

JANUARY 2025

GARDENING TO DO'S

Wishing You a Year of Successful Gardening!

Plan your gardening journey with confidence and creativity. Here are key dates, tips, and unique gardening methods to inspire your efforts this year. Remember to include native flowers and local seeds to increase our plant biodiversity!



Frost Dates for Redford, Michigan

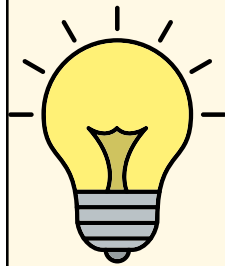
Last Frost: April 21, 2025

First Frost: October 27, 2025

Growing Season Length: 186 days

Keep these dates in mind as you plan your planting schedule to make the most of the growing season.

Indoor Transplant Planning



- Begin starting seeds indoors about six weeks prior to the last frost date. Refer to the specific seed packet for guidance on when to begin.
- About two weeks prior to transplanting outdoors, start hardening off your seedlings. Gradually introduce them to outdoor conditions to ensure they thrive when planted in your garden.

Unique Ways to Garden

Upcycle Your Garden

- Repurpose everyday items to create planters, trellises, or decor. For example, use old tires as raised beds or tin cans as herb planters.
- Get creative while reducing waste and adding a personal touch to your garden.

Go Vertical

- Maximize your gardening space by growing plants vertically. Use wall planters, trellises, or hanging pots.
- Perfect for small gardens or patios, vertical gardening also improves air circulation and access to sunlight.

Try Hydroponics

- Explore soilless gardening with hydroponic systems that use water enriched with nutrients.
- Ideal for growing herbs, lettuce, and other leafy greens indoors or in small spaces.

Make the most of your gardening experience by experimenting with new techniques and staying organized. Please visit our Seed Library for our local growers' chart. We'll have free copies while supplies last. Here's to a productive and fulfilling gardening season!

For more information on our Seed Library, please visit rtdl.org/seed-library

S O U P S E A S O N

Italian Wedding Soup

Ingredients

Meatballs

- 1/2 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 lb. ground pork
- 1 egg- beaten
- 1/2 cup Italian breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese grated
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1/3 cup fresh parsley finely chopped
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Soup

- 1 yellow onion diced
- 1 1/4 cups carrots diced
- 2 celery ribs diced
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 8 cups chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 3/4 cup small pasta, such as acini de pepe, uncooked
- 4-5 cups fresh spinach
- salt/pepper to taste

Garnish

- Parmesan cheese freshly grated



Instructions

1. Gently combine the meatball ingredients, don't overwork the meat. Roll into 3/4-inch balls.
2. Heat olive oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat.
3. Brown the meatballs in batches for about 2 minutes. The middle of the meatballs will finish cooking in the soup. Remove and set aside.
4. Add the onions, carrots, and celery and soften over medium heat for approximately 6 minutes, until softened. Add a splash of olive oil during cooking if needed.
5. Add the garlic and Italian seasoning and cook for 1 minute.
6. Add the chicken broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.
7. Add the cooked meatballs and simmer gently while you boil the pasta separately until al dente. Drain once cooked through and add the pasta to serving bowls. Cooking the pasta separately keeps it from absorbing the broth if there are leftovers.
8. Stir in the spinach and cook until wilted, about 2 minutes.
9. Ladle the soup into serving bowls and garnish with freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

Chicken Noodle Soup

Ingredients

- 1 large yellow onion
- 3 medium carrots
- 3 medium stalks celery
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil
- 2 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 (32-ounce) cartons low-sodium chicken broth (about 8 cups)
- 5 sprigs fresh thyme or a tsp dried thyme
- 2 dried bay leaves
- 1 (2 1/2- to 3-pound) rotisserie chicken, or about 1 pound cooked, boneless chicken
- 6 ounces dried extra-wide egg noodles (about 3 1/4 cups)
- 1/2 medium bunch fresh parsley or dill
- 1/2 large lemon (optional)

Instructions

1. Prepare the following, adding each to the same large bowl as you complete it: Dice 1 large onion (about 2 cups). Peel and cut 3 medium carrots crosswise into 1/2-inch thick rounds (about 1 3/4 cups). Cut 3 medium celery stalks crosswise into 1/2-inch thick pieces (about 1 1/4 cups). Mince 3 garlic cloves.
2. Melt 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a Dutch oven heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the onion mixture, 2 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.
3. Add 2 (32-ounce) cartons low-sodium chicken broth, 5 sprigs fresh thyme, and 2 dried bay leaves. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, use 2 forks to shred the meat from 1 (2 1/2- to 3-pound) rotisserie chicken or 1 pound cooked, boneless chicken into bite-sized pieces (about 3 cups).
4. Add the chicken and 6 ounces dried extra-wide egg noodles to the soup. Reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook until the noodles are just shy of al dente, 6 to 7 minutes or 1 minute less than the package instructions. Meanwhile, finely chop the leaves and tender stems from 1/2 medium bunch fresh parsley or dill until you have 1/4 cup.
5. Remove and discard the thyme sprigs and bay leaves. Taste and season with more kosher salt as needed. Add the chopped parsley or dill. If using, squeeze the juice from 1/2 large lemon until you have 2 tablespoons. Add to soup and stir to combine.

