

## Annie's Gardens and Greens

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It's not your ordinary greenhouse!

We're on the web

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## Vermicomposting

The Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference was held in Eau Claire, WI and I was able to attend the three day event. The first day I attended a class on food safety and the second day we listened to Will Allen speak about his greenhouse business in Milwaukee, WI. He is passionate about being sustainable and he does a lot of composting, as well as vermicomposting. Vermicomposting is the product or process of composting by utilizing various species of worms. This is done specifically by using red wigglers, white worms and earthworms creating the heterogeneous mixture of decomposing vegetable or food waste, bedding materials, and pure vermicast

produced during the course of normal vermiculture operations according to the Wikipedia.

In other words, the worms break down the scraps you feed them and turn them into compost. If one was to begin this process where do you begin? You will need 5 basic ingredients.

1. A container
2. Bedding
3. Water
4. Worms
5. Non-fatty kitchen scraps

Containers can be purchased for \$80.00-\$130.00 or higher. You can also build one out of wood or I have seen



Will Allen of Growing Power

where holes are drilled into rubber maid containers. Each has their pros and cons and you should research both to know which would work for you. However, there is more to making a box and throwing some worms in it with scraps, so be sure to research this in detail, or you will end up with a box of dirt and dead worms.

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March 2010

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## Annie's Gardens and Greens Newsletter

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### Special points of interest:

- UIU Health Fair winner for a sample Staples share was Joyce Harper of Oelwein!
- 15th Annual Open House—Join us May 6, 7, and 8th!

## Tomorrow's a New Day

I must start out by apologizing for taking so long to get the January and February newsletters out. Do not let the tech people fool you. Modern technology does not always save us time, nor money. Our copier does LOTS of work. I am pretty sure that it is unionized because when it comes time to step up and print those really important things on time, it goes on strike, and it demands a tune up and a little more cash to make it go. Then there have been the computers. Our lease with Dell was up and it was time to upgrade. This has been a month and a half long process. The order did not come in right and I ended up with monitors that were not compatible with our towers, more mice and keyboards than you can shake a stick at and then our Windows 7 is so new that no one knows if their software is compatible to run the programs we have been running for the past 2 years. Of course the publisher program that I

make the catalogs on and these newsletters are not. So, we now must feed everything back through the copier twice, along with a few other inconveniences.

Amongst this technology mess, I had to put our beloved Sophie to sleep. I did not realize how quiet the house had gotten until she was gone and no one was greeting us at the door at night, or begging for morsels from our plates. And then there is the tax season. We are flooded with 1099's and demands for financial statements, end-of-the year reports, until all you can talk about, think about and dream about is numbers.

It is said that God never gives us any more than we can handle. I have to ask him just how much more he thinks I can handle?

And as winter ends, and



*"It is said that God never gives us any more than we can handle. I have to ask Him just how much more he thinks I can handle?"*

spring begins, we are once again reminded how precious this life is. We eagerly await the arrival of a new grandchild, number 8! And shortly we will begin planting seeds and watching them grow. Each day the sun grows stronger, reminding me that tomorrow is always a new day and a new beginning.

A day after I mailed out my newsletters I got a phone call and was told that I have a purpose for being here and how much the newsletters are appreciated.

Possibly He has answered my question, as I put this day behind me and start another. Thank you.



### Dill: A Great Compliment to Fish

water before cooking it for a sweet tender taste.

You could substitute the 2 teaspoons of Lemon Herb Dill Blend in place of the dill weed and salt in this recipe.

#### Fish in Lemony Dill Sauce

- 3 Tbsp butter
- 3/4 tsp dill weed
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp salt

Chopped green onion  
 1 lb fillets (flounder, sole, cod)  
 Lemon slices (optional)  
 In a 10 inch skillet over medium low heat, heat first 5 ingredients until butter is melted and hot, stirring occasionally. If fillets are large, cut into serving size pieces. Add fish to butter mixture in skillet. Cover and cook 8 to 10 minutes until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Baste occasionally with butter mixture. Arrange fish on serving platter

The Lenten season is here and that means fish fries every Friday. Dill is a great herb to use when cooking fish. Here's a tip to help flavor your fish: Soak your fish in 1/4 cup of vinegar, lemon juice or wine and

### Vermicomposting....Continued

Bedding must be able to retain both moisture and air while providing a place for the worms to live. Once you have established a place for your compost. Bury your scraps of food about 1/4 inch under the soil. Worms do not like light. By placing your scraps just below the soil you are allowing the worms to have access to the scraps. If you do purchase a bin and there is a tap at the bottom you can drain the water from the bin and use what is called "Worm Tea".

have been making with the food scraps. You can put the "Worm Tea" in a spray bottle and mist the plant leaves. The nutrients in the "Worm Tea" will absorb into the leaves, and the plant, causing exponential growth.



Worms will multiply over time. So allow for growth by increasing the size of the bin they live in or by harvesting your worms

"Worm Tea" is an organic rich liquid that results from compost the worms

"Worm Tea" is an organic rich liquid that results from compost.

from time to time so the population doesn't get to big. If the worms do not have room to grow they will be unable to process the food causing the food to rot, which can kill your worm population

It isn't necessary for you to go out and purchase bedding, as you probably have the materials you need. You can use: shredded corrugated cardboard or shredded paper.

### Cold Frame-Growing Veggie's

We ventured down to the cold frame the first week of March through the muck and mud, to see if the ground in the cold frame was ready for planting. The average temp. on a sunny day has been 80° and on overcast days the temp is around 40°-50°. Night time temps on average are around the freezing point or a little bit below. The ground is not frozen and

is workable so we started planting. We have planted radishes, carrots, beets, kohlrabi, lettuce, cucumbers, green beans & cauliflower, just to name a few. The rows are still covered with floating row covers and plastic to protect the seedlings as they come up and to help keep the ground warm. Within a month or so we will be enjoying fresh veggies from the

cold frame.

These vegetables will be going into our winter CSA's and will be for sale at the "GreenGrocery" in Calmar and the Roadside Stand beginning May 1. Stop out and visit us any time.



### Steege Wins Moo Roo Cash Cow

Moo Roo announced back in September 2009 a new contest. Customers have a chance to make some CA\$H just by using their product. Every Monday, when milk is processed, five 1-gallon jugs are marked with \$5.00 winners. On the 1st of every month they mark one 1-gallon jug as a \$100.00 winner. When your jug is empty,



just look behind the kangaroo label to see if you are a winner. If you have a winner please let us know and we will pick up your prize the next time we are in Waterloo. Last month, we had a WINNER!

Katie Steege and her family from Fredericksburg had a \$5.00 winner. Congratulations Steege family!! The \$100.00 winner has not yet been claimed since the contest has begun. Therefore, if you find a \$100.00 in your milk jug it is now worth \$700.00!! Keep checking your milk jugs, you could be a winner!

### Annie's 15th Annual Open House—May 6, 7 and 8

After a cool summer last year and a long cold winter, I am ready for some sunshine and to get out and dig in the dirt. This year we celebrate Annie's Gardens and Greens 15th Anniversary!!

We will be running Mother's Day specials May 6, 7 and 8. Join us Saturday, May 8, 2010 from 11 am to 3 pm for wine and food sampling.

Local vendors who will have their products available for you to sample are:

- Englebrecht's Family Winery of Fredericksburg, IA will be sampling their wine.
- Fairfield Farms of Clermont will sample meats.
- Hansen's Dairy from Hudson, IA will have samples of milk, ice cream and cheese curds.
- Spain Family Meats of Elgin, IA will sample meats.
- GROWN Locally of Decorah, IA will

have producers here to sample a variety of vegetables.

- Iowa Supreme Meats of Burt, IA will be grilling brats for sampling.
- Iowa Naturals will have soap samples available.
- Three Sisters Baking will be attending with a variety of their homemade baked goods for sale.
- Winneshiek Winery of Decorah, IA will be sampling their wine.

have received some new items for the children to help out in the garden.

We thank you for supporting us for the past 15 years. We hope to see you soon!

Celebrating 15 Years in Business!



Annie's Gardens and Greens

**Take \$5.00 Off**

Redeem with a purchase of \$25.00 or more on plants.

**Cannot be used with the Take 5 Card.**

Limit One Per Person  
Expires 6/30/2010