

# Earthly Elements

“Helpful Information From The Trenches”

Issue 3

*Fall Edition*

September 2011



## **THE SCIENCE OF FALL**

It's a wonderful world, full of brilliant purples, reds, oranges & yellows. However, nature's colors hold much more to us than meets the eye.

Sugar Maple, American Smoke Bush, Fothergilla—whatever your favorite tree or shrub for fall color, come September, everyone eagerly awaits the spectacle. In Michigan, you can count on a beautiful show however, you'll never get a rerun. The brilliance & variety change from year to year. Science helps to explain why.

To try & simplify the process: leaves stay green with chlorophyll through spring and summer as long as the sun shines & temperatures remain warm. Once days begin to shorten and cool, trees cut off nutrients from leaves, triggering a complex set of interactions among pigments, water, & carbohydrates. Chlorophyll levels decrease, making way for pigments that create the much-awaited - for purples, reds, yellows, & oranges, as well as browns.

Then again, what about a sugar maple that's brilliant crimson one year but only so-so orange the next? For that, we have to pay attention to the weather. The perfect autumn color generally follows a wet spring, moderate summer, & warm, bright sunny fall days with cool nights. However, cloudy days & warm nights in autumn or a hard frost can dampen or halt color change. Stress from drought, disease, insects, or environmental damage also can affect a tree's color, sometimes causing leaves to change as early as July or August.

Let's not forget micro-climates. They too, will cause a tree's color to vary. For example, 2 trees of the same species might show different shades or intensity based on moisture, sunlight, and soil pH. Color is subjective, but autumn always offers something to see. Whatever stage of the leaf cycle you enjoy, fall is the time to witness the inner workings of a tree on display.

### **In This Issue**

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Despite all the crazy weather we deal with, moments like these make us blessed to live here! Autumn in Michigan is the whole state's "late summer flower garden".



at the amount of useful info regarding olive oil. I was well aware that it's been used for centuries & is well known for both therapeutic & culinary uses. However, I was handed pages of many, many other wonderful uses. Here's a "short list".

- Substitute for shaving cream. Olive oil can provide a safe & natural lubricant for a close shave. When done, rub an extra teaspoon on to your body or face to keep skin soft all day. For those notoriously dry spots, such as your feet or elbows use olive oil daily to keep skin feeling it's best.
- A mixture of 1/2 cup olive oil, 1/4 cup vinegar, and 1/4 cup water used as a night cream will make your skin glow. The olive oil softens and moisturizes and the vinegar lightens discoloration, kills bacteria & loosens dead skin cells. Splash water on or dampen your face before applying.

- As hair conditioner. Is your hair dry & brittle? Put the moisture back into it by heating 1/2 cup olive oil (don't boil it), & then liberally applying it to your hair. Cover your hair with a plastic cap & then wrap it in a towel. Let it set for 45 minutes, then shampoo & thoroughly rinse. *Side Note:* you can also remove paint from hair. Simply moisten a cotton ball with olive oil & gently rub it into your hair where paint stains are.

- Shine stainless steel & brass. Rub a bit of olive oil on a clean rag & wipe surface down. Will prevent streaks, corrosion & tarnish. Helps to minimize scratches too! We did this on my mom's old sink, it worked beautifully! Looks great too!



**"Olive Grove 2"—Vincent Van Gogh  
1853-1890**

## Amazing Olive Oil

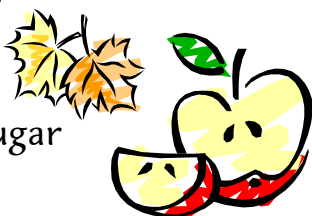
Once fall fades....winter comes & along with it the season of dry hair & skin. I attended a very interesting seminar on natural health care (mostly organic & vegan) & was amazed



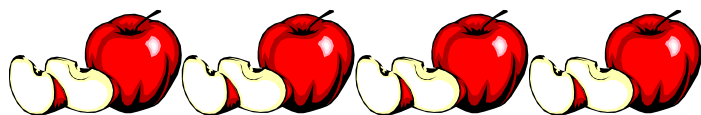
## Let's Toast to Fall!

### Hot Mulled Apple Cider

- 1 qt. apple cider
- 8 whole cloves
- 2/3 c. packed brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. ginger
- 1 stick cinnamon



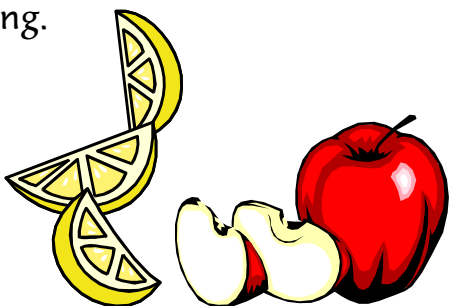
Combine all ingredients in 1 1/2 quart sauce pan. Cook until brown sugar is dissolved, stirring constantly. Simmer, covered, for 10 minutes; strain. Serve hot in cups. Garnish with lemon slices and cinnamon sticks for stirring. May keep warm in Crock pot on low. Yields 1 quart



### Lemon-Cider Spritzer

- Ice
- Juice from one lemon (2 tablespoons)
- 1/4 cup seltzer water
- Fresh apple cider
- Lemon & Apple slices (optional)

Fill a tall glass with ice. Pour in lemon juice & seltzer water. Fill the glass with fresh cider. Adjust lemon juice to taste. Garnish with lemon & apple slices. Makes 1 serving.



## Raw Pumpkin Face Mask

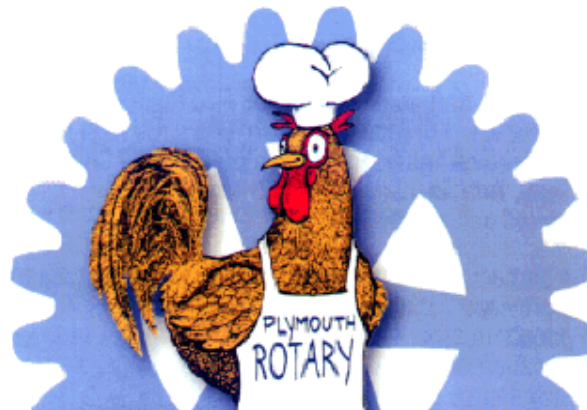
For a face treatment that's rich in antioxidants, cut a chunk from the inside of a raw pumpkin (the one you might be carving up for a Halloween porch decoration). Mash up the piece & puree it in the blender. (Heating it in the microwave will destroy the valuable nutrients).

After you puree it in the blender, slather on your face & let it set for 20 minutes before washing it off.



## Plymouth Rotary Club

### 56th Annual



## CHICKEN Bar-B-Que

Kellogg Park/Downtown Plymouth  
**Sunday, September 11th 2011**

11:00 am to 5:00 pm *(or until sold out)*  
Tickets: \$10.00 (presale)    \$12.00 (day of)

Contact Plymouth Chamber of Commerce  
**734-453-1540** for details

# Pumpkin-Sage Corn Bread

Prep: 20 minutes/Bake: 35 minutes  
Oven: 400°F

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pumpkin puree or canned pumpkin

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a 10-inch cast-iron skillet or a 9x9x2-inch square baking pan; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, snipped sage, and baking powder. In a medium mixing bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add the sugar and beat until creamy. Add the eggs, milk, and vanilla and beat on low speed just until blended. Stir in the pumpkin puree.

Add the pumpkin mixture to the flour mixture. Stir just until moistened. Pour the mixture into the prepared skillet or pan. Bake in preheated oven 35 to 40 minutes or until toothpick in center comes out clean. Cut into wedges or squares.



## Gardener Gatherings Places To Go Things To Learn



**What & Where**

**FREE PLANTS!!**  
Trailwood Garden Club  
Perennial X-Change  
**Sept. 10th (9 A.M. to Noon)**  
Kellogg Park Corner of Union & Ann Arbor Trail  
call 734-459-7499 for more information

**MORE FREE PLANTS!!**  
Dearborn Heights Plant Swap &  
Fall Clean-Up Mini Seminar  
**Sept. 17th (9 A.M. to Noon)**  
**Fall Clean-up Seminar 10:30 A.M.**  
at the Canfield Center  
call 313-633-1845 for information

**Tollgate Fall Fair**  
**Sept. 17th (10 A.M. to 3 P.M.)**  
call 248-347-3860 ext 251 for information  
or visit  
[www.tollgate.msu.edu/event\\_fallfair11.pdf](http://www.tollgate.msu.edu/event_fallfair11.pdf)

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