

THE WISCONSIN VEGETABLE GARDENER

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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

TheWisconsinVegetableGardener.com



Holly and Joey speak at the Wisconsin State Fair. Listen to this talk on TheWisconsinVegetableGardener.com

Fall 2017

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Essential Oils

Essential oils are one of those buzz words you may have heard recently or see something posted about them on facebook. You may see a recipe for getting rid of bugs, or the benefits of using these oils around your home, work, anywhere. Many people feel these are not beneficial, but there are many people who swear by them.

Please note – this is not medical advice by any means, just bringing some clarity to a hot topic.

First of all, you may want to know what essential oils are. Meriam Webster defines essential oils as a “natural oil typically obtained by distillation and having the characteristic fragrance of the plant or other source from which it is extracted”. You may see people use the term EOs as opposed to essential oils, this is the most common abbreviation.

One thing I want to note, some essential oils are phototoxic. This means when they are on the skin and exposed to ultraviolet rays, like UV sunrays, these oils have an adverse reaction on the skin and could cause a sunburn like reaction. Here are some common EOs

that are phototoxic (observe care when using them and how you may use them):

<i>Angelica Root</i>	<i>Angelica archangelica</i>	0.8%
<i>Bergamot</i>	<i>Citrus bergamia</i>	0.4% **
<i>Bitter Orange</i>	<i>Citrus aurantium</i>	1.25%
<i>Cumin</i>	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	0.4%
<i>Grapefruit (expressed)</i>	<i>Citrus paradisi</i>	4.0%
<i>Lemon (Cold/Expeller Pressed)</i>	<i>Citrus limon</i>	2.0%
<i>Lime (Cold/Expeller Pressed)</i>	<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i>	0.7%
<i>Mandarin Leaf</i>	<i>Citrus reticulate</i>	0.17%
<i>Rue</i>	<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	0.15%
<i>Taget</i>	<i>Tagetes minuta</i>	0.01%

Many common uses for essential oils is relief for sore muscles, put in inhalers for stuffy nose relief, diffused in the home to make the home smell good or for the relief of the scent, homemade cleaners, uses in the garden, skin care,

even for use in homemade toothpaste and homemade lotions or body scrubs.

There is a popular oil blend called thieves oil and is supposed to have cleaning and germ fighting properties. Many people diffuse it in their homes during flu season or combine it with a carrier oil to use on the body. It is a mix of Clove, Lemon, Cinnamon, Eucalyptus Radiata, and Rosemary essential oils. It has a pleasant, spicy and warm scent.

When using essential oils on the body you need to dilute them with a carrier oil such as grapeseed or almond oil, or diluted in things like witch hazel, olive oil or even coconut oil. This allows you to use them safely.

Essential oils, carrier oils and more can be purchased online or a health food store. There are many uses and ideas to be found with an online search. I would advise doing your research as with anything. However, I encourage everyone to look into using essential oils as they can be quite beneficial.



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Powdery Mildew

Powdery mildew can be a problem in your garden if left uncontrolled. This disease affects vining crops like squash, melons and pumpkins. Powdery mildew is a fungal disease that affects a wide range of plants. Powdery mildew diseases are caused by many different species of fungi in the order Erysiphales, with *Podosphaera xanthii* (a.k.a. *Sphaerotheca fuliginea*) being the most commonly reported cause. You can identify it by a powder like looking substance growing on the leaves of your vine crops. This fungus is caused by too warm nighttime temperatures and high humidity which doesn't allow the plants to dry off fully. Then powdery

begins to emerge and grow. The problem will continue and the leaves will begin to suffocate, which will cause the plant to die. This can be controlled or eliminated.

There are many conventional products on the market to control this problem. However, it is to control, not eliminate. Also, some of these products are highly toxic and not very sustainable. There are great homeopathic alternatives that can actually eliminate the problem. When spraying these remedies on the plants be sure to spray both sides of the leaves.

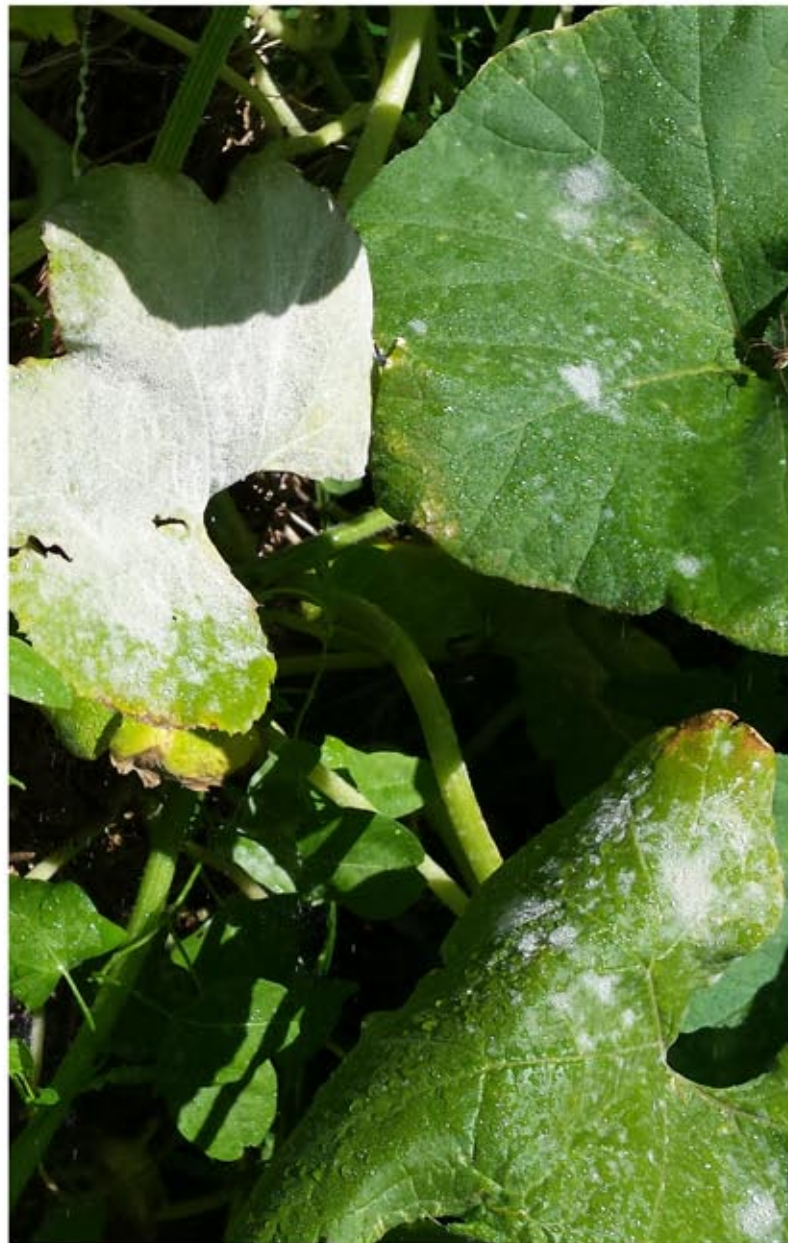
Baking soda has many uses around the home and garden. This has been noted as one of the

best remedies for powdery mildew. You simply mix one tablespoon of baking soda with a teaspoon of dormant oil and one teaspoon of insecticidal or liquid soap to a gallon of water. Spray on plants every one to two weeks.

One remedy we found success that greatly slowed powdery mildew was milk. Simply apply a weekly dose of one part milk to two parts water.

Acidic components are ideal as well. When using these remedies take care in where you are spraying them as the high acid can have an adverse effect of the microorganisms in your soil. If a little gets in that's ok, just don't spill a large quantity. Generic, ethanol based mouthwash is a great use for powdery mildew. Mix one part mouthwash to three parts water and spray. Avoid the tender new growth, focus on the older and more mildew affected growth. Vinegar is another acidic remedy. A mix of 2-3 tablespoons of raw apple cider vinegar mixed with a gallon of water sprayed on the plants does the trick. Just be aware as too high concentrations of either of these acidic sprays can burn the plants.

One way to prevent this at the start of the season is to look for disease resistant plants and to make sure you are spacing the plants apart correctly.



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Five Garden Fails

Even if you've gardened for your entire life, you still will have fails. A lot of new gardeners have a hard time understanding this. Failure is a part of life and a part of gardening. Its going to happen every year and most of the time every year will be different. Here is our 5 garden fails this year.

Bush beans are generally easy to grow, do well, and do not require trellising so do well in containers. Something ate our bush beans that we had planted in the ground. From what we can tell it's slugs or snails eating away at these - especially with the little holes in the leaves. One thing you can do is sprinkle diatomaceous earth around these plants. This will prevent those pests. You can also sprinkle used coffee grounds around. Both of these methods will help to keep

these pests away. If you have problems with rabbits getting in your garden, a 2 foot tall chicken wire fence around the area will remedy this. We leave ours up all year and it has made a significance difference.

Planting rhubarb in a container is not ideal, but possible if you don't want to commit a whole area for it. We started some last year, in a container, and it had a great start this spring. As we got closer to July the rhubarb is not doing well. With it being in a container - elevated about 18 inches above ground - the wind has whipped the stalks and leaves apart. Something like this would do better by the side of a house where there is less chance for wind damage.

Many people plant turnips in the spring. We have found best success in the fall, but wanted to

try it again this spring. The days got too long and too warm. One got stressed and went to seed. The others didn't germinate well. We typically plant them August 1st with rutabagas and harvest them about 60 days later with much better success. We will continue to do this from here on out.

Spring peas are very enjoyable. They are usually one of the first things you can enjoy from your garden. We planted them when the soil temperature was at about 40 degrees and the soil was quite moist. We had a dip in temperature following that which hampered the germination. This was not the ideal spring for peas.

Leaf miners have also been a problem this year. They are the larvae from flies and moths. These insects lay their eggs on the leaves, the larvae hatch and eat the leaves of plants. You can tell because the plants start to brown and curl – just portions of the leaves. To prevent this you can use a neem oil spray or at the time of planting use a floating netted row cover.



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Making your own stock is easy, nutritional and tasty. It can be done cheaply with items you already have. I recommend everyone try it as it will make your soups and other recipes have a great flavor.

Homemade Chicken Stock

By Holly Baird

Bone broth is great to make yourself and has many nutrients in it. Bone broth is rich in minerals that support the immune system and contains healing compounds like collagen, glutamine, glycine and proline. The collagen in bone broth heals your gut lining and reduces intestinal inflammation.

To make your bone broth or stock you need chicken bones, vegetables scraps, and any herbs you may want to add to your stock. I save my chicken bones from recipes in a freezer bag in the freezer. I do this with my onion and garlic peels, kale stems, etc. I usually try the time my making of bone stock for when I have some other veggies close to going bad – such as carrots, celery, sweet peppers, even cabbage.

Cooking the bone broth is what is important. Some people will cook it in a slow cooker, but you can cook it in a large stock pot on the stove. I usually make a double batch so I use 2 stock pots. I add half the bones and veggies to each, handful of cloves of garlic, a couple bay leaves, and then cover in water. If there

if there is meat on the chicken bones that is fine. You are going to strain the liquid out so if there are chunks of skin or meat it's not a problem. There isn't an exact recipe to this. When cooking on the stove I bring the stock to boil. I let it boil for a few minutes, and then reduce the heat. I typically allow this to cook for several hours, so everything is really cooked down. You want the collagen to release and all the goodness and flavor of the vegetables to cook down. Depending on the combination of vegetables used the darkness of your stock will vary.

When your stock is ready you want to let it cool a little. Then strain it through a screen strainer. At this point I taste the stock and see if I want to mix in any salt, pepper, or even granulated garlic. I typically leave it as is but will add a little pepper. I try not to add any extra salt as I may do that to season whatever I am making with it later on.



Fruit Vinegar

By Holly Baird

Webster dictionary defines vinegar as a sour liquid consisting of dilute and impure acetic acid, obtained by acetous fermentation from wine, cider, beer, ale, or the like: used as a condiment, preservative, etc. Many cooking applications require vinegar, as well as canning. If you do a lot, it can become costly. People are now using raw vinegar as a health supplement, ways to treat indigestion, and even clean with. Purchasing vinegar at the store, based on how it is produced, can vary in cost. There is your cheap, highly processed white vinegar, your salad vinegars – like balsamic, wine vinegars, etc, and then there is your raw vinegar, such as raw apple cider vinegars. If you are one of the many people who find raw vinegar beneficial then you can make your own and could save some good money in the process. You can make your own raw vinegar and it is shelf stable once fermented because the naturally occurring yeast has eaten all of the sugars. Regular vinegar, such as white vinegar has been pasteurized, allowing it to be shelf stable.

Making your own vinegar is easy from pear or apple scraps. Simple take your fruit scraps and place them in a jar, ceramic bowl, or crock. Then, for every quart of water you add the mixture you want to add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar. If you have some raw vinegar you can add 2 tablespoons of the raw vinegar to every quart of water. Pour your water mix over the fruit scraps, add as much

as needed to make sure fruit scraps are submerged completely. Cover the container with cheesecloth, coffee filter or a loose towel. You want to prevent bugs from getting in. Place your container on a stable surface away from direct sunlight. We keep ours near the back of the kitchen counter. You want to check your ferments daily and stir them up a bit at least once a day. If they start to bubble that is great. This means the fermentation is happening. After a week you can strain the liquid through cheesecloth or mesh strainer. Put the liquid in a mason jar, cover loosely with a coffee filter or cheesecloth and a rubber band. Place in same spot, away from direct sunlight. You will see the liquid darken and sediment form on the bottom of the jar. Fermentation can take anywhere from 2 to 6 weeks. Typically its about 3 weeks for me. I check mine daily just in case. If you see a gelatinous mold forming at the top that is not a problem - that is the “mother” and if you stir your ferment that will generally sink to the bottom. Once vinegar is fermented, cover with lid and store in a cool place away from direct sunlight or in the refrigerator. It will ready for you to use for over the next year or so.