

HOE, HOE, HOE!

Inspirational annotations from our readers are always welcomed!

With her permission, Elaine Janis provides some encouraging guidance for the St. Leo Community Garden and for all gardeners—newbies and experts alike! Here are her words of wisdom along with a photo of Elaine “in action!”

I'm a big container gardener. Much easier on the back and it keeps the rabbits etc. from eating your produce. Lettuce and carrots grow well in styrofoam coolers! Just poke holes in the bottom for drainage. I've been known to pick up coolers when they've been sitting out for the trash. If you have a small patio or porch you could grow a pot of lettuce, a tomato or even a green pepper plant! Lettuce self-sows itself if you don't pull it out of the dirt at the end of the season. It also grows like the lawn! Clip some for a meal and it grows back!

Heirloom seeds. Heirloom means when you grow the plant, you can keep the seeds from the fruit and never run out of seeds! I like to start seeds in Styrofoam coffee cups. I do not use fancy grow lights when starting seeds. Desk lamps work fine, especially the crook neck kind where the light and heat can get closer to the seeds. Since they are heirloom, as long as your gardeners keep some of the seeds*, they will always be able to grow the same veggies.

The Good Lord provides lots of materials for gardeners free for the taking. Grass is wonderful for your compost pile, as long as you don't use weed and feed. Keep all your vegetable scraps (no meat) for the compost pile also. Cuts down on stinky garbage cans. Leaves, mushrooms and small broken up sticks feed the soil. Pine needles make excellent mulch. Breaking up lots of sticks not only cleans up your yard but makes great mulch also. Large sticks are ideal for supporting peas or to make a teepee for green beans to grow on. I always think twice before I toss something. Perhaps it's the Native American heritage that makes it important to protect the earth and to recycle. It's amazing how much water we use in a day. Setting a bucket in the sink will collect "grey aka used water" that is fine for plants. Helps with the water bill also.

Happy Gardening!

*keep seeds from the ripened vegetable at end of the season



I'm standing in front of a pot of snow peas. Tall sticks support the peas. After blooming, the plant is great for feeding the compost pile.