

ries yet bring a whole realm of flavor profiles to the table. While I've killed yet another rosemary this winter, I'll be planting 'Arp' along with chervil, basil, tarragon and sorrel. They'll be joining my favorite easy mainstays of thyme, sage, parsley and mint.

But herbs are more than flavor savers and I've been learning about herbal salves, bath products and oils. On my radar this year are bath salts mixed with lemon verbena and lavender, and coconut oil mixed with steeped rose petals and chocolate mint to be used as lotion. I always have a glut of all of these herbs and flowers from the garden and, instead of dropping a pile of cash at a bath boutique, I'm concocting my own fragrant potions and goods. Plus it just feels a wee bit witchy—and in my book, that's a good thing.

Tomatoes—Last year's tomato season was a sad flop. And for a whole year now, I've been lamenting the absence of a big, ripe heirloom tomato, picked fresh from the garden and warmed by the sun, sliced and eaten in all of its glory. Summer 2010 robbed me of this moment, and I'm resolute that 2011 will not. Walls of water, mulch and cages sturdy enough to brace the monsters I'm determined to grow are all on the agenda. I am prepared!

Salad bowls—Whether you're dealing with a small space or acres to garden, a pot of salad greens close to your kitchen door is too easy not to try. Our cool springs and mellow summers make it simple for the cooler weather needs of salad greens, and I'm intent on planting a whis-



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key barrel full of lettuce. That, and the dark days of winter have left me time to peruse my favorite local seed catalog, Territorial Seed Company, and I've acquired a list for lettuce seeds with names like "Flashy Trout's Back," "Devils Tongue," "Speckles" and "Drunken Woman Frizzy Headed." How can I *not* grow these? Hint: Have a little bit of part shade? Lettuce is what to grow there. Another hint: Arugula, the darling of the restaurant salad plate, is as easy to grow as a weed and, in fact, can be weed-like in

its prolific ability to reseed. I planted a row of it two years ago and will never need to plant it again. It shows up regularly and will appear in salads and on grilled pizzas throughout the spring and summer.

Keeping on top of the weeds—It's true: Keep on top of weeds early in the season, there will be less of them later on and in the following year. I'm determined to visit my garden daily as a break from work and a stress reducer while pulling weeds on a regular basis. I'm

hoping to prevent a weekend of backbreaking work that leaves me cursing ever being a gardener to begin with. *This year, the weeds will not win*, I say. Repeat 10x.

Cultivating whimsy—I like to laugh, and gardening can be too serious of an endeavor. I'm cultivating some surprises and humor in my garden this year, and I have my eyes on fun top dressings for pots like marbles and wildly colored tumbled glass. This may not appeal to the modern purist but, if done in a carefully crafted color palette or limited areas of the garden, if it brings a smile to the gardener's face, that's always a good thing.

Speaking of smiles, I can't wipe the grin off my face every time I see a miniature garden—and, yes, I have plans. I've recently learned there are whole genres of miniature gardening, ranging from gnome to doll to train to fairy gardening. Did you hear that, Radical Faeries? Yes! I've been planning some miniature surprises tucked into secret areas of the garden including a wee mountain house, paths and perches. I'll keep you posted on my *wee* progress. I'm sure it will be a teeny tiny success. See? I'm already having fun with just the word potential of miniature gardening.

Ready? Set? Garden!

LEANN LOCHER is a professional graphic designer by day, gardener by day's end. She's also an OSU Extension Master Gardener and would love to hear what's up for your garden this year. Reach her at sassygardener@gmail.com.

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