

THE WISCONSIN VEGETABLE GARDENER

QUARTERLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE

FALL 2016

AUTUMN
PREPARATION

BEEES
the true gardeners

basics of home
FERMENTATION

Interview:
CaliKim

CaliKim Garden & Home DIY



about us

Joey & Holly Baird are the founders of The Wisconsin Vegetable Gardener.

They are a married couple living in southeastern Wisconsin (just outside of Milwaukee). Joey & Holly make videos on youtube about how to grow your own food organically, reusing found items (or items you may just throw away), what to do with the food you grow, home canning and simple home living. Along with traditional ground gardening they also grow indoors year-round using up and coming methods along with winter growing in cold frames and low tunnels.

Their goal through their; videos, podcast, public lectures and online communities is to educate the average person how easy it is to grow food, store food, and reuse everyday items. Their motto is ;

“For The Health Conscious Organic Gardener Worldwide”

Joey and Holly enjoy speaking at garden expo's throughout the midwest. Holly is also an award winning home canner with a handful of ribbons from the Wisconsin State Fair including a Best of Show award for her home canning talents.

If you find this interesting and have any questions or would like to talk further we can be emailed at thewiveggardener@gmail.com

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Joey Baird-Host, Cofounder

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Norman Gaulin- Art Director

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By Holly Baird

Home Fermentation

Home fermentation is a way to preserve vegetables without canning, freezing or dehydrating. This method has been practiced for years, and when done correctly, it is beneficial to your health and very safe. I am going to share my experience and some tips. You may enjoy several fermented foods already and don't realize you can make them yourself. This includes sauerkraut, kim chi, raw apple cider vinegar, kombucha, sourdough bread and yogurt.

I have successfully made sauerkraut, fermented pickles, various fermented vegetables, beet kvass, pear scrap vinegar, and kombucha, yogurt and milk kefir. Some of these may sound familiar to you and some may not.

Start small. Many people want to try every fermentation project. While that is fun, and you

have a lot of different things to choose from, it is best to get a handle on one thing before moving onto the next. I started by taking a class through my local recreation department and we made sauerkraut. We also made fermented pickles. If I didn't have the guide of our local master food preserver I would've just started with one. Both of my projects were successful and encouraged me to make more. From there I made yogurt so I could try a different type of fermentation.

Check your ferments frequently! This is a science but there can be varying results. Fermentation can happen fast during the warmer parts of the year but can also go slow depending on where you keep your ferments. I check mine at least twice a day, especially during the

summer. Warmth speeds up the process which means cold slows it down. You also want to keep your ferments in a well circulated area out of direct sunlight.

Find a good book or guide. There are many books out there on fermentation. You can also find a lot of guides on different websites and even Facebook groups. I have a couple different books I refer to and also belong to a few different facebook groups where I have found some great guidance and answers to troubleshooting.

Buy a starter if needed. I bought my kefir grains, yogurt starter and kombucha scoby. Sometimes you can purchase these locally from a friend, I found mine on culturesforhealth.com where they provide the guides and also have many videos available. I would highly recommend educating yourself before you get started.

When in doubt, throw it out. I live by this rule. If I see mold, or am unsure about one of my ferments I will toss it. Its not always easy, but this is the safest thing for you and your family.

Avoid using metal when storing or mixing. I use glass jars and wooden spoons or dowels when it comes to fermenting. I have been told using metal to mix or ferment in can cause different reactions. Many people will use sealed ceramic crocks as well.

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Bees

For many people gardening means buying seeds or starts, planting them, weeding the garden, providing water for the plants, and enjoying the harvest – the assumed basic garden maintenance and care. There is so much more to gardening and what goes unnoticed – the behind the scenes of gardening. Bees are a big part of helping your garden produce! There are 3 types of *bees* – ***bumblebees, honey bees and mason (stingless) bees.*** Bees are crucial for pollinating many plants and keeping our food system diverse.

Mason bees emerge first in the spring. The males come out first, then the females. They emerge from their cocoons once the temperatures are at around 50 degrees. They are quick to pollinate, only for a few weeks, then the females

lay their eggs in small holes. Over the summer and fall the new bee larvae grows and will be ready next spring.

Bumblebees do not colonize over winter but the queen bee will hibernate. She will emerge in early summer and build a proper place to nest and lay her eggs. Her first bees will be worker bees, bringing in pollen and taking care of the nest. As it gets later in the year she will begin to lay queens and drones to add growth to the next generation. Bumblebees will build their nests in low surfaces, such as a pile of brush or grass.

Honeybees colonize much like bumble bees. Honey bees live in hives and produce honey. They also have more of a varying worker, drone and queen bees that emerge from the eggs. Hives are natural structures built by the bees often

found in coves like tree knots or hollow logs.

Many people don't realize all of the foods that bees assist in pollinating. This includes many things you may already grow in your garden such as tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, peppers, eggplant, cabbage and more! Unfortunately pollinating bees are on a decline. This has been attributed to the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. These pesticides are very common, many homeowners use them, and they are also used in a lot of farming. These harmful pesticides choke out the bees by interfering their navigation and if they make it back to their colony they can cause harm to other bees.

While this is unfortunate, we can help the bees. One thing you can do is avoid using pesticide and herbicides. This will ensure that the bees have safe plants to collect their pollen from. You can also plant flowers that attract bees to your garden. This will feed the bees but also give you better pollination. It is also ideal to keep your dandelions growing as this is the very first food



bees generally can find available in the spring. They can feed heavily off of a hardy dandelion plant. You can also help by educating others about the use of pesticides and bees, planting pollinator friendly plants, and not destroying the dandelions.

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Interview
CaliKim



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CaliKim, is a Southern California urban organic gardener who teaches people all over the world how to grow their own food and be healthier as result. She believes growing your own food doesn't have to be complicated, take a lot of time, or cost a lot of money. She provides instruction on how to grow a garden in a quick, simple, inexpensive way.

Her YouTube channel, CaliKim Garden & Home DIY has a very engaged community of over 60k subscribers. Through her YouTube channel, website, calikimgardenandhome.com and social media communities, she shares garden how to's and tips, healthy garden-to-table recipes, home DIY's, and provides garden support.

Kim and her husband, Jerry, a.k.a. "CameraGuy", work as a team to produce gardening videos and content, and have recently launched her first ebook,

"Growing 5 Warm Weather Vegetables Made Easy" and a garden caricature coloring book, *"CaliKim's Garden"*.

Q:What growing zone are you in? What area of the US do you garden in?

A:I am in zone 9b, in Southern California.

Q:How did you get into gardening?

A:As a child, my 9 siblings and I spent many hours working together in our family's large garden. We picked endless rows of beans, husked corn, harvested tomatoes and LOTS of zucchini and enjoyed many tasty meals made with homegrown veggies. We also helped my mom can and freeze the many vegetables that we grew. Growing up in Colorado – where we couldn't grow anything outdoors in the winter-

Being raised with these experiences helped me appreciate eating fresh, healthy food. I was excited to finally have a backyard where I could grow my own organic food when my husband, Jerry, and I, and our two children moved into house of our own in Southern California in 2011.

Q: Your husband, aka Camera Guy, was he receptive to you wanting to garden, or did this cause conflict – how did it become a family hobby?

A: Jerry has always been supportive of me wanting to grow healthy food for our family, and he loves the fresh, clean taste of homegrown! It hasn't caused conflict, although he jokes about me taking over the backyard with my garden!

We've always enjoyed working hard outdoors together, and love the feeling of accomplishment that comes from seeing a project through from start to finish. I do most of the day to day gardening, and we work together on the big projects, such as terracing our hilly backyard for more garden space, building new raised beds, or putting in the hoop houses for the winter.

Q:With you growing in California, most people think you can grow year round without any problems, but that's not the case. What are some of the biggest problems you face in having a climate that's warm almost year round?

A:We are blessed to live in California, I love being able to be outdoors and grow food year round. Because our weather is hot and dry 6 months out of the year, and warm with very little rain the other 6 months, I have to water year round, this gets expensive. Heavy mulching is a must for water conservation here in Cali!

Cool weather crops can be challenging to grow, even in the cooler months. As soon as I get a good head of cabbage, broccoli or cauliflower going, we get few days of 90 degree weather and it bolts. With the California drought, pests and rodents are looking for juicy food, and they love the buffet in

our garden! It's always a battle to keep them from devouring my tomatoes and watermelon!

Q: You are very popular on youtube as showing people how to grow their own food, your husband, aka Camera Guy, films you in the garden – why did you decide to make gardening videos? Where did the inspiration come from?

A: In the beginning, we never dreamed our channel would grow like it has! In fact, we started filming garden videos on a whim. Jerry and a few of his videographer buddies challenged each other to make a viral video. He filmed me using compost to fertilize my garden and posted it on YouTube. A few people watched and asked for more videos, so we posted more videos and people started subscribing to our channel!

While the first video didn't go viral, we realized our individual passions and skills make a good team - and decided to work together to grow our YouTube channel. I enjoy showing people how to grow their own food in an easy and affordable way, and Jerry loves being creative with the camera to produce videos that are visually appealing. We see YouTube as a way to communicate a message that we believe in, and love being part of a community that learns together, offers support, and makes a difference in each other's lives.

We are inspired by many of our wonderful subscribers who share how their lives have changed because of our videos. When we hear how a viewer is able to stop taking high blood pressure or diabetes meds because of growing and eating their own organic food, or how gardening fills an empty space in a viewer's heart, it motivates us to keep producing gardening content that helps more people do the same!



photos courtesy

Q: Every gardener has a challenging crop (or more than one) challenge crop to grow. What crops are these for you? Any idea as to why?

A: Broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage have always been a challenge. The weather doesn't cooperate long enough for me to get decent heads - we get unpredictable hot spells in the middle of the winter. As soon as a good head gets going, a few 90 degree days causes them to bolt. I've always wanted to grow enough to have lots to freeze, but have never been able to. I am going to try some new techniques this winter and hope to improve my success with these crops!

Q: You're a very popular YouTube gardener, and are seen around the world. You get questions daily - what is the most common question you receive and what is the answer to that question?

A: A frequently asked question is: "Why are there only male flowers on my squash and cucumbers and no female flowers?" and "Why am I not getting squash and cucumbers on my plants?" Answer: Squash and cukes are notorious for pollination issues - the first flowers are male, appearing up to 2 weeks before female flowers, and often drop off.

Don't be alarmed, female flowers are coming soon, they have a tiny swelling of a developing fruit behind them. To increase development of fruit,

help the bees out by hand pollinating - transferring some of the pollen from the male flower to the female flower - easy to do with a small brush. Watch my "How to Hand Pollinate" video for all the details and plant flowers that attract more pollinators!

Q: What do you do with the excess produce you get out of your garden (can, freeze, preserve)?

A: I love to give my fresh fruits and veggies away to friends, family and neighbors to get them excited about the taste of garden fresh! Once they taste the difference, they LOVE it, and, many times, want to grow their own. I freeze whatever I don't give away or our family can't eat fresh. I don't can too much, but do love to make (and can) pepper jelly. It's fun to give away for gifts, and it's a pretty popular appetizer at any gatherings we attend!

Q: What are some tips that you can offer, as you do in your videos, for people who have small back yards similar to yours?

A: With space at such a premium in So Cal, I always encourage people to just get started growing something in the space they do have. Many people don't start a garden because they



photo courtesy

think it's too complicated, takes a lot of time, or costs too much. I encourage people to keep it quick, simple, and inexpensive. Start by growing the ingredients for a fresh salad. Lettuce, cucumbers, and a tomato plant are easy-to-grow veggies anyone can grow. All you need are seeds, soil, a few 5 gallon buckets or containers and of course, some sunshine! Start simple, then expand as your confidence and skills grow! Just get started!

Q: You just started your website, how can people find it, and what are some things you are proud of that are on your website?

A: When you visit our website, calikimgardenandhome.com, you can download a free growing guide "Grow 3 Veggies in 6 Weeks" to help you grow your own organic food ASAP! I am proud of my new 85 page full color eBook,

"Growing 5 Warm Weather Vegetables Made Easy". It's full of step-by-step instructions for growing 5 popular warm weather veggies in a quick, simple and inexpensive way (more in-depth than we have time for in YouTube videos). It includes color photos of my garden, is downloadable, and printable - you can have the how-to's right by your side in the garden!

We are also proud of our garden caricature coloring book, "CalKim's Garden"- drawings made from actual photos of me in my garden, CameraGuy, and Mac, our dog! The whole family will have fun with this one!

Both products can be found on our website, under the "My Products" tab. While you are there, visit the blog, leave me a comment - let me know you heard about me from reading this article!



Radish, Lettuce & Peas

Leaf lettuce, spinach and radishes are easy crops to grow and one can be grown in less than 30 days. These are typically the first vegetables you can grow by seed or starts in your garden. Leaf lettuce is higher in nutrients than iceberg lettuce and adds great color and flavor to salads, wraps and sandwiches. Spinach is full of great nutrients and tastier than store bought. Radishes are a quick growing vegetable, typically ready in less than a month, and add a tangy punch to any dish.

Leaf lettuce can be started from seeds or starts. Lettuce can be planted by broadcasting the seeds and raked over, or planted every 4 to 6

when using starts. It takes 45 to 50 days to reach maturity. Leaf lettuce is termed as “cut and come again”, which means as the plants mature, you can harvest the larger leaves on the outside of the plant and let the smaller leaves continue to grow for an ongoing harvest. You will be able to harvest until the days get long and then leaf lettuce will turn bitter and even go to seed. Lettuce can be planted in the spring and fall. Leaf lettuce can be harvested before maturity for some early spring or mid fall garden micro greens.

Spinach can also be started from seeds or starts. Many people neglect to plant it as they

don't think about how easy it is to grow and enjoy. Spinach takes 45 to 70 days to reach maturity. This is another cut and come again variety. Spinach can be cut at any time for harvest as long as you leave some foliage on the plant so it can photosynthesize and continue to produce. Just like leaf lettuce, spinach will become bitter or go to seed once the days get warm and long. With leaf lettuce, as well as spinach, check for varieties that are available. Don't just grab the first thing you see. Some varieties will tolerate cold or hot temperatures better and are more adaptable to extreme conditions.

Radishes come in many varieties and colors, even as many colors as the rainbow, and many shapes and sizes. Radishes are one of the quickest growing vegetables you can grow in your garden as many varieties will mature within 15 and 32 days. Unlike lettuce and spinach, radishes, just like other root crops, must be seeded directly into the soil. Space them 1 to 2 inches apart. You can fit 16 radishes in one square foot! Many people only think of eating the bulb of the radish. The bulb and the leaves are both edible. Once the days get warm and long, rad-



ishes will grow seed pods that are edible and tasty. You can let the pods dry out and save the seeds, as you can with lettuce and spinach. Please note, lettuce and spinach pods are not edible.

For all 3 of these crops you can extend the season early or late in the year by growing them in a cold frame or grow tunnel.

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The Wisconsin Vegetable Gardener
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Holly and Joey presented "How to Grow Great Garlic" in the Horticulture Center

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Tuesday, September 13th 7pm
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1900 N. Calhoun Rd
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Thursday September 15th 7pm
New Berlin Public Library
Basics of Canning
15105 Library Lane,
New Berlin, WI 53151
www.newberlinlibrary.org

Tuesday, September 20th 6:30pm
USS Liberty Memorial Public Library
How to Grow Great Garlic
1620 11th Ave. Grafton, WI 53024

Monday October 6th
South Shore Garden Club
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How *Fresh* is Your Stored Food?

As a gardener and a home food preserver I store food from the garden, but many of us store food such as meats, homemade frozen dinners, dehydrated fruits and veggies, and the list goes on. It is important to use your stock and rotate it properly. This ensures freshness but also prevents any possible food illness you could get. I will go over a few different types of food storage and how to make sure you are keeping it fresh. The biggest thing is labeling. Make sure everything you store is properly labeled and dated. This prevents confusion and makes rotating through your storage a lot easier.

Home canned foods are very common in many peoples homes, whether is a few jars of jam and garden tomatoes, to shelves lined with

all different types of fruits, veggies, sauces, salsas, jams, meat, or soups it is important that these items are stored properly and used within the best time. *The National Center for Home Food Preservation* recommends all home canned food to be consumed within 1 year of canning for best taste and freshness. This doesn't mean that your home canned food goes bad immediately after a year, it just means it is best to consume those items within a year or so, and expect it to lose freshness after about a year. Also, when storing canned goods it is best to remove the rings. Home canned goods are also best stored away from direct sunlight.

Storing meat in the freezer is convenient especially if you harvest, butcher and process your

own meat or buy in bulk. Different types of meat have different freezing times. According to the food safety website here are some good general guidelines for common meats. Cooked poultry — 4 months, uncooked poultry parts — 9 months, uncooked whole poultry — 12 months, cooked meat — 2 to 3 months, uncooked roasts — 4 to 12 months, uncooked steaks or chops — 4 to 12 months, and uncooked ground meat — 3 to 4 months.

Storing homemade casseroles, lasagna, baked pasta dishes, and even soups in the freezer is easy and convenient. You can make twice as much and have an extra meal for later. For best results it is ideal to store them in an air tight container and use them within 3 to 6 months of original cook date.

Many vegetables can also be stored long term in a root cellar type setting. This would be a cool, dark area with good ventilation. This includes winter squash, potatoes, onions, garlic and some



root crops. Most of these items store well in these conditions between 3 and 9 months.

Storing food is convenient and when done right works well. It is best to follow guidelines and use what's oldest first. The important thing is, when in doubt, toss it out. If you think some of your stored food has gone bad then it is best not to risk getting sick from it.



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Fall Planning

by Holly Baird

As we are in the midst of heat in the middle of summer it may not seem easy to think about fall, or maybe it is. We cannot forget that fall is approaching and another season of gardening can be achieved. Fall is a great time to get one more crop in before the winter hits. Some crops can grow all growing season. Others are sensitive to day length and can only be grown in the spring and the fall.

Swiss chard is one of the crops that can be grown all season long and is not affected by day length. Swiss chard is a leafy green with edible foliage and stalk. The stalks, based on the vari-

based on the variety, can be red, yellow, pink, orange, white and of course green. If you like spinach, swiss chard is an excellent substitute and can be grown anytime of the growing season. Swiss chard is in the same plant family as the beet, with large tender leaves that can be eaten raw, stir friend or even grilled with a little cheese rolled up inside making a cheese and swiss chard roll up. Swiss chard can take 50 to 60 days for large plants but can be harvested as small greens at 25 days. Swiss chard does well in containers, raised beds and even traditional ground.



Peas are sensitive to heat, growing them in the fall and spring is the only option. There are several varieties of peas, dwarf, tall, etc, but there are 3 different categories based on what you are looking to do with your peas. Sugar peas or snow peas are flat peas, sweeter and good for stir fry. These are generally harvested in an immature state. Snap peas snap when you break them in half. You can eat the peas and the pods, they are just less sweet. English peas or shelling peas are harvested at maturity and the pods are not edible. These are the ones good for freezing or canning. Peas take 60 to 70 days to reach maturity. Peas are climbers and need to be trellised as



their stems are delicate and will snap.

Another cool weather crop you may not be familiar with is **bok choy**. It is considered an Asian green. Bok choy has a white stalk with tender green leaves. This is excellent in stir fry and soup or even sautéed with butter and garlic.

Bok choy is also delicious raw in a summer salad. Bok choy reaches maturity in 60 to 85 days, and it can be harvested early for baby bok choy.

With bok choy and swiss chard, when harvesting, remove the outer leaves first to allow the younger leaves to mature. Do not remove all leaves at once unless you are harvesting the whole plant.



What to do with Jerusalem Artichokes / Sunchokes?

By Joey & Holly Baird

Sunchokes are becoming a very popular root crop to grow in your garden. They are a perennial plant, which means that they will come back year after year on their own. They do grow wild and if you have some land you may have some growing there which you just are not aware of it. Sunchokes are a root tuber related to the sunflower and to the potato. A single plant can have top growth in height of 12 feet and can produce 3 to 8 pounds of tubers. They store best in the ground until needed but can be placed in buckets with layers of soil and tubers to mimic being in the ground. They are very good for diabetics because they are low in starch. You can also find these at your local farmers marked in the fall or at an organic health food store to eat. You can buy the tubers online to plant in the ground or container. Sunchokes can cause you to have gas, so do keep that in mind as each person will react to that differently. There are a number of things you can do

with Sunchokes. Simply clean the tuber off, cut it thin and eat it raw or dip them in some ranch dressing to enjoy as a snack. Roasting them is a way to bring out the earthy buttery flavor they hold inside. These will need to be roasted for several hours based on their size with a roast that you may be cooking in broth. You want them to be tender enough to be pierced with a fork. Sunchokes are a great substitute for mashed potatoes or you can do a mixture of sunchokes and mashed potatoes. A new way we have found this year to use sunchokes is to make hash browns or "choke browns" out of them. You shred the sunchokes as you would with potatoes and squish. Then proceed in frying up the shredded Sunchokes. We have found adding a bit of salt and shake of pepper as we cook them is delicious. We cook them on a flat plate or a skillet. We have not tried to deep fry them.



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