



June Tips

FRUIT AND NUTS

by Diane Relf, Extension Specialist, Environmental Horticulture

- If you like rhubarb in strawberry pies, try adding it to jams, especially strawberry or raspberry. Substitute rhubarb for half of the fruit called for in the recipe.
- Want a few home-grown fruits, but have no garden? Grow dwarf fruit trees, figs, strawberries, blueberries and even grapes in containers.
- The flavor and yield of strawberries vary from year to year depending upon spring growing conditions. Excessive rainfall dilutes the flavor of the berries and increases loss from fungal diseases.
- Remember to keep a record of the varieties you grow. By knowing the specific name of each crop, you can ask for that variety next season if you like it, or avoid it if it wasn't up to par.
- One way to keep raccoons out of fruit trees is to put a length of stovepipe at least 30 inches long around the base of each trunk. Or move the stovepipe sections from tree to tree as the fruit ripens. A separate pipe can also be used on each low branch to prevent the raccoons from climbing on them.
- Disinfection of pruners between cuts is recommended when removing diseased tissue from plants. Most authorities recommend a one in ten solution of bleach and water, but it can be cumbersome to carry a bucket of this mix about in the garden, and the solution is corrosive and must be rinsed from tools after use. A household, disinfectant spray that doesn't damage tools can also be used and a spray can is easier to carry.
- Strawberries picked early in the day keep best. Do not wash or stem berries until ready to use. Store berries in covered containers in the refrigerator.

Monthly Tips have been prepared since 1986 by various staff of the Office of Consumer Horticulture including Ellen Bennett, Michelle Buckstrup, Susan Day, Susan DeBolt, Sharon Dendy, Kate Dobbs, Sheri Dom, David Gravell, Virginia Nathan, Jenny Shuster, Ellen Silva, and Ruth Sorenson. Resource material for the development of this information includes the Virginia Master Gardener Handbook; Extension Publications and newsletters from VCE, numerous other states, and the USDA; and an extensive library of over 900 books, magazines and journals. Project funded by The Virginia Gardener Newsletter subscription fees. Diane Relf, Project Director and Content Specialist

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