

Village Garden Center & Landscape Service

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5 Fascinating Facts about the Monarch Butterfly

In one of the world's astounding natural animal events each fall, tens of millions of monarch butterflies migrate up to 3000 miles from the Northeastern US and Canada down to their wintering grounds in Central Mexico to escape the frosts of winter. In fact, tagged monarch butterflies have even been found to travel over 250 miles in one day.

The migration is due to the fact that monarchs can't survive the cold northern winters, unlike other butterflies that can survive as larvae, pupae, or even as adults in some cases. As a result, the monarch is the only butterfly known to make a two-way migration, similar to birds.

One of the enigmas around this phenomenon is how millions of infant butterflies who have never been to their ancestral breeding grounds return to the very trees that their parents roosted in before they were born

The orange of a monarch butterfly's wings is a warning color, identifying itself to predators that the butterfly will taste bad or may be toxic.

A monarch butterfly can flap its wings up to 120 times in a minute when trying to escape a predator. Their flight speed has been measured between 4 and 12 miles per hour but can be much faster if a monarch uses available wind currents that will speed it up considerably.

Monarchs know when it is time to migrate south for the winter based on the environmental cues associated with seasonal changes. They then get naturally high using air currents and thermals to travel such incredible distances. In fact, the highest monarch was recorded at 11,000 ft by a glider pilot – that's over two miles up in the air! Just to put this into perspective, most birds fly below 500 ft, hot air balloons only go up about 200 ft, and even songbird migrations occur in the 2000-4000 ft high range.

There's not really much else going on above 11,000 feet other than Mt. Everest (29,028 ft) and passenger jets (36,000 ft).



Butterfly and Bee Magnet, Joe Pye Weed

If you want to grow the ultimate flower buffet for butterflies and bees, try Joe Pye Weed. When there isn't much else blooming, Joe Pye will surprise you with fuzzy pink umbels of flowers that flying insects clearly relish.

A great late summer bloomer, *Eupatorium dubium*, 'Little Joe' tops out at 4 feet tall, as opposed to the more commonly grown 'Gateway' which can get up to 7 feet high and can flop over.

Now there is another cultivar called 'Baby Joe' which only gets 2 to 3 feet high.

Once the flower starts to bloom, I am sure you will see at least a half-dozen different types of bees and butterflies landing on my one plant!

'Little Joe' comes in a 'garden friendly' package of a plant that is easy to grow in full sun to part shade and has sturdy stems that will support the flower heads and won't bend or flop. The plant is drought tolerant and fragrant with mauve purple flower heads which can reach 12 inches across! The flower persists for weeks and the seed heads will last through the winter and will provide food for the birds when food is scarce. What is not to like? A tough beautiful, easy to grow plant which provides entertainment.



Overview

Height 1 ft. to 3 ft.

Spread 1 ft. to 3 ft.

Growth Habit Spreads

Growth Pace Moderate Grower

Light Full Sun to Part Shade

Moisture Medium Moisture

Maintenance Moderate

Characteristics Attracts Butterflies,

Native, Showy Flowers

Bloom Time Early Fall, Fall, Late Summer, Summer

Flower Color Niagara

Uses

Beds and Borders, Roadside

Style

Cottage Garden,

Meadow Garden

Seasonal Interest

Summer Interest

Type

Perennials



Common Milkweed
Asclepias syriaca
Milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae)

Description: This herbaceous perennial plant is 2-6' tall and unbranched, except sometimes toward the apex, where the flowers occur. The central stem is relative stout, pale green, terete, and usually short-pubescent (less often glabrous). The opposite leaves are up to 8" long and 3½" wide, broadly oblong in shape, and smooth along their margins. The upper leaf surface is pale-medium to dark green and hairless above, while the lower leaf surface is densely covered with woolly hairs that are very short. There is a prominent central vein along the length of each leaf, and finer side veins that radiate outward toward the smooth margins. When either the central stem or leaves are torn, a milky sap oozes out that has variable toxicity in the form of cardiac glycosides.

Umbels of flowers, each about 2½-4" across, emerge from the axils of the upper leaves. These flowers are quite fragrant, with a scent resembling violets or pansies, and they range in color from faded light pink to reddish purple. Each flower is about ¼" across, consisting of 5 reflexed petals and 5 raised hoods with curved horns. The hoods are more light-colored than the petals. The pedicels of the flowers are light green to pale red and hairy. The blooming period lasts about 1-1½ months from early to mid-summer. The seedpods (follicles) are 3-4" long, broadly lanceoloid, and covered with soft prickles and short woolly hairs. At maturity, each seedpod split along one side to release numerous seeds that have large tufts of white hair. Dispersion of seed is by wind. The root system has long creeping rhizomes, promoting the vegetative spread of this plant.\

Cultivation: The preference is full sun, rich loamy soil, and mesic conditions, but this robust plant can tolerate a variety of situations, including partial sun and a high clay or sand content in the soil. Under ideal conditions, Common Milkweed can become 6' tall and spread aggressively, but it is more typically about 3-4' tall. This plant is very easy to grow once it becomes established.

Faunal Associations: The flowers are very popular with many kinds of insects, especially long-tongued bees, wasps, flies, skippers, and butterflies, which seek nectar. Other insect visitors include short-tongued bees, various milkweed plant bugs, and moths, including Sphinx moths. Among these, the larger butterflies, predatory wasps, and long-tongued bees are more likely to remove the pollinia from the flowers. Some of the smaller insects can have their legs entrapped by the flowers and die. Common Milkweed doesn't produce fertile seeds without cross-pollination. The

caterpillars of *Danaus plexippus* (Monarch Butterfly) feed on the foliage, as do the caterpillars of a few moths. Many of these insects are brightly colored – a warning to potential predators of the toxicity that they acquired from feeding on milkweed.



Helianthus salicifolius 'First Light'
Willowleaf sunflower or
swamp sunflower

An explosion of golden yellow flowers combined with a manageable height makes this a superior selection. Despite its name, this plant can be found literally blanketed in flowers in the late summer and into the fall when most other *Helianthus* are past. Flowers form on upright, self-supporting stems but instead of the typical tall sunflower, *Helianthus* 'First Light' forms a nice, compact clump of fuzzy, linear leaves topping out just above 3 feet.



Willowleaf sunflower Interesting Notes

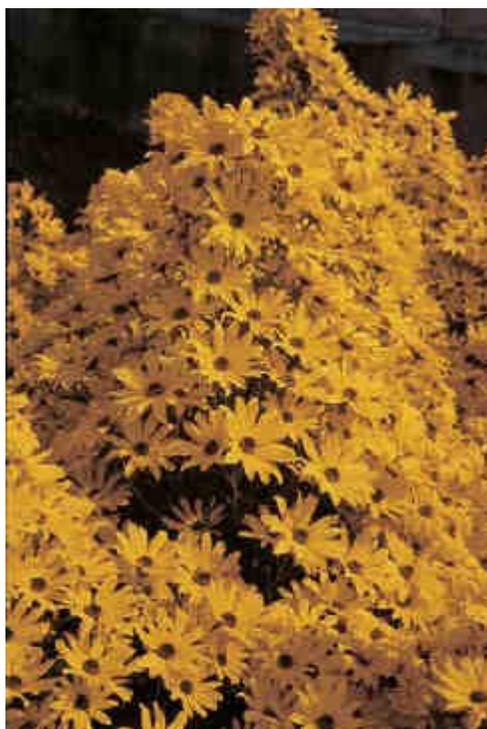
Hundreds of golden-yellow flowers with dark brown eyes form in midfall on upright, self-supporting plants. Narrow elongated foliage. Stunning explosion of color for fall gardens. More manageable plant height than other Sunflowers. Birds enjoy the seeds.

'First Light' is a fireplug of a plant reaching only three feet in height. As the common name suggests, the foliage of the willowleaf sunflower is narrow, linear and tightly arranged on a strongly pyramidal Plant.

For optimum flowering, site in full sun and well-drained soil. Once established, perennial sunflower will tolerate periods of drought. 'First Light' is hardy to zone 6.

After most annuals and perennials have faded, 'First Light' explodes into bloom in late September and early October engulfing the plant with three-inch sunflower-like flowers. The golden-yellow ray flowers surround a chocolate-brown central eye and persist for several weeks. When in flower, the plant resembles a small Christmas tree aglow with bright yellow lights.

The showy flowers attract butterflies and if allowed to remain on the plant, seed heads add winter interest and a source of food for birds. Maintenance is minimal throughout the growing season; however, after three years plants benefit from division.



Helianthus salicifolius 'First Light'
Growing and Maintenance Tips

Prefers average, well-drained soils. Grows best with added moisture but can tolerate drought. Allow stalks and seed heads to remain for winter interest and for food for birds.

Divide clumps in spring or fall every 3 to 4 years.

Any seeds produced by this cultivar will reportedly be sterile.

Height
3-4 Feet

Spread 2-3 Feet

Bloom Color
Yellow

USDA Hardiness Zone 5-9a

Cimicifuga

(*cim-eh-SIFF-you-gah, cim-eh-siff-YOU-gah*)

Common Name: Bugbane, black snakeroot

In recent years it was determined that Cimicifuga and Actaea plants share the same genetic structure and Cimicifuga was combined into the genus Actaea. However, because the two plants vary in their bloom structure, flowering time, and type of seed capsule we have decided to keep them separate to easier distinguish between the two Plants.

Cimicifuga acerina, bugbane. 3 - 4'. This plant has handsome, maple-like leaves and pure-white bottle-brush flowers on upright or arching spikes. Zones 4 - 8.

Cimicifuga racemosa, black snakeroot. 5 - 7'. This regal plant has beautiful divided foliage with very tall, branching spikes of creamy bottle-brush flowers in summer. Zones 3 - 8.

Cimicifuga simplex, Kamchatka bugbane. 3 - 6'. This species is one of the last to bloom late in the fall. The variety 'White Pearl' has pale green palm-shaped leaves and 3 - 4' white flower spikes. The good thing about these late flowering plants is that they are not affected by light frost that is common in October and November and continue to bloom until a hard freeze. Zones 4 - 8.

Cimicifuga simplex var. *ramosa*, black snakeroot. 4 - 5'. This variety blooms in September. It has large, divided leaves forming an impressive mound above which arise tall, branching, white or creamy white flower spikes. 'Hillside Black Beauty' has very dark purplish-black foliage and white flowers with a tinge of pink, however it tends to be somewhat slow growing. 'Atropurpurea' has attractive purple tinted foliage in the spring turning green later with dark stems and ivory white flowers in late summer. 'Brunette' is often listed as being identical to 'Atropurpurea' but actually has darker foliage that stays dark most of the season. Zones 4 - 8.

How to Grow: Bugbane prefers moist, deeply rich, humusy soil in part to full shade. Plants will tolerate some sun if grown in a cool location with plenty of moisture but may wilt often. When planting crowns they should be completely buried about 1 to 2" below the soil and mulched lightly. Dormant plants prefer to be rather dry but then they like frequent water after they are fully leafed out and actively growing.

The crowns multiply somewhat slowly so it is usually best to plant them in small groups for the best effect.

Propagate in fall by division, keeping them dry after replanting, or by sowing fresh seed outdoors. Propagation could also be done in early spring but they emerge very early so divide just as the soil warms and be careful not to damage the new shoots.

Landscape uses: Bugbane provides a beautiful vertical accent in the partially shaded garden along with hostas, ferns, grasses, and shrubs. Other attractive flowering companions include *Actonidium* (monkshood), *Tricyrtis* (toad lilies), Japanese anemones, and *Dendranthema* (hardy mums).



How To: Make Blooming Cupcake Liners

What You Need

Cupcake liners (in assorted colors)
Pipe cleaners (in green)
Craft glue
Craft knife

1. Pile 5 to 6 cupcake liners on top of one another. Using a craft knife, poke a hole through the center of the stack.
2. Take one pipe cleaner and apply a dab of hot glue to one end. Then secure one liner to this glue. Set aside to dry.
3. Once the glue has dried, scrunch the liner closed to create the look of a flower bud.
4. Repeat Step 2 with the additional liners, sliding onto the same pipe cleaner, securing with glue, and scrunching together.
5. Wrap the pipe cleaner around the base of the bloom, and bend the pipe cleaner to create a leaf-shape.



How do I provide nesting sites for bumblebees?

You can help bumblebees by providing them with somewhere to nest.

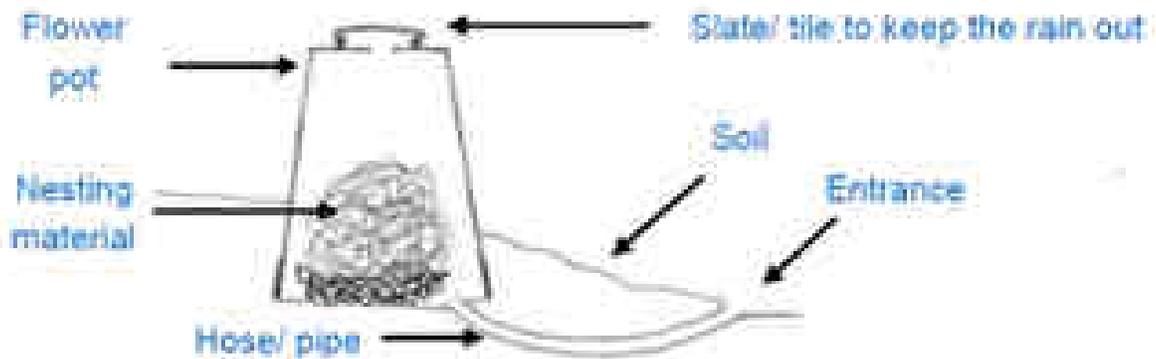
The first step of course is to provide lots of the right kinds of flowers in spring. At this time of year the nest-searching queen will be attracted to gardens where she can find plenty of food to help her produce her first batch of eggs.

Once she is ready to lay, the queen will start looking for a nest site. She flies low over the ground in a zig-zag pattern, stopping to investigate holes in the ground, or piles of leaves.

It can be quite difficult to encourage bumblebees to nest in a specific place - even specially designed nest boxes have limited success. However, here is a design to build a suitable nesting site in case you want to give it a go.

What you need:

- A flowerpot (> 20cm in diameter)
- A piece of slate/ tile
- A bit of tube or pipe



Instructions:

Sink the upturned flower pot into the ground and use the slate/ tile to cover any drainage holes to keep the rain out.

Run a hose or pipe underground to the pot, leaving a prominent entrance. Be sure to make drainage holes in the pipe.

Finally, fill with a generous handful of nesting material, such as old bedding from a pet mouse, guinea pig, etc.

Caring for your Crepe Myrtles

The Crepe Myrtle is a fast-growing, small to medium-sized deciduous tree that produces large, colorful flowers over a long period from midsummer to fall. The foliage is attractive in fall and the textured bark provides winter interest. Another common name is southern lilac. It is typically cultivated as a multi-trunked flowering tree grown throughout the warmer climates of the world.

The Crepe Myrtle may be the most widely grown ornamental shrub in the southern United States. In the summertime, the showy blooms last for several months, withstanding high temperatures, punishing heat, and powerful sunlight.

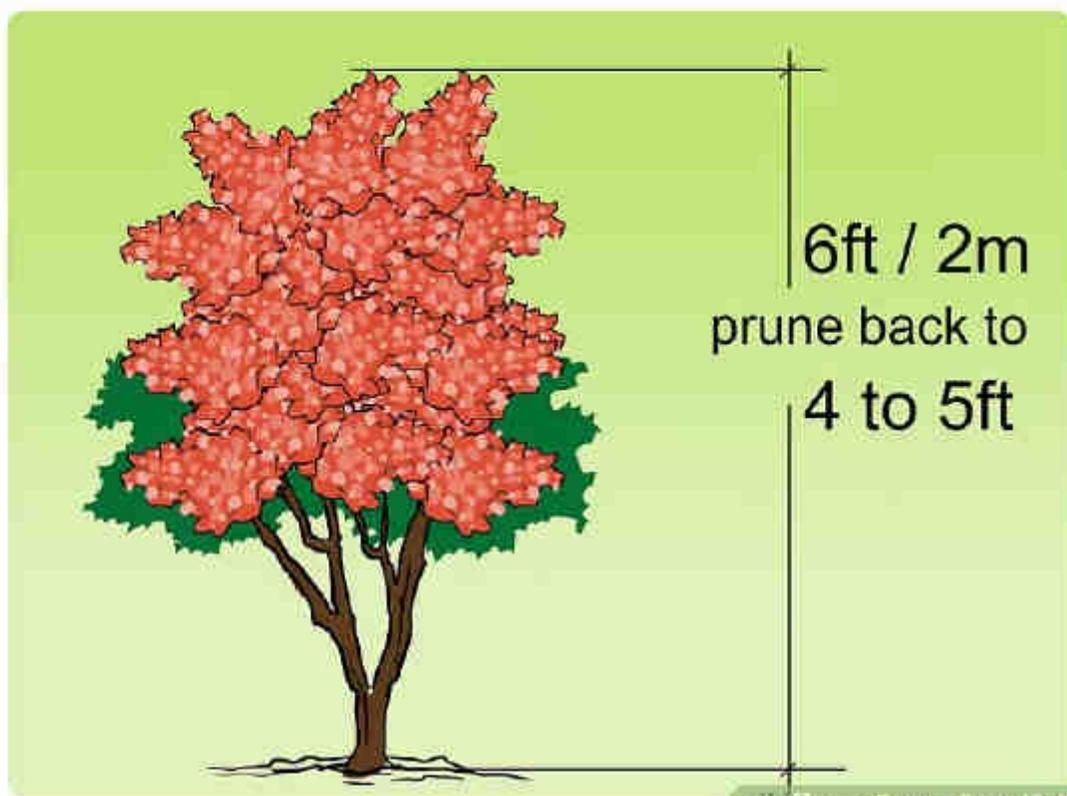
Flower colors include pink, red, purple, and white, depending on the variety. Most grow 15 to 25 feet tall and wide, with some shorter varieties growing only 2 to 5 feet tall. Dwarf varieties can be grown in containers.

Ongoing Care

Apply a layer of compost under the tree each spring, spreading it out to the dripline (the area under the outermost branches). Add a 2-inch layer of mulch to retain moisture and control weeds, keeping mulch a few inches away from the tree trunk. Water plants during the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Flowers are produced on new wood, so prune back weak, spindly growth in spring to encourage better flowering. Prune off dead, diseased, and broken branches anytime.

Preparing to Prune the Plant

late winter or early spring for the best summer blooms. Pruning before leaves sprout on the tree is also helpful because you get a clearer view of which branches to cut. You can remove flowers when they fade in the summer to encourage a second bloom.



Determine what shape and size you want the crepe myrtle to be. To keep a crepe myrtle healthy and beautiful, you want to prune with an eye toward opening up the middle of the tree to allow air to flow through more easily. Don't over-prune by lopping the trunks close to the ground. Aside from those guidelines, you can prune your crepe myrtle to a shape and size that works for your yard. Crepe myrtles can grow about 1 to 2 feet (30-40 cm) per season, so prune based on your desired tree height. For example, if you want your tree to be about 6 feet (2 m) tall, you will want to prune back to 4 to 5 feet (121 cm to 166 cm).

Keep in mind that new growth will sprout from the pruned areas.

Prune small sprouts at bottom of tree first. These are called "suckers." Left untrimmed, these will give your crepe myrtle a bushy appearance, and may compete with your main trunks for resources. Suckers can be pulled out when they first sprout or trimmed with a hand pruner. Leave the large, healthy, thick trunks to keep growing taller and stronger.

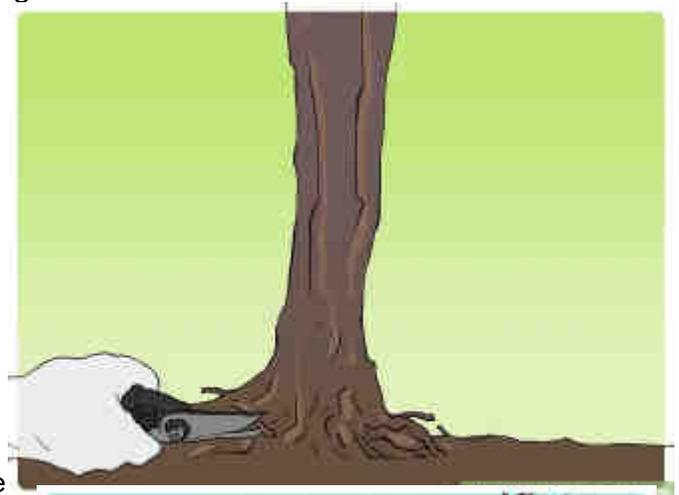
Cut side branches. Prune any branches coming out of side of the trunk up to about halfway up the trunk. This is called limbing-up, and helps the tree retain an attractive shape.

For younger trees that you are starting to shape, prune the small limbs from the ground up, leaving only the 3-5 strongest limbs.

Remove smaller branches that are growing horizontally or toward the inside of the tree. Prune out dead and crossing branches. You can use hand pruners for small, thin branches that you can reach, loppers for branches that are more than 1/2 inch (12 mm) thick, or a pole pruner for thicker or taller branches. Cut branches that are growing at an angle or that detract from the shape you are trying to Achieve.

Cut long or arching branches back to where they are no more than 1/2-inch in diameter. Branches that are too thin will still bloom, but they will not be able to bear the weight of the blooms and will droop or Break.

If you're cutting a branch back to the trunk, cut flush with the trunk instead of leaving a stub. Use loppers for lower branches or pole pruners for the tall ones out of reach. It is not necessary to cut off seed pods. It won't affect blooming.



BEST PLANTS TO KEEP AWAY JAPANESE BEETLES

Least favored by adult Japanese beetles and less susceptible to destruction.

Ash
Boxwood
Burning bush
Dogwood
Hemlock
Holly
Magnolia
Northern red oak
Redbud
Red maple



WORST PLANTS FOR JAPANESE BEETLE DAMAGE

Most favored by adult Japanese beetles and more susceptible to destruction.

American linden
Apple
Apricot, cherry, peach, and plum
Birch
Crab apple
Crape myrtle
Japanese maple
Norway maple
Pin oak
Rose



Try this safe homemade solution: Mix 1 teaspoon of liquid dishwashing detergent with 1 cup of vegetable oil and shake well; then add it to 1 quart of water. Add 1 cup of rubbing alcohol and shake vigorously to emulsify. Pour this mixture into a spray bottle and use it at ten-day intervals on pests. Homemade sprays can run more of a risk of damaging plant leaves, so be careful.

Apply sprays in the morning, never in full sun or at temperatures above 90°F. If your plants start to wilt, rinse the leaves immediately with clean water.

Geraniums: Japanese beetles are attracted to geraniums. They eat the blossoms, promptly get dizzy, fall down, and permit you to dispose of them conveniently with a dustpan and brush. Plant geraniums close to more valuable plants which you wish to save from the ravages of Japanese beetles.

Japanese Beetles on Roses? Note that insecticides will not fully protect roses, which unfold too fast and are especially attractive to beetles. When beetles are most abundant on roses, nip the buds and spray the bushes to protect the leaves. When the beetles become scarce, let the bushes bloom again. Timeliness and thoroughness of application are very important. Begin treatment as soon as beetles appear, before damage is done.

NOTE: Many dusts or sprays are highly toxic to honeybees. If application of these materials to plants is necessary during the bloom period, do not apply during hours when bees are visiting the flowers. If larger than yard and garden plantings are to be treated, you may need to contact nearby beekeepers in advance so that they can protect their colonies.

From the Garden of Eva

Zucchini, Eggplant, Tomato Gratin

Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups sliced yellow onion (1 large onion)
- 1 cup of sliced red, orange, or yellow bell peppers
- 1 long eggplant (a slender eggplant like a Japanese eggplant, not a large globe, about 1/2 pound)
- 1 large zucchini (about 10 to 12 inches long, 1 1/2 inch diameter, about 1/2 pound), or other summer squash
- 2 medium sized tomatoes
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and smashed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 ounces Provolone cheese, sliced or grated
- 3 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese



Bake for 40 minutes at 350°F. Remove the foil. Turn on the broiler and broil for 5 minutes or until nicely browned.

1 Sauté the onions and peppers: In a large sauté pan heat 2 Tbsp of the olive oil on medium high heat. Add the sliced onions and cook until lightly browned, stirring frequently, about 10 minutes. Add the sliced bell peppers and continue to cook with the onions until the bell peppers are softened and the onions are well browned, about 5 to 6 minutes more.

When done, transfer the onions and bell peppers into a large gratin pan or casserole dish.

2 Slice the eggplant, zucchini, and tomato in similar sized rounds: While the onions and peppers are cooking, slice the eggplant and zucchini in 1/4-inch thick round slices. You'll also want to slice the tomato into 1/4-inch thick slices, but depending on how big your tomato is, you may need to cut the tomato in half or in quarters first. All of the sliced vegetable pieces should be about the same size to make it easier to layer them in an attractive manner.

3 Layer the eggplant, zucchini, tomato rounds on top of the onions, bell peppers as garlic: Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Spread the cooked onions and bell peppers in an even layer at the bottom of the gratin dish. Place the mashed garlic on top of the onions and peppers. Arrange the slices of the eggplant, zucchini, and tomato on top of the cooked onions and peppers, alternating the vegetables, in an attractive pattern, stacking them and fanning them across the surface of the dish.

4 Top with salt, parsley, cheeses, olive oil: Sprinkle with salt and parsley. Top with Provolone and Parmesan cheeses. Drizzle the remaining tablespoon of olive oil around the perimeter, where the vegetables meet the side of the dish.

5 Cover with foil and bake, broil uncovered to finish: Cover with foil (it helps to grease the underside of the foil with a little olive oil so that the cheese as it melts does not stick to the foil).

Mozzarella, Basil & Zucchini Frittata

Ingredients

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ cups thinly sliced red onion
1½ cups chopped zucchini
7 large eggs, beaten
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
¾ cup pearl-size or baby fresh mozzarella balls (about 4 ounces)
3 tablespoons chopped soft sun-dried tomatoes
¼ cup thinly sliced fresh basil



Directions

- 1 Position rack in upper third of oven; preheat broiler.
- 2 Heat oil in a large broiler-safe nonstick or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and zucchini and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, 3 to 5 minutes.
- 3 Meanwhile, whisk eggs, salt and pepper in a bowl. Pour the eggs over the vegetables in the pan. Cook, lifting the edges to allow uncooked egg from the middle to flow underneath, until nearly set, about 2 minutes. Arrange mozzarella and sun-dried tomatoes on top and place the skillet under the broiler until the eggs are slightly browned, 1½ to 2 minutes. Let stand for 3 minutes. Top with basil.
- 4 To release the frittata from the pan, run a spatula around the edge, then underneath, until you can slide or lift it out onto a cutting board or serving plate. Cut into 4 slices and serve.

Spiked Lemonade

Ingredients

2 cups lemon-flavored sparkling water
or club soda, chilled
½ cup citrus-flavored vodka, chilled
½ cup fresh lemon juice
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup orange liqueur
Crushed ice
Garnish: lemon slices
Order Ingredients
How to Make It

Combine first 5 ingredients in a large pitcher.
Serve over crushed ice.
Garnish each serving with a lemon slice, if desired.



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Crape Myrtles*

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