

# Lifestyles



## Summer flight

The stillness of this Hoke County pond was broken only by the flight of the heron that winged its way through the hot summer air to the cooler shade at water's edge.

Photo by Rebecca Jones

## Fall garden should be planned now

By Willie Featherstone Jr., County Extension Chairman

Growing a productive fall vegetable takes thoughtful planning and good cultural practices. The following checklist should be used as a guide to help insure a bountiful harvest of fall vegetables:

**Time of Planting:** For the most part, August is the main planting month. For instance, vegetables that have a 60-80 day maturity cycle should be planted around August 1. Shorter season vegetables, like turnips and leafy greens, can be delayed in seeding until September 1.

**Soil Preparation:** The soil should be tilled to a depth of 6-8 inches. A good seedbed is necessary to get good stands in the fall. Lumpy soils with unrotted organic matter cause faster soil drying and result in poor stands. The soil should be tilled far enough ahead of planting (10-14 days) to allow the crop residue to decompose. If needed, additional organic matter (leaves, compost) may be incorporated into the soil prior to fertilization and planting.

**Planting Depth:** As a general rule, seeds should be planted deeper in the fall when the moisture level is farther down in the soil. In many cases, the planting depth may be 1 1/2 to 2 times as deep as the spring planting of the same crop.

**Direct Seeding or Transplants:** The practice of direct seeding (planting seeds rather than

transplants for crops like broccoli and collards) is often used in the fall. However, the success of this planting method is dependent on having adequate moisture available to keep the young seedlings actively growing after germination. Gardeners that do not have irrigation source would be wise to buy vegetable transplants from local garden centers or grow your own transplants.

**Thinning:** Practically every vegetable that is direct seeded will benefit from thinning. Thinning will insure better growth conditions for the seedlings by keeping them from becoming weak and spindly. The seedlings that remain will thrive better and become sturdy. Thinning also reduces the competition among the seedlings for nutrients and water in the soil. Normally, the seedlings should be thinned when they are about 2-3 inches tall. Evening is a good time to thin, because the remaining plants have the cool dark night to recover any disturbance to their roots.

**Protection From Sun:** The sun can play havoc on young transplants. Providing protection from the summer sun on the west side of the row will help insure better survival of the plants. This can be in the form of a wooden board, cardboard, burlap sack, or shade cloth.

**Insect and Disease Control:** Insect and disease problems will naturally be worse in the fall garden due to a buildup in food

supplies and environmental conditions (high temperatures, rain) conducive to the spread of these pests. As a result, a strategy plan must be developed to get the insects and disease before they destroy the vegetable crops. Careful attention should be given to the spray program, especially in selecting the pest control chemical. Striving to keep the fall vegetables healthy and actively growing will help make the plants less susceptible to insects and diseases.

**Watering:** All vegetables need one inch or more of water each week. Failure to provide adequate moisture will put stress on the plants and reduce yields. It is drought, not heat, that damages vegetables. Organic mulches (straw, leaves, or compost) should also be applied to help conserve moisture and reduce week growth.

**Sidedressing:** Fall vegetables will need extra nitrogen just like the spring crops. Most crops will benefit from an application of nitrogen about midway in the maturity cycle. Crops that set fruit should be sidedressed after blooming starts. Be sure to keep the nitrogen fertilizer 4-6 inches away from the plant's stem to avoid injury.

Remember, no one ever said growing fall vegetables would not work up a sweat or make the back ache. However, the mind has a tendency to forget all the production problems that were encountered during the growing season once the food is set on the table.

## Light meals hit spot in summer

By Alice L. Pettitt, Home Extension Agent

With summertime and hot weather, a lot of people have a decreasing appetite, or do not want to heat up their kitchen by cooking a full meal. Summertime seems like a good time to eat a lot of sandwiches, but it is still very important to make sure that you include all the essential nutrients in your diet.

Try some new sandwich recipes, or invent some of your own. They are great foods for all ages. Here are some things to keep in mind:

**Be Thrifty-**Look in the refrigerator before you begin. Last night's dinner can be part of today's lunch.

**Be Creative-**Start with a new bread. Try crackers, tortillas, English muffins, or pancakes. Use foods you might not ordinarily think of. Add fruits, nuts or sprouts to meat, cheese, or even peanut butter.

**Be Food Wise-**Mix colors. Add tomatoes and lettuce to your meat. Mix textures. Have something crunchy, like nuts or sprouts, with something soft, like tuna or cheese.

**Be Nutrition Minded-**Mix 3 or 4 of the food groups (Vegetable and Fruit Group, Bread and Cereal Group, Milk and Cheese Group and Meat, Poultry, Fish and Beans Group). Add a slice of cucumber and some cheese to last night's meatloaf. Sometimes use whole

### Front Burner

grain bread. Remember-butter, margarine and mayonnaise add calories. If you're cutting calories, use less or use mustard instead.

Try some of these sandwiches. Many of them are simple enough for youth to prepare.

**TASTY TUNA TREAT**  
1 slice whole wheat bread  
2 tablespoons canned tuna or other cooked fish  
1 tablespoon mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons chopped tomato  
2 tablespoons chopped lettuce  
2 tablespoons grated cheddar or other cheese

Preheat the oven to 400°. Mix the tuna with mayonnaise and spread it on the bread. Top with lettuce, tomato, and cheese. Place on cookie sheet and bake at 400° for 4 to 6 minutes or until the cheese melts. You can run it under the broiler for a minute or two until the cheese melts.

**POCKET FULL OF FLAVOR**  
1 pita bread  
2-3 slices leftover cooked chicken  
3 peach slices  
mayonnaise  
1/4 cup alfalfa sprouts or chopped lettuce  
1 tablespoon sunflower seed or chopped nuts

Spread a thin layer of mayonnaise on the inside of the pita. This thin

layer prevents the bread from getting soggy. If you can't find pita bread, make your own pocket sandwich from a hot dog or hamburger roll. Add the chicken, sliced peaches, alfalfa sprouts, and seeds or nuts.

### SNACK PIZZAS

Oil  
1 pkg. flaky refrigerator biscuits  
1/2 cup tomato sauce  
1 teaspoon oregano  
1/2 cup chopped fresh or canned mushrooms drained  
sliced pepperoni or salami  
grated cheese-mozzarella or cheddar

Preheat oven to 400°. Put a little grease or oil on the baking sheet. Mix the tomato sauce and the oregano in a measuring cup. Spoon some on each biscuit. Spoon the mushrooms over the tomato sauce. Put a few slices of the meat on top of the mushrooms. Sprinkle with the cheese. Bake about 8 minutes or until the crust is light brown.

### ORANGE SMOTHEE

1 1/2 cups milk  
6 oz. can of frozen orange juice concentrated, softened  
1 1/2 cups of water  
1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Pour the milk in a large bowl. Add the other ingredients. Using a hand better, mix well until the mixture is foamy.

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