

# THE BUMBLEBEE

*Bringing You The Latest Buzz from Skookum Food Provisioners' Co-op*



*photo: Giovanni Spezzacatena*

## SEAWEED HARVESTING FOR GARDEN USE

**BY GIOVANNI SPEZZACATENA (RABIDEYE.COM)**

Maybe the ‘weed’ part of ‘seaweed’ throws us off and makes novice gardeners wary. Some call those varieties of seaweed that are usually eaten ‘sea vegetables’ which has a nicer ring to it. Seaweeds are excellent, tasty sources of low-calories micronutrients including folate, calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron and selenium, and an important source of iodine. Some varieties of seaweed are used to produce thickeners for the food and cosmetic industries (as agars and carageenans), with their component chemicals also used in medicines as antiviral agents. That said, for this piece for Skookum Food Provisioners’ Cooperative, I’ll focus on use of free, abundant, fresh seaweed in the garden.

Many local gardeners swear by seaweed, and you might see us foraging off local beaches, and might be wondering ‘what is that about?’ So, I’ll try to address some of the questions I know I had, such as: What does seaweed do for the garden? Is there a type I should harvest? How much do I need? Where do I get it and at what times of

(con't previous page) the year should it be picked/used? Is harvesting seaweed a sustainable practice? Practically speaking, how do I use it in the garden? And, is it even legal to pick the stuff?

Seaweed is high in carbohydrates which are essential building blocks in growing plants, and low in cellulose so it breaks down easily. Seaweed shares no diseases with land plants. Unsurprisingly, the nutrients we gain from eating seaweed straight, are also helpful to edible plants in the garden, and benefit us through eating those plants in turn. Other benefits include seaweed as a mulch to protect plants during hot, dry weather as it saves water, and keeps soil moist at ground level. In the summertime seaweed will decompose into small rather sharp bits that will recombine themselves when it rains and release water and nutrients back in to the soil again, until they are invisible. Using seaweed also lessens the need to weed as it suppresses emerging weed seeds, and the (minimal) salt and texture of dried seaweed repels slugs and other pests, helps lighten the soil, and does not itself contain weed seeds or harbour mites and pests like bark mulch do.

**Extra tips to make your picking more pleasant and sustainable include:**

- Gathering 'mid-beach': not too close to the shore (as not to include too much sand, weed seeds, bugs, leaves) and not too close to the water (so as to not include too much sea life, and water – which makes it super heavy to carry).
- Picking after a strong windstorm (but preferably after a day or two of dryer weather) will give you easiest access to lots of seaweed that will be lighter to carry.
- You may pick a variety of seaweeds, all are good to use in the garden, but try to use fine, smaller broken up seaweed for garden use (or as chicken feed supplements) and keep the larger kelp fronds for 'kelp tea' or compost.
- Pick lightly from several areas to reduce impact on sea life, and pick no more than a third of the seaweed from any patch.
- Apply the seaweed as soon as it's home and apply thickly, at least 4 – 6" deep on garden beds to cover any exposed soil, and add to compost – don't waste your precious seaweed on pathways!
- During most of the year in our region the plentiful rain will wash most of the salt away, but if you're adding seaweed in the summer months, the seaweed can be spread out over the driveway and rinsed with a hose before application.

*(con't from previous page)* Of course, the seaweed habitat affects its edibility – like other sea life, seaweed will absorb and store toxins (even naturally-occurring ones) if these are present in the water or on the shores where it is found. It's of prime concern if you're directly eating seaweed but also if using it in the garden, so avoid areas that display the 'usual suspects' like industrial sites, or areas where run-off is an issue, and check government sites and warnings over contaminants.

As with any human intervention and resource extraction, we need to be careful to minimize our impact. The key fish species directly harmed and killed through regional marine plant harvesting are primarily Pacific sand lance and surf smelt. These fish spawn in the intertidal zones along sand and pebble beaches. Herring spawn season will very soon be upon us and no seaweed should be collected for gardens in February, March and April, as herring will often choose seaweeds as the anchor for their eggs; this includes seaweed that has washed onto shore, as high tides may reintroduce the seaweed and surviving eggs back to the ocean. This is not to mention that the harvest area is home to many small sea creatures and provides shelter, shade and moisture between the tidal periods, so summer harvesting should be particularly light.

Fisheries and aquaculture BC states that "Individuals harvesting for their own personal use, and collecting amounts of 100 kg or less, do not require a licence; however, all aquatic plant harvest should minimize impacts to aquatic plants and to the environment. All harvesting must be done by hand (no raking) and if harvesting occurs on the foreshore, the substrate should not be disturbed or exposed."

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



**HAPPY FORAGING!** by Gianni Spezzacatena





photo: Kevin Wilson

## "ASK THE EXPERTS" SKOOKUM ONLINE SOCIAL

On May 5, 2021, quite a few Skookum members gathered on Zoom to connect and ask garden/food producing questions to our local pro's: Ron Berezan, Shirley Cole, Samantha Sherman and Sharon Shultz. The following pages are some 'hot tips' from these 'cool growers/livestock raisers.'

### Prevent Late Blight\*

Consistent application of brewed compost tea.

Keep nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, peppers tomatillos) spaced far apart

Select seeds and varieties of tomatoes that are blight resistant or early ripening.

*\*blight is a fungal organism pathogenic to nightshades. It's airborne and triggered by a precise combination of heat and humidity.*

### Watering Tips

(and why it's ok to underwater!)

Roots grow strong by searching for water

If a plant isn't getting a lot of water, it thinks it's dying and will further produce flowers/fruit.

Put out a tuna can and once there's an inch of water in it, then you know you've watered "deep" enough. Do this once a week.



## Dealing with Wireworms

- if you are turning your grassy area into a garden, till it and then let it sit, and the robins will come eat the wireworms
- You can bait wireworms with chunks of potato or carrot. Leave for a week and dig up and throw away.
- Try bait balls: 1 cup flour, 2 tablespoons of honey and some water. Bury 10-15 cm deep, marking location.

## Thinning Fruit Trees

**Why?** If there is too much fruit then your fruit will be smaller. Also, considering how much energy it takes to produce fruit, by thinning the fruit, we are helping next year's crop as well.

**When?** As soon as you recognize the fruit, when it's about an inch in diameter.

## Using Animal Manure in your Garden

- You can use rabbit manure right away, as well as duck manure tea (great to water fig trees with it!)
- As animal manure can carry e-coli, botulism and some parasites you must wait at least 120 days before using: duck, llama, sheep, chicken and goat. For cow and pig manure you should wait at least 6 months.
- Dr Van Dyck is a vet in Comox and a great resource for answering questions about using manure on farms and gardens.
- If you are looking for manure, you can post on Qathet Regional District Livestock Facebook page.



*photo: Kevin Wilson*



*photo: Brooke Oxley*

### **Shared Resources from 'Ask the Experts'**

Linda Chalker-Scott's site <[theinformedgardener.com](http://theinformedgardener.com)> is interesting and science-based. She has spent much time researching horticultural myths. Bonus! [CLICK HERE](#) to listen to her podcast.

[Linda Gilkeson](#) is a good resource for west coast pest management. She has a monthly email that you can sign up for that covers a lot of good info on organic gardening.

Check out [Toilet Tech Solutions](#) - ecological principles for waste management, waste treatment, and nutrient cycling.

Support the [Gardener's Pantry](#) (Victoria) - Organic Fertilizers and Microbial Inoculants - you can order Ron's Biochar from them!

Become a member of the [Powell River Garden Club](#)

## **Resources for learning about organic fertilizers**

submitted by Kevin Wilson

[Build Better Garden Soil With Free Organic Fertilizers!](#)

[Use Organic Fertilizers for the Right Reasons](#)

[Organic Fertilizer Sources for the Garden](#)

[Green Manure Cover Crops](#)

[7 Comfrey Uses in the Permaculture Garden](#)



# NO-BAKE GREEK YOGURT TART

*A dessert recipe to try when it's too hot to turn on the oven.*

## Ingredients

For the crust

- 2 cups raw pecans
- 10 Medjool dates, soaked in warm water for 10 minutes and pitted
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

For the filling

- 1 ½ cups plain Greek yogurt (dairy free if vegan)
- ½ cup (or more!) any kind of berries
- 2 tablespoons honey (maple syrup if vegan)

## Instructions

1. In a food processor, pulse the pecans until ground into a semi-fine meal. Add the dates and pulse until the mixture holds together when pinched and starts to look like dough.
2. Press the dough into a 9 to 9 ½-inch tart pan with a removable bottom to form an even crust along the base and sides. Chill in the freezer for 10 minutes.
3. Remove the crust from the freezer. Carefully remove the tart from the pan (leave it resting on the round base) and slide it onto a round serving platter. Spread the yogurt over the crust. Top the yogurt with the raspberries and strawberries, then drizzle with honey.

*recipe source: [Cookies and Kate](#)*



## Skorthalia

*source: [Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company](#)*

- 1 head garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup ground almonds
- ¼ cup bread crumbs, soaked in water and squeezed dry
- ¾-1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

## Instructions

Place garlic into a mortar, add the salt and grind with the pestle into a smooth paste. Mix in the olive oil in tablespoon quantities, waiting to add in more until all has been absorbed. When the emulsion has a mayonnaise-like consistency and the olive oil begins to not be absorbed, mix in the almond flour and soaked bread crumbs (can replace almonds with entirely bread crumbs). The emulsion will break but that is not a problem. Beat lemon juice into the mixture, which will turn whitish and will help the emulsion reform. Adjust salt to taste. Let sit at least an hour (or even better over night) before serving.

# SKOOKUM PROJECT UPDATES

## Cider Press

Old Cider Press: Deadline for bids is extended to midnight on Wednesday June 23. If no bids are received, we'll open up bidding to non-Skookum members in the qathet region.

New Cider Press: Planning a work party to clean up/refurbish the new (to us) cider press, followed by a 'how to use' workshop. Stay tuned for more info!



## Gleaners

We have 35 pickers signed up this year so far!

If you are interested in becoming a picker (no experience needed) please fill out the form [here](#).

If you have fruit or nut trees or berries or grapes (or other plants) that you would like to have us come and pick, please fill out the form [here](#)

## Skookum Merchandise

Next time you are shopping at Ecosentials and forgot your reusable bag, we've got you covered! Starting in July, you can find Skookum's organic cotton cloth bags for sale.

