



# Summer veggies on my mind

Social distancing doesn't apply to Victory Garden vegetables; some actually do best when in stuffed into close quarters.

Garden Tabloid (free online, go to MSUCARES.com and type it in the search box); he said "It's better to start small and build on success than get discouraged and give up

After over a decade of living from late May until early September in England, it's been awhile since I planted summer veggies in my home grounds.



**FELDER RUSHING**

But with the growing realization that no, getting on a plane for jolly old Lancashire ain't happening this year, I've started setting out stuff for a Mississippi summer harvest.

because the garden was too much work."

So, this week I bit the bullet and dug up and wood-framed a hundred square feet of otherwise useless hot, sunny "hell strip" between the west side of my house and my neighbor's driveway. Broke up the clay, spread a two-inch layer of compost and bark plus a little starter fertilizer, and churned it together with a rented tiller. Did it right the first time, so from now on I can garden with just hand tools.



**Hand pollinating squash flowers for lack of bees.**

Trouble is, though my flower beds and pots always sport a few pretty vegetable and herbs, it's been awhile since I've had a sho-nuff food garden. Might have forgotten how.

To get the most out of it I'm doing two things: Avoiding long skinny rows by forming easily-reached four-foot wide individual plots with stepping boards between each, and only planting what I like to eat and which produces a lot in a small space or is expensive in the store, including tomatoes, peppers, a little okra mostly for looks, and sweet potatoes. Then mixing things up in groups rather than a lot of each in one spot so bugs and blights have harder targets to hit.

When I was a kid I toiled nearly daily in my folks' huge garden, which produced plenty to eat fresh and enough extra to freeze, put up in jars, and share with neighbors. But today not many people want to tie up my dad's forty tomato plants or weed his three twenty-foot rows of okra that had to be harvested every other day.

Remembering in years past having to break off male squash flowers to hand-pollinate the female flowers for lack of bees, I'm adding long-blooming zinnias, salvias, and guara to attract pollinators to do that crucial work. And I'm gonna cover some plants with insect netting.

Most folks now just want a small plot, often a raised bed out in the yard or clusters of big pots on the patio, to set out a few favorite veggies and herbs with maybe a few flowers thrown in for looks and to attract pollinators. In fact, according to National Gardening Association researchers, while the average size dedicated home food garden is just shy of six hundred square feet (twenty by thirty feet), the median urban plot is only about a hundred square feet. To visualize that, it's about the space my old pickup truck takes up.

Like I wrote earlier, some plants do better when crowded together, so I'm also planting companion mounds of corn, beans, and squash, a super productive and attractive combination that has sustained people for many centuries; go online to learn about the ancient "three sisters" gardening.

So, that's what I'm starting out with, remembering the aphorism of my early home garden mentor Milo Burnham, author of the Extension Service's all-inclusive

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 2 cups Miracle Whip
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil

Salt and Pepper to taste  
Place all chopped vegetables in a large bowl. Whisk the Miracle Whip, sugar, vinegar, and vegetable oil until combined. Pour mixture over the cabbage and vegetables. Mix well and salt and pepper to taste. Let stand for an hour to let flavors mix. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours before serving - overnight is best.

\*Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, *The Help*. Fleming can be reached at [lafkitchen@hughes.net](mailto:lafkitchen@hughes.net).

## How to Bathe a Cat

I did not grow up a cat lover, but I married one. Since I was allergic to cats as a child, I was never around them. That is one allergy I've grown out of and I couldn't be happier about it. We have never gone out looking for a cat as a pet, they seem to find us.

We have two cats that are very different. Milo is a blonde Persian cat who is very calm and docile. Sometimes a little jumpy and afraid of his shadow. Then there is Gizmo.

Gizmo is a black cat with white feet. He is as strong as an ox and will not allow a dog in our yard! He likes to fight with other cats and I don't think he is very good at it.

One afternoon last week, Steve came in and told me to look under the carport. There was Gizmo covered in mud from head to toe. When Steve said we have to give him a bath I thought he was joking - he wasn't. We shut ourselves in the bathroom and proceeded to bathe the cat. Steve held him in the bathtub and I sprayed the water on him. When we finished, that bathroom looked like a war zone.

I started thinking that there must be a better way to give a cat a bath. So, of course, I googled it. I found this hilarious piece on how to give a cat a bath. It was written by the family dog. Don't Try This At Home.

Dear Cat Owners,  
Here you will find directions on how to give a cat a bath.

- 1) Thoroughly clean the toilet.
- 2) Add shampoo to the toilet water, and have both lids lifted.
- 3) Obtain the cat and soothe him while you carry him towards the bathroom.
- 4) In one swift movement, put the cat in the toilet and close the lids (you may need to stand on the toilet lid so that he cannot escape). CAUTION: Do not get any part of your body too close to the edge, as his paws will be reaching out for anything it can find.
- 5) Flush the toilet 3 or 4 times. This provides a "power wash and rinse" which I have found to be quite effective.
- 6) Have someone open the door to the outside and ensure that there are no people between the toilet and the outside door.
- 7) Stand behind the toilet as far as you can, and quickly lift both lids.

8) The now clean cat will rocket out of the toilet, and run outside where he will dry himself.

Signed,  
The Family Dog

I couldn't very well include cat recipes to go with today's article, so I did the next best thing - Copycat Recipes. These recipes are dishes from some of your favorite restaurants. Someone sits around and tries to figure out the ingredients and how to prepare some of our favorite dishes from the restaurants we love. I have tried these three and they are dead on delicious. Thanks for reading.

### COPYCAT SHONEY'S STRAWBERRY PIE

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 6 Tbsp. strawberry Jell-o
- 1 pound strawberries, stems removed, and left whole
- 1 9-inch pie crust, baked
- Cool Whip or Whipped Topping

Blend sugar, cornstarch, and water in a boiler over medium heat; cooking until becomes thick. It will be thick enough when the glaze slowly comes off the back of the spoon; add Jell-o and combine. Place drained whole fresh strawberries, piling them high, into baked pie shell; pour cooked mixture over berries. Cool for several hours and generously top with whipped topping when served.

### COPYCAT OLIVE GARDEN SALAD DRESSING

- 1/2 mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup white vinegar
- 1 tsp. vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. light corn syrup
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp. grated Romano cheese
- 1 minced garlic clove
- 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp. dried parsley flakes
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice

Combine all ingredients and store in an air tight container in the refrigerator. Can also be used as a great marinade. It will last about 10 days in the refrigerator. Salad ingredients: lettuce, black olives, red onions, pepperoncini peppers, and croutons. Additional grated Parmesan cheese on top.

### COPYCAT KFC COLESLAW

- 1 large head cabbage, or 2 small ones, chopped (You can use the pre-packaged chopped coleslaw mix)

walk the walk.  
*Felder Rushing is a Mississippi author, columnist, and host of the "Gestalt Gardener" on MPB Think Radio. Email gardening questions to [rushingfelder@yahoo.com](mailto:rushingfelder@yahoo.com).*



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### In Loving Memory of... GEORGIA G. CLARK



This is your 97th birthday and Mother's Day too. Oh, how we long to celebrate it with you.

We miss your colorful stories of the days gone by. We are so proud of how you helped family and community without batting an eye.

Young or old we would sit at your feet, and listen for hours as you reflected on what use to be.

Your laughter and energy were second to none, your face and inner beauty as radiant as the sun.

While the world is still changing, as the years roll on, the love shared with you is embedded, steadfast and strong.

So for your birthday and Mother's Day this year, our hearts will rejoice because we will feel your presence near.

All our love, your children, grand children, great grandchildren and extended family.

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