

APRIL: National Garden Month Celebrations!

National Garden Month got started about 30 years ago when Former President Ronald Reagan signed a Proclamation on April 18, 1986 designating the first ever National Garden Week to be celebrated the next year from April 12 to 18, 1987. In 2002, the National Garden Association decided to extend the celebration to a whole month! So, let's all celebrate National Garden Month this year!

National Garden Month! What will you do to celebrate?

"Gardeners know, and research confirms, that nurturing plants is good for us: attitudes toward health and nutrition improve, kids perform better at school, and community spirit grows. Join the celebration and help to make America a greener, healthier, more livable place!" (National Garden Association¹) Help your community, park and recreation site, home, church, or other group celebrate gardening during *National Garden Month*. Check out some suggestions below and on the next page for some easy, fun activities you can do to celebrate.

Get-it-Ready (GIR) Day! Get a group together to get things ready for spring and summer planting!

- Give everyone a shovel and let them turn the earth, then mix in some organic matter, to prepare the in-ground garden plot for planting. Check out <http://bit.ly/CHGTips> for hints on location and soil.
- Build raised beds – raised beds are fantastic because they allow you to control the quality of the soil, provide better drainage than the ground (especially if you live in areas with lots of clay), and allow for easier access (and they are easier on your back and knees!). Check out this great page on raised beds <http://bit.ly/CHGraisedbeds>. Build them as a group at a community location, or get together to cut wood and put together bags of fasteners so people can take them home to assemble!
- Share seeds and herb perennials – a great way to try out new edibles is to share seeds and perennials with your neighbors, local gardening group, or others who share the love of edible gardening! Check out sites such as this one to find groups that share seeds, <http://bit.ly/2rzsdof>. Find out who shares seeds and/or perennials and create an event with them to celebrate local edible gardening!
- Build Salad Tables – A salad table is a waist-high "raised bed," build of whatever extra wood and screening you can find, that produces wonderful salad greens throughout many seasons (when covered as necessary). If you want to try your hand at building this efficient, easy-to-use "salad table," check out this MD Extension resource <http://bit.ly/saladtable>. Create some salad table soil-less planting mix, seed kits, or even the whole table for your group to take home to use as part of your celebration of *National Garden Month*!



APRIL: Host an Herb Tasting Event!

This month, as part of National Garden Month, think about hosting an *Herb Tasting Event*! If you have been lucky enough to have found success in growing herbs indoors during winter, share some of your bounty at an event to teach others about the wonderful aromas and flavors of fresh herbs! Or, buy some fresh potted herbs or cut fresh herbs in your local grocery store. There are many fun ways to share herbs in a tasting event – check out some suggestions below!

Herbal Tea Tasting!

One great way to try out different herbs is to make tea with them! Generally, when using fresh herbs for tea, use one sprig (or 1 tablespoon) per person (per cup), and muddle the herb a bit before putting it in the cup of hot water (tearing or crushing to release the herbal oils). Don't expect your herbal tea to get dark in color; instead, test for readiness by tasting your tea!

Read more at Gardening Know How: Plants For Tea Gardens: How To Brew The Best Plants For Tea <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/herbs/hgen/herbal-tea-plants.htm>



Herb-infused Oil Tasting!

Try different herbs in infused oils! It is simple to add fresh herbs to olive oil – all ages can do this! Try adding rosemary, thyme, basil, oregano, lemongrass, or other herbs to a jar with some oil in it, seal it, and then wait a couple of days before hosting your herb-infused oil tasting to allow better infusion of the herb. Use plain whole wheat bread or plain crackers during the tasting so the herbs in the infused oil pop! As a fundraiser, you may want to consider making small bottles of your favorite (take a vote!) to sell!



Herb-infused Water Tasting!

Try different herbs in infused waters – check out the *February CHG Newsletter* for more information on how to infuse water! Adding a muddled sprig of mint, lemongrass, rosemary, or basil can make your water pop! Bring a variety of herbs to your tasting event so everyone can try a few!

