

Grow • Cook Share & Relish

PLANT • GROW
SHARE A ROW
UN RANG POUR
CEUX QUI ONT FAIM

On Earth ... it's not all about us humans. Or at least it shouldn't be.

The rich diversity of Life is precious,
worthy and needing to be protected.

As gardeners, we have much at stake –
our success and harvests being intertwined
with the health and well-being of the critters,
both above and below ground.

From pollinators to earthworms, bacteria and fungi,
we have a lot of helpers to support us
in the garden.

And just like us, they need shelter,
water, air and nutritious food.

So as we embark on the exciting food gardening
times ahead, be gentle and kind
to your helpers and earthly beings.

They will return your love in bountiful ways.

As an ode to our “team”, this issue of

Grow • Cook • Share & Relish
is all about them (and us).

Create Your Own Butterfly Oasis

If you want to create a butterfly garden on your lot or organize one at
your school or in a local park, here are some considerations:

1. Ideally, it should be in full sun in a spot protected from the wind.
2. For abundant bloom, add compost as you plant to enrich the soil and improve its tilth and drainage.
3. Do include milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) to feed monarch caterpillars, but also include a wide range of other nectar-bearing flowers to feed the adult butterflies.
4. The larger the flower bed, the more butterflies it will attract. Do you really need the vast sea of green lawn that surrounds most houses and that is essentially a butterfly desert?
5. You have to learn to accept a bit of imperfection in a butterfly garden. Yes, some leaves will be munching on: the caterpillars need to eat something!
6. Give butterflies a space in the sun where they can warm up on cool mornings; a flat rock, a table, a few chairs.
7. Create a little butterfly puddle by filling plates or shallow pans with sand and a bit of water. Then place in a sunny spot. Many butterflies love them!
8. Avoid treating your butterfly garden with products toxic to butterflies, such as insecticides. If you feel you have to treat plants in the garden, prefer gentle treatments like a sharp spray of water or hand picking. Even organic insecticides, like insecticidal soap and neem, can harm caterpillars and butterflies.
9. Include a wild corner where you just let plants grow on their own. A lot of butterfly food plants are—let's face it!—a bit weedy: thistles, mallows, wild cherries, etc. The wild corner can be in a less visible part of the yard.
10. Don't clean up in the fall. An astounding number of butterflies (great spangled fritillary, red-banded hairstreak and so many others) use leaf litter at some point in their lives, either as food or as shelter. Many overwinter in dead leaves. Just let fall leaves and dying annuals and perennials decompose on their own. Or pick up fall leaves from your lawn and toss them into the oasis: even as they protect butterflies, they'll act like a natural compost, decomposing and enriching the soil to ensure more blooms the following year.

**For the entire article and a list of food plants for
butterflies and other pollinators, download the PDF here.**

The Healthy Community Committee of Essa Township (Ontario) recently hosted a webinar for their initiative, The Flutter Buzz Patch in Essa, to encourage the planting of native plants to attract and feed bees, butterflies and birds throughout the township. Check out their information-rich video presentation here.

The Flutter Buzz Patch in Essa

RELISH
Yo' Mama

'Cause Mama's goodness can be preserved

Dandelion Flower Jelly

This recipe and the special jelly that is produced has become my “Ahah!” moment –
the taste of the jelly has huge connections with the taste of honey, making me realize that dandelions should be
revered and celebrated for their importance as a first native flower of Spring.

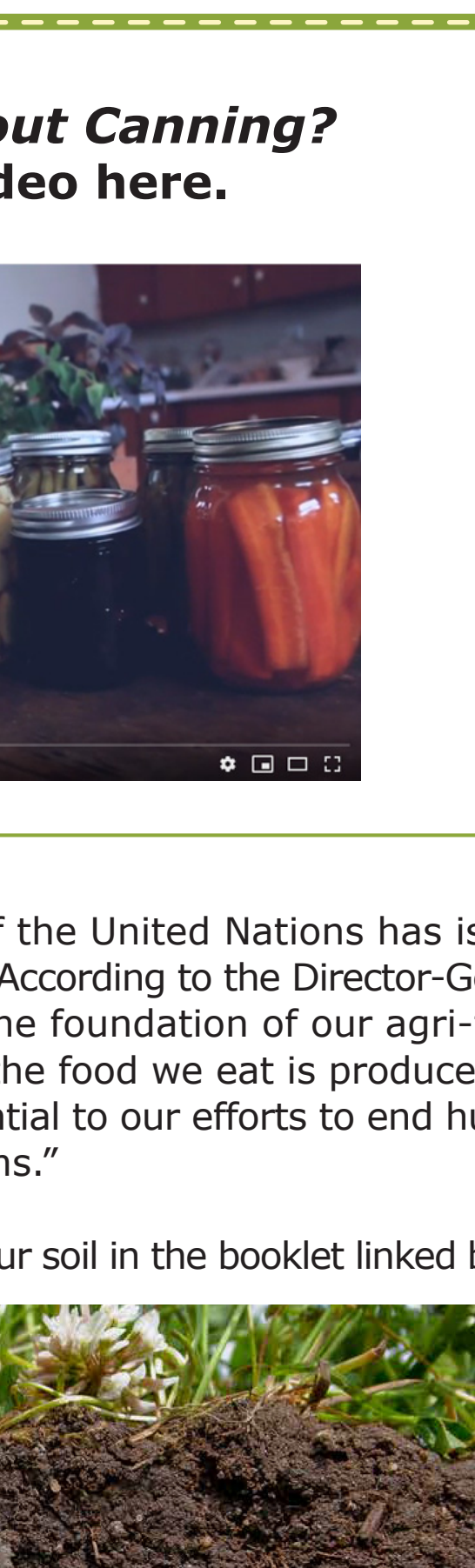
Dandelion flowers are an important (and early Spring) food source for bees and insects.

We should not be treating dandelions as weeds.

This is a wonderful recipe to involve everyone in – from the picking to the preparing
and then the tasting (and the “Ahahs”).

Ingredients

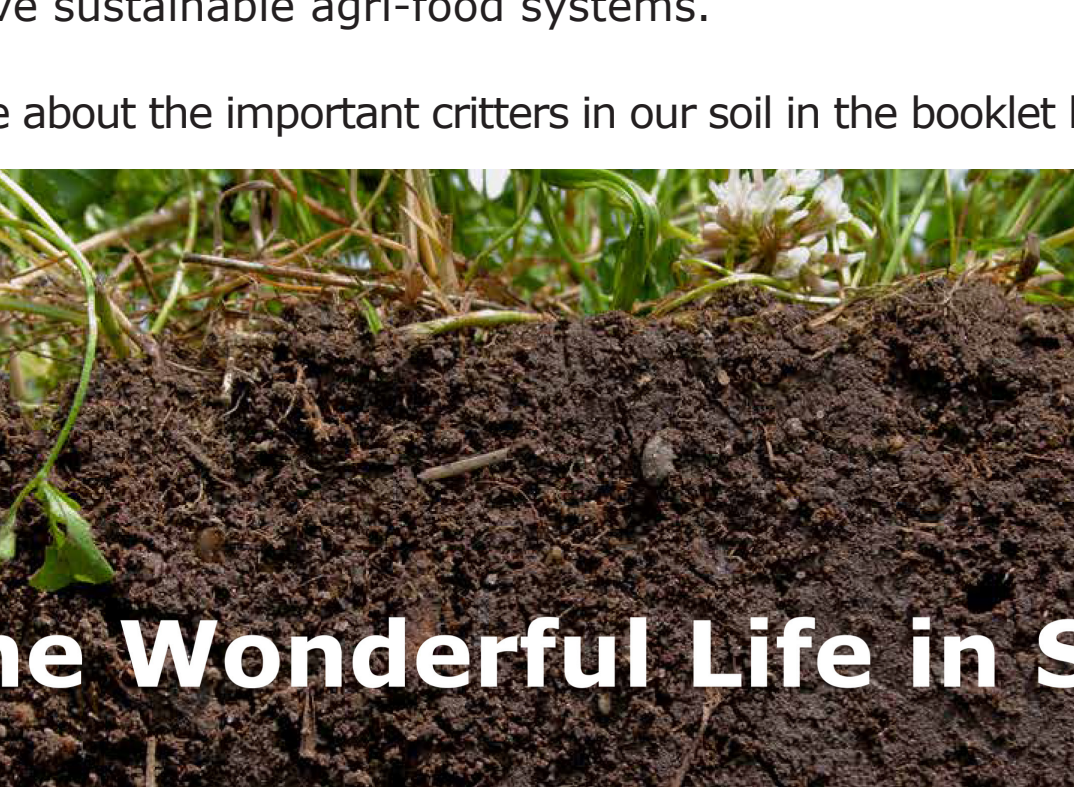
- 4 cups dandelion blossoms
- 3 cups dandelion blossom water
- 1 package pectin
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 cups sugar



Directions

1. Find an area where the dandelions are just being left alone.
2. Early morning is a good time to pick as you won't likely find any insects already having their flower-y breakfast.
3. Pick just the dandelion flower — the stem and leaves will add a bitter taste. Some recipes say that you should even remove the green “cup” that holds the flower as it also adds bitterness. I have not found it to detract from the lovely taste and so, in the interest of time, I don't do this extra step.
4. Gently rinse the flowers (and if you find any insects already on the flower, just shake the flower outside before rinsing).
5. Place the flowers in a large pot, cover with water (about 4 cups) and boil for 3 minutes (you are basically making a tea). Stir regularly throughout the boiling period.
6. Pour through a sieve. Save the liquid and compost the flowers. You will want to have 3 cups of the dandelion flower tea-liquid.
7. Add pectin and lemon juice. Bring to a boil for 3 minutes. Keep stirring the mixture.
8. Add the sugar; boil for about 2 ½ minutes. Keep stirring.
9. Skim off any foam prior to pouring into jars that have been prepared for canning. Process according to standard canning methods.

Want the Basics about Canning? Check out our video here.



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has issued calls for action to preserve soil biodiversity. According to the Director-General of FAO, Qu Dongyu, “Soils are not only the foundation of our agri-food systems and the way that 95 percent of the food we eat is produced, but also their health and biodiversity are essential to our efforts to end hunger and achieve sustainable agri-food systems.”

Learn more about the important critters in our soil in the booklet linked below.



The Wonderful Life in Soil

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ALLIANCE DE LA QUALITÉ
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Recycle your organics

Feed your soil

COMPOST !

The soil connects us all. Not just we humans, but all life on earth.

Through plants and their roots, air that is breathed and exhaled,
water that seeps into the soil from rain and snow,
and the organic matter that is returned to the soil,
living connections are made and sustained.

Twenty-five percent of the world's species live in the soil.
They clean our water, feed the plants that feed us and calm our climate.
Like us, they need food, water, air and shelter.

When we add compost to the soil,
we give them what they need to keep their world and ours going.

HOW DOES YOUR EDIBLE GARDEN GROW?

growarow.org

GIVE BACK TO THE EARTH ... COMPOST!

THE SECRET TO A GREAT GARDEN IS THE QUALITY OF THE SOIL. SOIL IS THE PLANT'S HOME, PROVIDING THE TEXTURE, STRUCTURE AND NUTRIENTS FOR ROOT GROWTH AND SUSTENANCE. A COMBINATION OF ROCK AND MINERAL PARTICLES, AIR, WATER AND MOST IMPORTANTLY ORGANIC MATTER OR COMPOST, A CENTIMETRE OF SOIL CAN TAKE MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS TO FORM. TO CONTINUE TO REPLENISH ITS GOODNESS AND PROVIDE THE PLANT'S NATURAL FOOD SOURCE, ADD COMPOST EACH SPRING AND FALL TO YOUR GARDEN SOIL AND TURN IT IN.

PLANT • GROW • SHARE With Those in Need

As part of your garden this year, plant and grow an extra row of your favourite veggies and donate the harvest to your local food bank. Help us help all those in need. www.growarow.org

Relish Yo' Mama shares tried-and-true family recipes, passing them forward to follow the footsteps of our mamas and those before us. Relish Yo' Mama also refers to Mama Earth who not only gives her goodness with the fruits and veggies of her bounty but who we are striving to protect through actions of preservation and conservation. www.relishyomama.org

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