



Welcome to Hamlen's
Helping Hand!

1st Newsletter of 2009

VEGETABLE GARDENING 101 Seminar

How best to prepare, plant and tend your vegetable garden. **When: 10:00AM Saturday, March 28th**
Where: Hamlen's Garden Center.

Hamlen's Helping Hand



Hamlen's Garden Center
157 St. Albans Road
Swanton, Vermont

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The Magic of the Garden

The Magic of the Garden By Dave Hamlen

When I was a small boy, I always marveled at the sense of peace a garden gave. Here life was irrespective of the events of the world. Here bees, butterflies, and toads ruled giving a magical feel to the garden. The garden itself was constantly transforming, growing, flowering, and fruiting. The garden was part of my world, yet I was a part of its. As a boy, I was in awe of its transformation. The changes in the garden were evident day by day. This world is never dull, but reflects constant change and inspiration.



When I was six years old I discovered the fun of growing pumpkins. It was fascinating to think from one tiny seed could grow a vine that, left to its natural inclinations would engulf the garden. So I learned early in life pumpkins need their space.

A few years later, I learned how you could interact with pumpkins to help determine their potential. It was when a good friend of our family, experienced horticulturist, Lewellyn Jones showed me how by injecting a mixture of sugar and water into the vine of the pumpkin it could dramatically alter their size. Another trick I learned was pumpkins like a lot of rich manure and compost. I took the seeds of Connecticut Field pumpkins (normally about a 20 lb. pumpkin) and planted them in an area where my father once raised chickens. Once the pumpkins started to form I cut a slit halfway through the vine just before each pumpkin. I then mixed up a solution of sugar and water. I used a medicine dropper to apply a dropper full of the solution into the slit of the vine daily. As a child, I was learning persistence and patience (it can take pumpkins 120 or more days to grow). The pumpkins grew, and grew, and grew. It proved to me how nurturing pays off no matter what you are growing. Finally by October the pumpkins were ready for picking. I knew my efforts had paid off as I had several pumpkins I could barely budge. Using the bathroom scales it was determined I had several pumpkins around 108 lbs. Keep in mind normally these pumpkins would only reach about 20 lbs. I was ecstatic to think I could work with nature to achieve these kinds of results.

This is just one of the ways gardening can reap rewards while providing fun and education. Yes, the garden is a magical place for both the young and the young at heart.

Hamming It Up

Have you heard about the person who didn't go to bed just so he could find out where the sun went? ... Then it dawned on him. Sort of hits you in the solar plexus, doesn't it!

Hamlines

“Where flowers bloom so does hope.”

– **Lady Bird Johnson**

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Hamlen's Garden Center

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