



## SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

### HOW TO START YOUR VEGETABLES INDOORS

If you are planning on growing a vegetable garden this summer, you can get a head start by growing seedlings indoors in early spring (it is still too cold outside at this time of year to plant seeds directly into your garden). Here's how:

- 🍎 You can grow seedlings in several different types of containers, including yogurt containers or plastic muffin trays.
- 🍎 Once you have collected your containers, wash them in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water. This helps to prevent the growth of fungus.
- 🍎 Cut small holes in the bottoms of the container so that water can drain out. This will ensure that your soil does not become water-logged and that your seeds do not drown.
- 🍎 Fill your container with moist potting soil. It is a good idea to mist the soil with a water spray bottle before you put it in the container.
- 🍎 Plant seeds in each of your containers. You should put about 2-3 seeds in each small yogurt container. How deep should you plant the seed? About 3 times the size of the seed. For example, if a seed is 1mm in diameter, you should plant the seed 3mm deep into the container soil.
- 🍎 Now you need to keep your soil moist with a spray bottle or gentle watering. The soil moisture should be similar to a damp sponge. You don't want to underwater, but you don't want to over-water either.
- 🍎 When you start to see green poking through the soil, you know that your seeds have successfully germinated. Now they need the sun, so place the containers next to a sunny window.
- 🍎 Continue watering and watching your seedlings grow!

## Early Spring 2009

### **Before You Put Your Seedlings Into Your Garden...**

Before you plant your seedlings in your garden, you need to give them some time to get used to the outdoor climate. Otherwise, the difference in climate between the indoors and outdoors can be too shocking.

- 🍎 About a week before you plan to plant the seedlings in your garden, begin putting them outside for short periods of time.
- 🍎 For the first few days, place the seedling containers outside in a shady spot (e.g. covered porch, under a table) and bring them back inside at night or at any time if the weather turns cold, windy or rainy.
- 🍎 For the next few days, gradually increase the amount of time that the seedlings are exposed to direct sunlight. By the end of the week, they will be able to handle a full day of sun.
- 🍎 Make sure you keep your seedlings well watered during this process.
- 🍎 After a week of getting used to the outdoor environment, your seedlings are ready to plant in your garden.
- 🍎 Try not to plant them during the sunniest part of the day (i.e. not at noon).
- 🍎 Water them well immediately after they have been planted.

### **DANDELIONS...SO MUCH MORE THAN A WEED!**

Although most people think of dandelions as just a weed, dandelion greens and roots are great for eating! They are very nutritious and full of healthy vitamins and minerals. In fact, dandelion greens are actually one of the most nutritious greens one can eat.

The best time to pick dandelion greens is in early spring before the plants have grown their yellow flowers. At this time the leaves are young, tender, and at their tastiest. You can eat them raw in salads and sandwiches.

If you want to pick dandelions for eating, make sure you pick them in a place where no chemicals have been sprayed. Do not pick them from public places or from the roadside. It is best to ask your parents first!

On the next page there are some dandelion recipes that you can try!

### **Dandelion Dip**

1/4 cup plain yogurt  
1/2 cup cottage cheese  
1 cup dandelion greens  
Garlic and salt to taste

1. Cut the greens and garlic into small pieces.
2. Combine with yogurt and cottage cheese.
3. Serve with tortilla chips.

### **Weed Balls**

2 cups dandelion greens (or other spring greens), chopped  
2 cups bread cubes, cut into 1/4 inch pieces  
2 large eggs  
3/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

1. Combine the dandelion greens and bread cubes.
2. Add eggs and mix.
3. Form the mixture into 16-20 ping-pong-sized balls.
4. Roll the balls in parmesan.
5. Bake at 425°F (220°C) for 10 minutes, until browned.

### **Dandelion Honey**

1 litre dandelion flower petals  
1 litre water  
3 slices lemon – 1/2 cm thick  
1/4 vanilla bean, cut in half  
1 kg sugar

1. Pick the dandelion flowers when it is sunny out and the flowers are open.
2. Pull off all the dandelion petals and put them in a pot with the water, lemon slices and vanilla bean.
3. Cook on the stove on medium heat for about 30 minutes.
4. Take the pot off the stove and let it sit for 5 to 6 hours.
5. Strain the mixture to separate the petals from the juice.
6. Return the juice to the pot and bring to a simmer.
7. Slowly add the sugar and simmer until desired thickness (takes about 4 hours).
8. Serve on toast, muffins or Danish.