Today on *Across the Fence* if you have a vegetable garden and are wondering what to do this time of year in addition to weeding and watering or are wondering what problems to look for or what pest you may have, hopefully we'll have some answers for you. Hi, I am Leonard Perry with University of Vermont Extension. Today we are at the home of horticulturalist Cathy LaLiberte near Richmond Vermont. We were here a couple months ago and this is what the garden looked like then, compared to what it looks like now.

Well Cathy, looks like you have a bumper crop of peas this year. These really look awesome. Looks like you'll be eating a lot of peas.

Cathy.: There are a lot of peas to eat; these are my sugar snap peas. I planted them at the end of April now it's the middle of July and they are coming in really strong. They're starting to Peter out. They've stopped flowering so we will use what's left here and then probably pull them out. The stems will gradually wither and we can plant a second crop in this space.

Leonard.: So you can plant another crop at the end of July or early August?

Cathy.: Yeah as soon as I pull these out when they're done I'll put in something like fall broccoli or lettuce would be good.

Leonard.: But not more peas?

Cathy.: I know I'll probably plant a full crop of peas in another couple weeks in a different place. I don't want to plant them in the same place all plants have disease tendencies and if you can keep them apart and on a rotation of 2 to 3 years it's a good idea.

Leonard.: That's a good point. So these sugar snaps again you let them fill out? And you can eat the whole pod compared to regular shelling peas.

Cathy.: Right they're nice and thick and you can eat the whole thing. You can eat them raw sauté then you can freeze them and I've also made pickled peas. Last year I had a really huge crop even more than this. I pickled them with tarragon and some vinegar and I even put some garlic scapes in there.
Leonard.: Wow. If you have a lot of something in the garden to maybe try something different has many ways you can eat the same thing.

Cathy.: That's right there's a lot of ways to eat sugar snap peas and one of them is right down here in the garden.

Leonard.: But again you want to harvest go through every day or every few days and when they fill out harvest them?

Cathy.: Yes that's usually for these peas about a three week harvest season maybe four.

Leonard.: But regularly you don't wait till one point and harvest them at once?

Cathy.: I think every day is about right. Or at least every two days because it's amazing if it's warm and you have a lot of moisture to fill out really quickly. One day they'll be kind of skinny and flat the next two days you come back and they've gotten really fat and ready.

Leonard.: In a hot summer it will go by a lot quicker?

Cathy.: That's right. When they've gone by the outsides will get a little puckered and dry. They're still edible but their peak of flavor is when they're nice and fat and full.

Leonard.: Well Cathy it's obvious when peas are to harvest that these potatoes are growing in the ground how can you tell when to harvest those?

Cathy.: You can harvest potatoes of a couple of different times. You've often heard of new potatoes and new potatoes are harvested early. Let's take a look and see if these are ready. Usually you can tell right after they flowered. These have flowered and dropped the flowers that it's about the time to start seeing if you're new potatoes are ready. These are purple potato. If you could hold this pack I'll dig and see what we've got.

Leonard.: So we're looking for purple there's a lot of unusual colors.

Cathy.: There are.

Leonard.: Yes we see a purple. Look at that wow!

Cathy.: We've got some little potatoes. The deal is they will get bigger. So you could take these if you have a good supply of potatoes. You could take them and you can eat them now. There are a couple of different types of potatoes and some are really good for baking and others are really good for boiling. This is I believe a boiling potato. The way I will cook these little guys is in a pan with a little bit of water until they're cooked and then serve them with butter and parsley.

Leonard.: Last time I was here these tomatoes were covered in cloth. I went home and covered mine in cloth and it really worked well to give them a little protection.

Cathy.: Yes it was a cool spring. Every spring I keep them wrapped up with garden fabric around the outside of these cages. This year it was so cool I left it on until the 4th of July. They were
starting to grow to the top of the cages so I uncovered them and this is what we've got. They have set up a lot of fruit and they're starting to ripen. Cherry tomatoes are actually the ones I'm worried eating. That's one of the reasons I grow cherry tomatoes you get a lot of fruits are but also they ripen a little bit earlier than most of the other tomatoes.

Leonard.: I guess since there so many different tomato varieties that ripen in all different times and when you're choosing early in the season is probably what you want to watch to make sure you don't get any ripening too late and you'll get a selection that ripens early middle in late than you'll have a nice harvest.

Cathy.: That's right and I also like to pick different colored tomatoes. I have green ones here and orange red I guess that's all we have now.

Leonard.: I know there are some new colors of different vegetables. For the green ones I know have been a very popular one. How can you tell when that's ready to pick?

Cathy.: Green zebras are kind of tricky and I didn't know how do you know? It's called green zebra and what I have found is the best quality is one fruit this so green but the top shoulders just start to turn a little bit yellow. That's the time to pick them but you know what you just experiment and see how you like them.

Leonard.: Normally tomatoes if they're turning red and you have a nice red color you can always taste one too.

Cathy.: Unless you have an orange tomato in that case orange is red.

Leonard.: So make sure you know what color tomatoes you have. You mention these are growing will they keep growing or they look like they're getting pretty tall?

Cathy.: I have some determinant tomatoes in here. Determinant tomatoes just grow to a certain height stop and ripen their fruit but indeterminate tomatoes give you more fruit because it'll just keeps growing. Tomatoes are perennials and they keep growing and growing and in Vermont there's obviously a stop to the growing but they produce a lot of fruit and the thing is you need with the indeterminate you need to provide enough support. You start to get this happening where.

Leonard.: Before I've had wheat cages and they haven't been very upright and they just topple there is so much weight.

Cathy.: Yes they get incredibly heavy that you can come around here and tie these up with whenever you have handy pantyhose string or rope and keep them neat. A lot of people prune their tomatoes and take the suckers out. The suckers are a little stem that grows in the crotches of the vine. If you're going to be training your tomatoes up a stake or something like that usually you need to prune those suckers because as going to get too wild. I don't prune them because I don't have enough time I have other things I'd rather do so I leave them and it makes for more foliage but I think in all you get about the same amount of fruit.

Leonard.: Just make sure you have a good cage if you're going to have all that foliage on it.

Cathy.: It's going to get big definitely.
Leonard.: Kind of related here is another very popular vegetable the pepper. These are looking pretty good that looks like fruit is coming and tell us what you have here.

Cathy.: Yes peppers are coming they are always slow in Vermont to get going. They are really are hot weather crop. I always think they should go to Mexico. I think they think what am I doing here? These are also kept covered until the first week of July surrounded with a garden fabric to make a nice warm microclimate. I took the cover off and basically we're just stuck for two weeks and freaked out. Now they're starting to say OK its summer and are starting to set fruit so there are lots of bugs on here and fruits are certain form. I usually grow red peppers because I like them sweet. This is green and when it gets a little bigger and it looks like a regular green pepper you can certainly eat it it's just a regular green pepper or you can leave it and it will gradually ripen and depending on what kind of pepper ivy you have it will ripen yellow orange purple red and some of them stay green.

Leonard.: So you can eat them whenever really?

Cathy.: Whenever you want to eat them really.

Leonard.: I know before we had thought they were ready the ones we've grown. We harvest them and then we realize that they would have turned color if we left them on the plant.

Cathy.: Yes but usually they are making enough that you can spare green one now and then if you need one for salad. These are hot peppers it's a jalapeno plant right here and these will probably just a green put again you can eat them of any point.

Leonard.: Okay so it's not like you have to wait until their certain stage.

Cathy.: That's right.

Leonard.: Like some other vegetables.

Cathy.: Just pull it off and take a plate of one of those jalapenos and see if you think it's hot enough.

Leonard.: Speaking of colors this is gorgeous this lettuce.

Cathy.: This is a red romaine and this has actually gone by. What I mean by that is that the lettuce starts to elongate. Usually you imagine your lettuce plant down here. And as it starts to get ready to set flower which is.

Leonard.: Is that what they call bolting.

Cathy.: Yes so it's bolting and it's going to come out here and just the next week or so. What's happened is this has elongated it's starting to flower and if you break this off or break just a piece of lettuce you'll see it has a milky sap. This has a bitter taste to it and if you don't have any other lettuce to eat in your garden you can cut these off and soak it in cold water for a couple hours and it will take a lot of bitterness out of it. I will probably put a full crop of beets in here. When I do that I'm going to cover it up with shade netting. So I'm going to take this up fork it up smooth it over and put beets in. Then cover them with this fabric. The reason I'm doing that is to keep the soil moist
because it takes moisture to break the seed coat you do not have to be out here watering every day so I will keep them covered up and get seedlings started. Also this is going to keep the soil cooler because in the middle of the summer it's hard for seedlings to go through a week of 85°. You do not have to be out here watering every day too. I keep them covered up until probably mid-August late August when the weather starts to cool off a little bit and then I'll take this off because there's less light that time of year and you want to make sure the crops are getting as much light as possible.

Leonard.: I've always wondered about sowing a full crop it needs cool in the summer and that's the answer you put shade on it to keep the cooler.

Cathy.: You make you think that is cooler. Definitely take it off a late in the summer so that it will get enough light otherwise they'll be leggy and you want to try to avoid that.

Leonard.: I assume if you have them covered when the seedlings come up that will protect them from feeding. You have any varmints?

Cathy.: Yes there's been some feeding going on in my garden this summer which is why I have this covered up. This is the garden fabric the same thing I use around the tomatoes earlier in the season.

Leonard.: That's just wire hoops with some clothespins very simple.

Cathy.: I have rabbits this year. I have not had rabbits before why have rabbits now?

Leonard.: They found you; word got out.

Cathy.: I also have a really bad slug problem. You can see my basil.

Leonard.: You can hardly tell what that is poor plants.

Cathy.: This is lettuce leaf basil that's been in here since May.

Leonard.: And you haven't been picking it?

Cathy.: I know I haven't had any basil yet. This is more basil that I had in the greenhouse that I put out last week and you can see it's already munched. Here I have the second or third planting of broccoli and this needs to get covered because the rabbits just got one out. I left them to get some large pots when I thought they could take it but the rabbit the next night was chomping. You saw my second planting this is my first planting a broccoli and you can understand why I need a second planting. I have gotten some heads off of this but I don't know what's happening I think it is weather related. Broccoli is a cool weather crop and in Vermont it often gets warm quickly. Sometimes it will button off and get strange looking heads. But I will go down here and cut this head off. You can use a knife it works a heck of a lot better than these pruning shears. Cut this off and then I'm going to use the parts that are good but is not the kind of broccoli. It's kind of disappointing.

Leonard.: It's not the big head but it's in the garden and you can make do with what you got. I would be happy putting some of that in a salad just to add it up.

Cathy.: With broccoli it does send up once you cut off the main head it will send up side shoots for the next month or so.
Leonard.: Once you cut those off you let side shoots develop and you'll get something like this.

Cathy.: Yes you'll get something like this that are perfectly good.

Leonard.: That you can use small scale to fry up or in a salad or whatever.

Cathy.: Right.

Leonard.: Talking about weather related I guess you can't do much about the weather.

Cathy.: Well I do have a backup plan.

Leonard.: So Kathy I guess this is your backup plan?

Cathy.: This is my backup plan, my greenhouse. This is my third or fourth crop of cucumbers growing here so cucumber beetles completely decimated the ones in the garden. I can put these up there. I may not plant them I may wind up putting them in compost. I have more basil growing too.

Leonard.: To feed the bunnies? Then you have warm crops and a hot greenhouse which makes sense.

Cathy.: Yes these guys think they're living in Florida and not in Vermont because it will get to the eighties here every day. I have tomatoes peppers and sweet potatoes, all heat lovers.

Leonard.: How long will they stay in?

Cathy.: These all keep until probably in the middle of September and then I will have had enough tomatoes and they'll come out and I'll put fall crops of lettuce spinach arugula. And they will all winter over.

Leonard.: I guess we may have to come back in the fall and see how you do all that.

Cathy.: I hope you do; I better get busy.

Leonard.: Thanks so much for having us here today and showing us around.

Cathy.: You're welcome.

Leonard.: For Across the Fence and University of Vermont Extension, I am Leonard Perry.

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