



Be Aggressive, Be-Be Aggressive!

For the most part, vegetables need a worry free life in order to grow to their full potential. This means moderate temperatures, plenty of available food and water (but not too much!), and limited weed and insect pressure. Every once in a while a crop breaks the mold, this crop for us is Okra. Related to hibiscus and cotton this member of the mallow family is a summer time workhorse. The hotter the temperatures the faster it grows, doubling in speed every 18 degree

increase. We have followed these guidelines and our plants are looking really lush, but have not started to produce fruit yet.

So what more can we do, or not do, to get these plants to start putting out their delicious pods? Whip them! Yes it sound pretty brutal for both the plants and for us in this kind of heat, but as an old time farmer explained to me this week you just have to stress out the plants a little more. So whip them we have. Taking a stick and hitting the plants until all their lower leaves are off and the trunk is scarred. The first row we did already seem to have noticed and



Easy Eggplant

Eggplant, peeled and cut into 3/8 inch slices

Mayonnaise

Lemon pepper

Parmesan cheese

Coat each side of eggplant with mayonnaise and dust with lemon pepper and Parmesan cheese. Place on Teflon coated pan and bake at 450 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes. Serves 2 slices per person. Serve immediately. Easy.

Easy Crispy Eggplant

2 small eggplants

1/2 c. fine dry bread crumbs

2 eggs

4 tablespoons freshly minced parsley

1/3 c. grated Parmesan cheese

1/2 tsp. dried Italian seasoning

1/4 tsp. ea. celery seed, paprika (optional)

1/4 tsp. ea. garlic and onion powder

salt and pepper

3 cloves garlic, whole

3 tablespoons olive oil

Wash and slice eggplant and sprinkle generously with salt. Allow to sit out for 30 minutes. Rinse and pat dry.

Set out 2 shallow dishes or trays. (We like to use aluminum foil or plastic plates for easy cleanup). Into the first tray, measure bread crumbs, parsley, celery seed, 1/2 of the cheese, paprika, garlic and onion powder (do not substitute garlic or onion salt).

In the second tray, beat the 2 eggs well with a fork. Add the chopped parsley and the other half of the cheese. Heat a pan with 1/4 inch olive oil (does not need to be extra virgin for frying purposes). Add the garlic in whole pieces; as the oil toasts the garlic, mash it into the oil with the tines of a fork to flavor the oil; remove before browning.

Meanwhile, dip the eggplant into the egg mixture, turn to coat both sides; dip and coat both sides in the bread crumb mixtures. Fry in hot olive oil over medium-high heat for 5-10 minutes or until golden on both sides and eggplant is tender in center. If eggplant is later to be baked in a casserole, fry only until edges are browned as cooking will be finished in the oven. Serve as is, seasoned to taste with salt and pepper, or bake in a casserole dish for 30 minutes at 375°F topped with grated Parmesan, mozzarella and pasta sauce.

Vegetarian Moussaka

1 eggplant, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large zucchini, thinly sliced
2 potatoes, thinly sliced
1 onion, sliced
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 (14.5 ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes, chopped
1/2 (14.5 ounce) can lentils, drained, juice reserved
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 1/2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 1/4 cups milk
black pepper to taste
1 pinch ground nutmeg
1 egg, beaten
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Sprinkle eggplant slices with salt and set aside for 30 minutes. Rinse and pat dry. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Lightly brown eggplant and zucchini slices on both sides; set aside on plate. Adding more oil if necessary, brown potato slices; set aside on plate. Sauté onion and garlic until lightly browned. Pour in vinegar and reduce. Stir in tomatoes, lentils, 1/2 the juice from lentils, oregano and parsley. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 15 minutes. In a 9x13 inch casserole dish layer eggplant, zucchini, potatoes, onions and feta. Pour tomato mixture over vegetables; repeat layering, finishing with a layer of eggplant and zucchini. Cover and bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan combine butter, flour and milk. Bring to a slow boil, whisking constantly until thick and smooth. Season with pepper and add nutmeg. Remove from heat, cool for 5 minutes, and stir in beaten egg. Pour sauce over vegetables and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake, uncovered, for another 25 to 30 minutes.