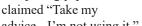
THURSDAY,

## mato plants.

turist in me said hold off, it's early and we have until August to plant for a full fall harvest, my inner gardener couldn't help getting started. But then for years I wore a lapel pin that only half-jokingly pro-



advice - I'm not using it." I tried avoidance tech- decent tomatoes. niques like taking long walks vegs, herbs, and flowers.

climbing branchy bamboo too often. stakes, and double rows of Fertilized with both comsoil is so alluring...

vitamin-dense berries, even extra calcium. the uber-hot Carolina Reap- Still, knowing I'll likely bite. We grow big juicy slic-

It's legal to gamble in the but growing them is such a garden, which is good be- macho thing. I try to harvest cause I just threw money, enough peppers to freeze for effort, and hope at some to- when they hit a buck and a half apiece in the store, or Yeah, though the horticul- dry them into seasoning flakes.

But - dare I admit this - I fall short of the pinnacle of gardendom; in spite of being raised by a dad who grew bushels of them in just plain Delta topsoil and decades of working professionally with to-

mato growers, I can't grow

**FELDER** 

RUSHING

Tried it all. Planted by the to admire spring flowering moon in good garden dirt, trees and watch neighbors in raised bed blended dirt mow their spring meadows. and compost, in big pots But I always back in my painted red for encouragelittle raised bed garden, dig- ment. Planted deep so they ging the dirt, savoring the root along buried stems, petrichor - that sweet odor staked and trussed-up vinereleased from moist earth. I types and caged bush-types. did whatever I could to put Pinched out small suckers off actually planting summer to leave just two or three strong stems, mulched with Besides, I already have everything from bark to pine cool-season English peas straw, watered deeply but not

broccoli and cauliflower (the mercial and organic nutrients latter for roasting and dip- and borderline-gimmicky ping like chicken wings). Epsom salts, sprayed white-But there's room between flies and aphids, thumped those plants, and the warm big stinkbugs, plucked minidragon hornworms. Fought Being more of a chilehead the various blights that cause than 'mater-master, I usually plants to "fire up" with withplant eight or ten types of ered brown leaves, and prethose colorful nutrient- and vented blossom-end rot with



FELDER'S PAINT BUCKET TOMATOES

and I do surprisingly well produce better in Autumn's coolness.

I've even Sharpied smiley faces on green ones, in case that's as good as they ever

By the way, just as the "real mayo or Miracle Whip" debate will never be settled satisfactorily, no two gardeners can agree on the best variety to grow. Some like 'em sweet, or with an acidic er, literally too hot to handle, fail, I give it a go because ers, firm-fleshed soupers,

they give me hope. Occa- and mouth-popping cheery sionally I get a few fruits be- types. There's a litany of fafore they peter out or crack, vorite disease-resistant hyor squirrels beat me to them, brids and exotic heirlooms; do an online search for Seed with July transplants that Savers Exchange or Baker Creek, and you'll dehydrate from salivating over just the photos and descriptions of what's available from seed.

> Or just set out whatever varieties your locally-owned garden center folks carry based on what your neighbors come back asking for year after year.

caging to keep them from to sprawling, and water. And com.



March 25 - Beckett Bond, Bettye Ware, Ann Edwards, Antonio Bailey, Marvin Pablo Hernandez ST, Mary O'Reilly, Kilpatrick Sims, Kohn, Dalton Sheedy

March 26 Terrell Dakota Ferrell, Hollins, Nat Hooker, Lydia Neal Frazier, Chanel Burns Williamson, Courtney Steverson, Causey Johnson, Debbie McLemore, Lance J. B. McBride

Mike Steen, Halley Box

March 28 - Roxann Malone. Glen Lawson, Wooten, Landry Gardner, Wyn Diggs, Cartrina Benson, Bubba Debby C. Meeks, Carolyn Spell, Jr., Sandra Jenkins, Love, Cortez Epps, Sasha Tissie Harrell, LaShunkeita Clark

March 29 - David McBride, Maggie Garrett, Kalen Joe, Webster, Cindy Hammett, Whitman Sanders, Gnemi Woody, Janet Martin, Valerie Jessie Williams, Mason Ables,

March 30 - Victor Gilbert, White, Cha'mylah Miller, March 27 - Chandler Woo, Chanta Grayson, Carrie Dillon

March 31 - Bro. Jack Jim Harrell, Brock, Williams

## Anniversary

March 25 - Marlin and Sarah Lowery, Garrett and Karen Powers Jenny Clare Holland

March 26 - Christopher Andi Frank and Jennifer Truitt, Steven and Monica Green

luck - all my horticulture knowledge, and for me it's still a gamble.

Felder Rushing is a Mississippi author, columnist, and They all grow about the host of the "Gestalt Gardensame, given decent soil, sun- er" on MPB Think Radio. shine, nutrients, staking or Email gardening questions rushingfelder@yahoo.

March 27 - Dale and

March 28 - Andrew and

March 30 - Gregory and Shinna Anderson

To add your birthdays and anniversaries to our list, please send your information by mail to P.O. Box 60, Lexington, MS 39095; fax 662-834-1074; email to hcherald@gmail.com; or stop by our office at 308 Court Square in Lexington. No phone calls, please.

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