

My 2007 Gardening Resolutions LMGA Contest Entries

#1 "Winner" ABCs OF GARDENING by Helen Abbott

Attract butterflies, Amend the soil.

Bright colors scattered throughout the yard. Consider the lilies, Compost. Dig & Design. Eat my produce. Find new plants. Fertilize as directed. Get involved. Hope it grows. Identify garden pests. Just keep weeding. Keep my eye on the goal. Listen to the birds. Make a rain barrel. Mulch.

Never give up. Open my eyes. Propagate & Prune . Quench my plant appetite. Use garden art. Remove the mistakes. Share plants. Think . Use the Clemson input. Vary Vegetable crops . Water. Xeriscape.

Yearn. Zap the weeds.

MY GARDEN WORK SCHEDULE by Alice Fraser.

In January 2004 I planted a fruit orchard. It was prompted by my participation in the MG program. Upon receiving the Clemson order form with zone appropriate fruits, I decided to take the plunge.

Today I have about 25 different fruits and over 75 plants ranging from small shrubs to trees over 15 feet.

In order to keep track of what I needed to do to each type of fruit and when to do it, I created 2 charts on Excel which has simplified the process.

One sheet lists all of the fruits alphabetically by common name. Across the top the column labels are as follows: Common Name, Latin Name, Year (planted), Spacing, Pruning, Soil Ph, Fertilizer, Bears (when it fruits). It is in a landscape format.

The second sheet lists the fruits again as above. Across the top are the 12 months. In each column I place an F for fertilize or P for Prune or leave it blank. I can look at the month of February and see that apples need fertilizer and grapes and pears need pruning.

GROWING MUSHROOMS by Anne Peters.

This year my gardening resolution was to grow something that I have never grown before. My husband gave me the opportunity by purchasing a mushroom growing kit as a Christmas gift! He found a grower in California called Mushroom Adventures and ordered the kit online (www.mushroomadventures.com). There were several types of mushrooms that you can grow - we chose the old standard, the white button mushroom - bring on the steak!

My kit arrived within a week or two and the instructions were very user friendly. It contained all the necessary components need to grow several crops of mushrooms over an 8 to 12 week period. It contained a large bag of compost which was inoculated with spawn which began to look frosty white or moldy within days as the mushroom mycelium started to grow through it. Another bag of dry peat moss called casing was also included in the kit. When it was the appropriate time (they even give you the date you need to start your kit by!), I added the correct amount of compost and water to the bag of casing. You then apply the casing to the top of the compost (still in the box) and continue to mist daily and keep the box indoors, out of direct light, and about 68 - 72 degrees.

The mushrooms should appear within 7 to 14 days and should be ready for picking around day 17 to 21. Mushrooms will just about double in size every day when they are young! Once the first crop is picked, I will continue to water and should get two more large crops - perhaps even three! At this time, the entire kit can be recycled by adding it to my compost bin or mixing it into my garden for fertilizer. It's been a fun and very easy adventure and I am looking forward to my first crop!