

Week of June 18

By Sage Sassafras

Gardening Long Ago

Ever wonder how gardeners of old --and I don't mean those who are long of tooth -- managed to feed their families with fresh and root veggies and still have time left over to win prizes for the best dahlias at the Grange? And all of this was accomplished without the supplies and additives we so freely dispense on our gardens today.

Well, curiosity got the better of me; plowed my way through some old gardening articles and unearthed some ideas that are as fresh today as they were generations ago.

When planting roses, add a banana peel around the root ball. Banana peels add phosphate, calcium, sulphur and magnesium as they decompose. Apparently, the peels also ward off aphids.

Plant French marigolds, although I'm sure any old marigold will do, to help with insect control, especially around tomatoes. It's the scent that the bugs don't like.

If you have mole holes around the yard, drop a little piece of Etlax down the hole and the moles will be gone in a couple of days. Hmmm ... wonder if this works for ground hogs too?

Fill an old juice bottle with iron nails and then with water. Let it sit overnight and use this water to water your plantings. The iron in the water is good for the plants. Keep the juice bottle filled all the time. (Does anyone around remember the taste of iron in the water when it was pulled icy cold from the ground by an old-fashioned pump?)

Plant parsley all around the garden. It will make everyone wonder what you are up to while at the same time encouraging bees and warding off insects from tender veggies, especially asparagus, beans and carrots. Heh, anything that's good for the bees we should practice right away!

Delphiniums and hollyhocks love beer - one for you, one for the plants - but only once a week.

Happy gardening and don't forget to check out the website www.woodstockgardenclub.org. Remember that Mother Nature needs all the coddling we can give her.

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