

If you've been reading the papers lately, you will have seen reports of E. coli poisoning from contaminated spinach and scallions. What better excuse could you have to start your own vegetable garden? In your own garden, you control what gets into your plants, how they are fertilized, and how they are harvested. Plus you'll have the best-tasting vegetables you've ever eaten. If you are a complete novice to gardening, over the next few weeks we'll look at starting your own vegetable garden and discuss what, how, and when to plant your own uncontaminated food. I hope you cut and keep this series so that you can start growing and enjoying your own vegetables this year.

Your first job is to select the area for your vegetable garden. It should not be too large to start with. You can always enlarge it when you've acquired some experience. We'll start with a growing bed that's 4 feet wide and 12 feet long. I do not walk on the soil in the growing bed to give seeds the best chance at life. Making the bed 4 feet wide allows me to reach in from both sides. Ideally, your growing bed will be oriented east to west so that you can grow taller vegetables at the back and root crops or low growing plants in front. A bed of this size provides 48 square feet of growing space, which gives enough for two to four tomato plants, a zucchini plant, a row of basil, a row of onions, some lettuce, maybe a few peppers and



## The Island Garden

By Roger Marshall

eggplants and a little spinach. To get all these vegetables in before fall frosts we'll need to plant in succession, so we'll have to pay careful attention to planting times. Later, I'll explain how to germinate seeds indoors to help you grow more in the same space.

Before you start, get your soil tested. Call the URI extension service and get a soil-testing kit. Have them test your growing bed soil and supplement it as they recommend. If you decide to wing it and grow without a soil test, you need to tend to the soil. That's the number one job. It should be light, friable, easy to turn, and full of organic matter. We'll save making your own compost for a later issue and for this project rely on store bought products from Jamestown Hardware. For your growing bed, buy a couple of bags of horse or cow manure, a small bag of lime, a couple of bags of peat moss or other organic matter, a bag of bone meal, and a bag of dried bloodmeal. These are all organic fertilizers. If you wish to use a fertilizer such as Miracle Grow, you can probably skip this step, but your soil won't be as good over the long term.

Around the 15th to 25th of April in your island garden, dig in the bags of manure to the depth of one garden fork. Sprinkle a little lime, bone meal, and bloodmeal over the growing bed at the rate recommended on the bag and rake it in. Rake the growing bed over and mark a row 4 inches in from the north side. Make a small trench about 2 inches deep and sow peas about 4 inches apart. A packet of peas will sow about one row. Cover the peas with soil. To speed germination, you can soak the peas in water overnight, and then plant them. You can also cover the row with spun fleece to speed germination and to keep mice from eating our seeds.

Mark a second row 6 inches in from the pea row and dig a trench about half an inch deep. Sow spinach along this row, rake dirt over the spinach seeds. Six inches south of that row make another small trench and sprinkle lettuce seeds along the length of the row. Water your seeds well to help germinate them.

Your peas should germinate in a few days and be ready to harvest in 60 days or so. When the peas get 6 inches tall, push some twiggy sticks into the ground in

between the plants for the peas to climb on. The spinach and lettuce should be ready in about 30 to 50 days from sowing. Harvest plants as they grow to thin them, leaving a spinach or lettuce plant every 6 inches or so. The young leaves make good salads. That harvest will take you to the beginning or middle of June, just about the time to plant tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers, which will go right where the earlier plants were growing.

If you wish, plant more peas, lettuce and spinach 10 days to two weeks apart in the remainder of the bed to keep the harvest going. If you don't want to do this, wait until around May 10 to 15 to plant a row of carrots, beets, or other vegetables that you enjoy. All you have to do to your vegetable patch is to keep a watch for weeds and pull them out before they grow too large. As long as you keep the bed weed free, vegetables will grow just fine. As your skills improve, we'll look at mulching the bed - that is, covering the bed with an organic material to prevent weeds from growing in it, but for now pull weeds by hand.

*Next week we'll look at filling out the rest of your growing bed and growing squash in a separate area.*

## Buildings

Continued from page 11

the winter. The new backhoe is also equipped with a brush cutter with an extended boom as well as a clamshell loader for removing brush and picking up rocks and boulders. Pendlebury asked Town Planner Lisa Bryer, a committee member, to secure a list of all rights-of-way so they are included in the inspection.

Kelly also said that "the town has every intention of leaving the offices on Southwest Avenue by August of 2007." The town-owned facility should be used for affordable housing, Kelly said, and he asked for support from the committee in this regard. Robert-

son, who said he was a strong advocate of affordable housing, agreed, adding that "with escalating real estate values, purchasing new property was probably beyond their means."

Pendlebury said that he will write a short report to the Town Council concerning attendance records and scheduled committee meetings for next year.

## Donation

Continued from page 1

the filming.

Disney workers have constructed a temporary "book store" to be added to the shops at East Ferry. The bookstore will serve for a primary film sequence.

In late October, the council delegated Keiser to develop more information about his suggestions that the town consider a policy that would provide for fees for use of the town as a movie location.

Keiser said that industry sources told him that there are no set or standard agreements about costs for publicly-owned film locations, although there is widespread knowledge that fees are negotiated with owners of private properties used as movie locations. Keiser suggested that a hosting fee schedule would be in addition to assessment of costs for municipal services, such as police assignments. The policy would have no impact on or authority over payments to private entities, he said.

The councilors said they want the policy to specify a town contact worker so that film companies are not inundated with people looking for donations for use of publicly-owned locations.

During the open forum part of the meeting this week, Clayton Carlisle, of West Passage Drive, told the council that five or six Disney trailers were permanently parked for several weeks at a West Reach Drive cul de sac. He suggested that if Jamestown is asked to be a film location again that it review the arrangements for consideration of impacts on neighborhoods. "The impact was severe on our neighborhood," he said. He said that he was not against filmmaking, but he believed better arrangements could have been made.



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