops shortly above the bulb. Collect and clean off the bulbs. Store them in a net bag and hang in a cool dry place. Avoid freezing.

**GARLIC:** *Allium sativum*, or garlic, rarely produces seed and is normally propagated by division of the bulb into cloves that are planted in rows spaced 30 centimetres apart. They are planted at the same time as onion sets and are treated in the same manner. Mature bulbs are produced in 90 to 100 days.

**LEEK:** *Allium porrum*, or leek, is a bulbless onion with flat, rather than hollow, round leaves. The thick elongated stems are used where a delicate flavour is desired. The plants are grown from seed as with onions. The seed is planted in furrowed rows and thinned. Gradually fill in the furrows as the plants grow. Seedlings for planting out are usually started in late February. In colder areas, the plants are dug up intact before the ground freezes, and stored in moist earth or sand in a cool cellar for winter use.

**CHIVES:** *Allium schoenoprasum*, or chives, is a perennial plant that will live in the garden for many years. It is often planted in Rock Gardens for its round globes of lilac flowers. The green tubular leaves grow 20-30 centimetres and have a delicate onion flavour - prized for soups, salads and baked potatoes. Plants can be started from very fresh seed sown in early spring, but propagation is usually from division of older plants. In early fall, lift and plant in pots for growing on the kitchen windowsills for fresh leaves all winter long.

## Rideau Lakes

### Horticultural Society

#### Happenings

Our July meeting took the form of a business meeting. We all enjoyed a program of slides taken at the Toronto Flower Show. We timed the slides to correspond with our own Flower Show and in that way encourage everyone to participate in our Fall Show. With the response of our horticultural members, I'm sure that our forthcoming Flower & Vegetable Show in Sept. will be a huge success.

I believe our plant-of-the-month feature is quite popular with all of us. We feature two or three unusual plants each month and a different member gives the cultural background usually accompanied with the actual plant.

We wish to have a large percentage of our area gardeners take part in our Show, so I'd like to include a preview of our Show schedule. You can obtain a copy of the Fall Show schedule at your local Library, wherever the Show posters are displayed, and just by calling any of our Society members. Remember any interested persons of the Rideau Lakes district can participate in our Flower Show. They will be available after August 10th. Please pick one up and plan on attending.

Our Show schedule consists of Adult and children sections on: vegetables, flowers, houseplants, and flower arranging classes. We encourage the 13 and under children in growing and arranging their own flowers and vegetables. Our schedule includes animal and fruit characters, terrarium, natural dried arrangements. Check our program - there's something for everyone.

Join us at our August 1st meeting to hear our program discussed in detail as well as a few Flower Show hints on exhibiting. Newboro Town Hall, August 1 at 8:00 p.m. Everyone welcome.



## KID'S STUFF

### PAPER PLATE MASK

It's easy to create masks out of round paper plates. Start by drawing a face on the back of a paper plate. Use coloured markers, crayons, or tempera paints. Pierce holes for your eyes and mouth. Parts of other plates, pieces of wool, or pipe cleaners can be used to create the character.

Punch a hole through each side, about 3/4" from the edge of the plate. Run a string or elastic through these holes and tie to fit your head.

Some mask ideas:



Space creature



Lion



Soldier

### Confucius Say:

Man who put face in punch bowl get punch in nose.

Chemist who fall in acid get absorbed in work.

Man who live in glass house should dress in the basement.  
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Professor: If, in going down an incline, I gain four feet per second, what will be my condition after 25 seconds?

Student: You'll be a centipede!  
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### CORN NUTS

Save late season ears of sweet corn, even those toughies which are no good for boiling or canning. The dried kernels can be turned into a family treat for winter evenings.

Pour the kernels into a heavy pan and add enough oil to coat and fry until they're plump and brown. Sprinkle the corn nuts with a little salt and enjoy!

## Riddle Mania

Q. Why do elephants clip their toenails?

A. So their tennis shoes will fit.

Q. Where does a sheep go to get his wool cut?

A. To the Baa-baa shop.

Q. What did the near-sighted porcupine say when he backed into a cactus?

A. Excuse me, honey.

Q. What hangs from the ceiling and eats flies?

A. A fly-eating ceiling hanger.



Boys and Girls!

### SUNSHINE MUSIC

A special musical/puppet show for boys and girls will be presented at the Elgin Branch of Rideau Lakes Union Library on Friday, August 4 at 2 p.m.

"Sunshine Music" with Suzanne Pinel and Company is a musical happening for children 3 to 9 years of age. The program includes songs and stories as well as hand and life-size puppets such as Sunshine Bear, Pif Paf Penguin, Raggedy Cindy and Samuel the Clown.

All boys and girls are invited to come, see and participate in this free show. The program is sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council, "Outreach Ontario" of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and the Eastern Ontario Library System.