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## LETTUCE US TEACH YOU TO GARDEN

The groundhog says Spring will arrive early! I am optimistically holding on to that and dreaming of warmer days and the chance to start getting in the dirt. If that appeals to you then I encourage you to enroll in the upcoming 2019 Master Gardener Training classes here at the Extension Office. They start soon, February 28th and run until April 25<sup>th</sup>; both beginning and experienced gardeners are welcome.

Classes are taught by University of Maryland Horticulture Faculty and other experts. Participants receive 40 to 50 hours of basic training. This nationally recognized program began in 1978 as a means of extending the horticultural and pest management expertise of University of Maryland Extension to the general public. This program is designed to train volunteer horticultural educators.

Master Gardeners educate the public about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices through a demonstration garden at the UME office, presentations, fair demonstrations, and other creative activities. It's a great way to learn the ABC's of gardening and meet other garden enthusiasts and volunteer in the community. Special focus areas include:

- Bay-Wise landscape management, promoting better water quality through smarter gardening
- Grow It Eat It, educating the public about best practices for growing vegetables and fruits
- Landscape gardening, focused on providing information and inspiration to those interested in growing ornamental plants
- Pollinator-friendly gardening, raising awareness of the important roles in farming and the environment played by bees, butterflies and other pollinators, as well as ways to protect and sustain them
- Therapeutic gardening, reaching out to elderly and disabled groups who may benefit from the rejuvenating experience of horticulture
- Youth gardening, introducing youngsters to the joy of gardening, in public schools and other settings.

The cost is \$225. This year classes will be offered on Thursdays, 9:00am-3:30 pm; March and April, Tuesdays only, 9:00am-3:00pm. ALL classes are held at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick. Participants will be required to view lessons on-line prior to some classes. For details e-mail Susan Trice at [strice@umd.edu](mailto:strice@umd.edu) (best) or call 301-600-1596. Enroll now as classes fill up fast!

Enjoy these three popular recipes using vegetables you will learn to grow.

### **CARROTS WITH DILL**

1 pound fresh carrots  
1 tablespoon dried dill  
1 tablespoon butter or margarine

Wash carrots and slice. Sprinkle with dill. Steam or cook in microwave in a small amount of water. Drain and add butter or margarine

### **SIMPLY DELICIOUS COOKED SPINACH**

1 pound baby spinach, washed & ready to use  
1/2 teaspoon Crazy Jane's mixed up salt (optional)

Place spinach in large glass Pyrex dish. Sprinkle with seasoning if desired. Add 1 teaspoon water. Cover with glass top and cook for 5 minutes in microwave on high setting.

### **BAKED TOMATOES STUFFED WITH BREAD CRUMBS, PARMESAN & HERBS**

4 large, ripe but firm tomatoes  
2 slices whole wheat bread, crumbled  
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
4 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves  
4 tablespoons minced fresh basil leaves  
2 medium garlic cloves, minced  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut off and discard a 1/2-inch-thick slice from the top of each tomato. Use a small spoon to scoop out and discard any remaining parts of the core as well as the seeds. Reach down into the tomatoes to pull up as much liquid matter as possible. Be careful not to puncture the skin as you work. Set aside.

Combine the breadcrumbs, cheese, parsley, basil, garlic, 1-tablespoon oil and pepper to taste in a small bowl. Use your fingers or a small spoon to stuff the tomatoes with this mixture, making sure the filling reaches into all the hollowed out areas. Mound the filling a little above the top of each tomato and pat the filling gently to compact it.

Use vegetable spray to grease a baking dish just large enough to hold tomatoes in a single layer, place tomatoes in dish. Drizzle remaining 1-tablespoon oil over the tomatoes. Bake until stuffing turns golden brown and tomatoes are soft but not falling apart, 25 to 30 minutes. Allow tomatoes to cool for at least 15 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 4 servings.

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