

# The GrapeVine

April 2021

## April is National Gardening Month!

National Gardening month was initiated in the 1980's as National Gardening Week. The celebration has since grown to a month-long event held to support and encourage new and established gardeners alike. Why garden? There are so many reasons! Here are just a few of the health benefits:

- Improved nutrition. Not only can it increase fresh produce consumption, research also suggests that digging in the dirt may have a positive impact on our microbiome—the healthy microorganisms that live in and on us that can contribute positively to a strong immune system.
- Improved mental health. Gardening has been shown to be an effective stress reliever. Gardening also combines physical activity and exposure to nature and sunlight, which in turn increases Vitamin D levels, and supports a positive mind-set.

### Vegetable Gardening Basics



- **Consider location, soil, and timing.**
  - Vegetables need light to thrive. Ideally, your garden location should provide at least 8 hours of direct sun per day, for most vegetables.
  - Healthy plants come from healthy soil. You can do a simple soil test to see what kind of soil you have. Check with an expert at a gardening center for tips on testing and, if necessary, improving your soil before you plant.
  - For best results--know when to plant what. Visit the featured National Gardening Association site in this month's **Nutrition Resource Center** to learn more about what to plant, and when to plant, in your area.

- **Start Small.**

- While the benefits are great, gardening takes time and commitment. If you are pressed for time or a first-time gardener, try a container garden, a raised-bed garden, or even a simple herb garden to start. How-to information can be found on the National Gardening Association's website at [garden.org](http://garden.org).



## Upcoming Events

### Zoom Orientation/Food Safety & Nutrition

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Please contact Karen LaSorsa or Elizabeth Notarbartolo at 631-873-4775 to register.



### Senior (60+) Food Distributions:

Please call for income eligibility requirements at: 631-873-4775.

**When:** Tuesdays: 2:00 pm-4:00 pm

and Fridays: 9:00 am-11:00 am

**Where:** Island Harvest Food Bank  
40 Marcus Blvd., Hauppauge





## NUTRITION RESOURCE CENTER

### National Gardening Association's Tips & Tools for Gardening:

The National Gardening Association provides comprehensive advice, guidance, and tools, for the first time or avid gardener, on their website, [garden.org](http://garden.org). Use the link below to input your zip code and receive advice on when to plant different vegetables in your area.

<https://garden.org/apps/calendar/>



**Gardening with Kids:** KidsGardening.org is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support educators and caregivers in working with kids to discover the life-changing benefits of gardening. Visit their website at the link below for gardening activities, lesson plans, general information and much more!

<https://kidsgardening.org/>

## Pasta Primavera

### Ingredients: (about 10-1 cup servings)

- 1 lb. Penne pasta (substitute whole grain pasta to up the fiber and improve the nutrition of this dish)
- 2-3 tbsp. Olive oil
- 2 cups fresh veggies, such as red onion, carrot, broccoli, bell pepper, yellow squash and/or zucchini, tomatoes, and garlic, chopped or julienned (cut into long thin strips)
- 2 tsp. dried Italian seasoning
- 1/3 cup shredded parmigiana cheese
- Salt to taste (optional)



### Directions:

- Cook pasta according to package directions, drain cooked pasta and save 1/2 cup pasta water
- While the pasta is cooking, heat olive oil in a large deep pan over medium-high heat
- Add red onion, carrot, broccoli and bell pepper and sauté 3-4 minutes
- Add squash and/or zucchini and sauté about 2 – 3 minutes
- Add garlic, tomatoes, and Italian seasoning and sauté 2 minutes longer
- Place cooked veggies in pasta pot
- Use reserved water to loosen up pasta if it is sticking together then add drained pasta and lemon juice to veggies, toss together with parmesan cheese and serve

### Tips & Facts:

- The vegetables in this dish are bursting with fresh flavor and provide lots of important nutrients, including vitamins C and A, potassium, magnesium, fiber, and so much more.
- Pasta Primavera is a dish that is meant to be personalized— substitute any of your favorite vegetables.