



HOMEGROWN HERO: DAMON GRAY

Damon Gray's garden gets bigger and bigger every year! Damon has been a member of the Larimer community for over 30 years, including as an assistant scoutmaster in the St. James AME Church Troop. Damon graduated from CCAC with a master's degree in culinary arts and his passion for food eventually led to gardening. One day, he was looking out into his backyard with not much to do and decided to start a garden. He still grows many greens in those beds, and even more in his Homegrown beds. His wife inspired him to cook and juice kale and collards, and his son-in-law loves basil, so green leaves are always in abundance in Damon's yard. Every Sunday in the summer, Damon brings a box of produce to give away at his church in Homewood. His favorite thing to grow is zucchini, specifically dark green black beauty and yellow golden varieties. Damon's counsel to gardeners: "Plants will tell you when something's wrong. You learn from paying attention."

The Homegrown Herald

The Official Newsletter of Homegrown, Phipps' Edible Garden Program

Hello gardeners!

It continues to be an unpredictable spring in more ways than one, but we're committed to supporting you this year. We will be using all avenues to provide education until we can be in person again. Check out the Upcoming Events section for online class offerings.

We typically offer a seedling sale at the YMCA in May for those of you in year 3 or later of the program. Since we cannot hold in-person events at this time, we are partnering with Operation Better Block to offer our seedlings and theirs for sale with delivery. See Upcoming Events for more information.

May you find your garden a place of rest and calm as we head into summer!



Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
One Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3830

FOR YOUR HEALTH: GARLIC

Garlic is one of the most popular spices in the world, and it's no wonder! Not only does it taste delicious, it has many health benefits documented in modern and traditional medicine. It contains a number of vitamins as well as a unique superfood compound called allicin.

Garlic promotes heart health and is associated with lower blood pressure and cholesterol. It also has antimicrobial properties, which help you recover from a cold, heal from an infection and even clear up acne.



GARDEN TIPS: ALL ABOUT MULCH

What is considered a mulch? A mulch is any sort of material used to protect soil, retain moisture and control weeds. Mulches can be made with natural materials — like wood chips, bark, leaves or straw — or they can be made from synthetic materials, like plastic fabrics. Which mulch you use depends on what you need. 2 – 4 inches is a good mulch depth. Always keep mulch 4 inches away from shrub and tree trunks and 1 – 2 inches away from the crown of a smaller plant to avoid killing the stem.

Mulch for your vegetable garden or yard:

- Fall leaves are free and will decompose, giving your vegetable or flower garden nutrients. Chop them with a lawn mower or vacuum mulcher before putting them on your garden.
- Straw can be used. Make sure it is not hay with seeds.
- Three layers of newsprint or one layer of cardboard can be used. Cut a hole or slit for your plant to fit through.

Mulch for your yard (not for vegetables):

- Avoid colorized wood mulch made from demolition debris to avoid bringing chemicals into your yard
- Sawdust from untreated wood mixed with compost is an option and great for blueberries and hydrangeas
- Grow a living groundcover, like sweet woodruff or hardy geranium underneath shade trees



UPCOMING EVENTS

Homegrown Virtual Classes

Weed and Pest Identification Wed., May 20 | 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Companion Planting and Pollinators

Thurs., June 11 | 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Zoom links will be sent out via text and e-mail closer to the date.

Online Seedling Sale with Partner Operation Better Block

Throughout May, orders are being handled through OBB.

To view a list of current offerings, visit

phipps.conservatory.org/Seedlings.

To order, please email NaTisha Washington at nwashington@obbinc.org.

If you do not have an email address, text 412-385-7282.

Questions? Contact Allison Glick at aglick@phipps.conservatory.org or 412-385-7282.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Cucumber Garlic Gazpacho

Ingredients

- 1 large cucumber (remove large seeds)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. lime or lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 1 tsp. salt

Flavorings: black pepper, basil, oregano and/or hot sauce

Instructions

Chop vegetables and bread very finely or blend with machine. Add oil and citrus juice or vinegar. Mix well and flavor to taste. Chill in fridge before serving.

