

# Earthly Elements

*"Helpful Information From The Trenches"*

Issue 3

*Fall Edition*

September 2004

## *What is 'Hoarfrost'?*

The definition of 'Hoarfrost' is: a deposit of needle-like ice crystals formed by direct condensation at temperatures below freezing point. This is what it looks like....



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## **Squirrel Trouble**

*Whose garden is it, anyway?*



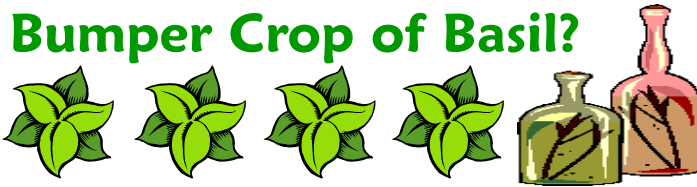
I planted LOTS of new tulips for you (my clients) in the fall. All winter you waited. By early spring, you were expecting to see blooming buds. Instead you saw nothing. What gives? Quite possibly squirrels. These little pests absolutely delight in digging up bulbs and or "re-planting them in a different spots, eating blossoms, and raiding bird-feeders.

Foiling them can also be a full-time job. Homespun tricks include spraying plantings with a hot pepper mix, protecting bulbs by planting garlic near them, or mixing physical deterrents such as ground oyster or eggshells into the soil around plants. Each gardener has his or her own favorite method. A number of commercially available products can also be sprayed on ornamental plantings to discourage browsing squirrels. (Ask your local nursery for suggestions.)

As a last-ditch effort, consider giving up the battle. Put up a special squirrel feeder well away from your garden, and it's possible (but not a guarantee) they'll forgo sampling from your flower beds this year.



## Bumper Crop of Basil?

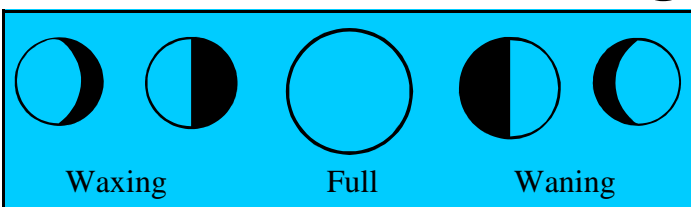


The first frost is looming to the north, but you still have at least a bushel of basil in your garden. What to do? Prepare some basil oil and freeze it. Here's how to make 2 1/2 cups:

1. Pick 5 to 6 cups of basil leaves and rinse well.
2. Dip the leaves briefly in boiling water and then into cold water, to soften them and preserve their color.
3. Gently roll leaves in a clean towel to dry.
4. In a saucepan over low heat, warm 1 cup of canola or safflower oil and 1 1/2 cups of extra-virgin olive oil. When warm, add basil and continue to simmer for 10 to 12 minutes. Allow to cool.
5. Pour basil oil into a blender and process for about a minute, turning blender off and on in short pulses.
6. Let mixture sit in the refrigerator for 48 hours, then strain into 4-ounce plastic containers and freeze. Use within three months as a marinade, basting sauce, dressing, or to dip bread.



## Lunar Phase Gardening



Gardening by the phases of the moon is one of the oldest practices out there. For those who thought this was just an old wives' tale, research is showing that at

least some of it makes sense scientifically.

Since the moon affects the tides and the atmosphere, therefore affecting the weather, it only makes sense that there is a certain rhythm to weather patterns. Gardeners are always looking for ways to use the weather to their advantage.

Hardworking New England farmers in the 17th century gave the title of "Harvest" moon to September's huge full moon that hangs close to the Earth's surface and thanked God for providing them extra light while harvesting their crops. Likewise, gardeners through the years appreciated the extra light, as they worked later into the evening bringing in their tomatoes and other vegetables.

There are hundreds of rules to follow in gardening by the moon and some of them seem to contradict each other. But here are a few general principles to get you started. Everyone seems to agree that the best time to plant vegetables and flowers that bear their fruit or flowers above ground is when the moon is waxing—the time between a new and a full moon. And the best time to plant bulbs and crops that are harvested below ground is when the moon is waning—the time between a full moon and a new moon. Normally, the moon rises 50 minutes later each night, but the full moon on September 28, the one nearest the autumnal equinox, first day of autumn (this year September 22) will rise at sunset as normal, but then for several nights, it will appear just 30 minutes or so later. This is caused by the tilt of the Earth at this time of year.

The lunar cycle can be divided into quarters, with the first two quarters occurring when the moon is waxing and the last two when it's waning. Some folks narrow down the principle we just explained even further: The third quarter is the time to plant bulbs and below ground crops, and the fourth quarter is a time to rest or to do non-planting work, such as building fences or weeding.

Whether or not you choose to believe that the moon influences the way your garden grows, organizing your chores into a schedule is a good idea. After all, who can disagree with a plan that even builds in time for rest?

For a more detailed explanation of lunar gardening, check out Louise Piotte's book "Planetary Planting."

## Doing Any Fall Cleaning?



Hospices of Henry Ford  
***Needs Your Help***



to continue the

### 2004 "Butterfly Bouquet" Flower Vase Drive

Hospices of Henry Ford has an ongoing program to collect new or used bud vases to create "Butterfly Bouquets" to cheer hospice patients. The staff does this in cooperation with the generosity of Vanessa's Flowers in Plymouth, who donate the flowers & **people like you** who donate the vases. This program has been a blessing to many patients in their final days.

***Your Flower Vase Donations  
Are Greatly Needed & Appreciated!***

All donations can be given to me or dropped off at:  
260 Union Street, Plymouth MI 48170

**please call: (734) 354 - 3372** with questions

## Plant Profile: Coneflowers

The North American native purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) are members of the daisy family, one of the plant world's largest groups, with 21,000 species. The genus *Echinacea* has only nine species, but



about 50 cultivated hybrids. The name *Echinacea* is derived from 'echinos', the Greek word for hedgehog, a reference to the plant's prickly seed heads.

Coneflowers are vigorous perennial plants with rough, handsome, deep green foliage, and striking flowers. The color is usually purple, but there are also varieties of pink, red, white, yellow and orange. The swept-back petals of some species and varieties give the flowers the appearance of a shuttcock. In many gardens in autumn, the borders begin to look tired and empty, but add any of the hardy perennial varieties mentioned here, and it will keep the show going longer.

**Growing Coneflowers.** Coneflowers are easy to grow and trouble-free. Where conditions are ideal, full sun or partial shade in well-drained soil, coneflowers flourish with little care and bloom for weeks through late summer and early fall. They tolerate hot, dry summers and can withstand winter temperatures as cold as 30 degrees below zero.

**Propagation.** Coneflowers can be grown from seed, cuttings or by dividing plants in early spring or early fall. Varieties grown from seed should bloom their first year in the garden.

**Fertilizer Isn't Essential.** If you do fertilize, apply a balanced fertilizer lightly in spring; over fertilization causes weak, spindly growth.

**Coneflower Cultivar Varieties:**

- |                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| 'Primadonna Deep Rose' | 'Alba'       |
| 'Kim's Knee High'      | 'Nana'       |
| 'Kim's Mop Head'       | 'Magnus'     |
| 'Robert Bloom'         | 'Bravado'    |
| 'White Luster'         | 'Purpurea'   |
| 'Razzmatazz'           | 'Ruby Star'  |
| 'White Swan'           | 'Ruby Giant' |

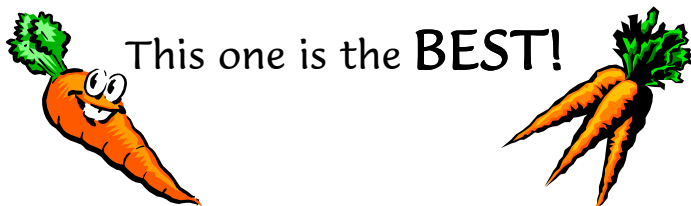
Blend together flour, baking soda, baking powder and sugar. Add salt and oil, then cinnamon, carrots and eggs. Beat after each item is added. Add nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes in either two 9" inch cake pans or 1, 9 x 13" inch pan.

**ICING**

- 1- 8 oz. package cream cheese
- 1 lb. powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 stick butter
- 2 tablespoons milk

Beat until smooth with electric mixer. If too thick, add more milk.

# Carrot Cake



This one is the **BEST!**

I'm not a big fan of carrot cake but this one made me change my mind! Thank you Joe & Frank for sharing it with all of us!

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 3 cups finely grated carrots
- 1 1/2 cups salad oil
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped nuts

## Gardener Gatherings

Places to Go & Things to Learn

### What & Where

**FREE PLANTS! FREE PLANTS!**

**Detroit News/English Gardens**  
**Fall Perennial Exchange**

**September 18th 9:00 to 11:00 AM**  
in the Detroit News Building Parking lot  
(3rd & Lafayette) call **313-222-2571**  
for directions & more information

**Novi's Fall Perennial Exchange**  
**September 18th 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**  
at the Novi Civic Center  
call **248-347-0400** for directions & info

**Tollgate Fall Fair & Plant Sale**  
**September 20th 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**  
at MSU Tollgate Gardens  
call **248-347-3860** for directions & info

Contact us at 734-416-0866 or earthenjoy@att.net