



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Don't look down on dandelions

Now is the time that most people go into high gear destroying dandelions because the first flush of bloom tends to enrage those who want a perfect green lawn.

Scrap and patchwork are my favorite kinds of quilts, over those with only two or three colors where everything matches. I also like folk art and homely things. There's really nothing homely about dandelions, though — they're more likely homey, giving your yard a friendly touch.

Yesterday I easily picked 2 gallons of dandelion blossoms in my own small yard. I poured boiling water over them and will let them sit until the blossoms rise to the top. At that stage all the liquid drained off and a small amount of sugar (2 cups or so) is added as well as yeast. A couple recipes call for making rye toast and spreading the yeast on the toast, then float the toast on the liquid. I like that way of dispersing the yeast.

Some people add lemon juice and orange juice and a lot of sugar. The dandelion flavor will be mostly citrus if you do that, but you may prefer it. I've never added citrus. At this stage the liquid is in a glass gallon jug. I cover the mouth with a party balloon. The carbon dioxide from the yeast will expand the balloon as the sugar is being converted into alcohol. The balloon will collapse when the process is complete. This will take a couple weeks. I usually set it on the floor in the pantry or a corner of the basement.

When the balloon has been collapsed for a while, remove the balloon and filter the dandelion wine into bottles. The first bottle will have the least sediment.

Garden chores

- Begin "hardening off" peppers to prepare them for transplant to the outdoors. Reduce watering, put them outdoors during the day and bring them back in at night.
- Continue to plant seeds of bush, pole and lima beans.
- Also plant seeds of cucumber
- Plant sweet corn; try several varieties with different maturity dates.
- Make that last sowing of lettuce and radish.
- Fertilize hybrid tea roses and tender perennials.

Entertain And Educate Children — And Make Dinner At The Same Time



Dreamstime/TNS

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KITCHEN KIDS

By Sharyn Jackson
StarTribune (Minneapolis)

MINNEAPOLIS — My 2-year-old, Milo, has recently begun stringing short sentences together, and my favorite of his newfound phrases is this declaration of pride: "I did it!"

That's what he said when he helped me make pizza dough by kneading the flour, water, yeast and oil with his chubby little toddler hands. Later, he sprinkled cheese over the dough, and waited (OK, impatiently) while the pie baked and then cooled. Sure, he tried to nibble the raw dough a couple of times, and downed a handful of mozzarella before I could stop him. Otherwise, our little kitchen adventure went pretty smoothly.

When he finally got to eat a slice of homemade pizza, he used another of his new sentences: "I made this."

Nothing has ever tasted better.

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— Kelly Montoya, founder, Little Sous, subscription services that sends cooking kits with recipes to children ages 5 and up

parent," said Kelly Montoya. She's the founder of Little Sous, a subscription service that sends cooking kits with recipes and kitchen tools to children ages 5 and up.

Montoya has seen subscriptions climb since the coronavirus started keeping families home mid-March.

In these extraordinary times, people are searching for a way back to something elemental, like food, Montoya said.

"We're all learning right now there are things we've taken for granted," she said. "It's inspiring a whole deeper level of thought and connection as a society to the things we care about but have been moving too fast to enjoy."

Cooking with kids accomplishes much more than allowing parents to multi-task while feeding the family. It helps kids master a new skill, practice math and chemistry, feel pride in a

finished product and learn about hand-washing and food safety.

It can even help with picky eating.

"It's hard to not at least be curious about what something will taste like, especially if you've had a hand in creating it," said James Rone, who encourages Minneapolis high-schoolers to explore global cuisine in cooking classes at the Project Success Institute. (Rone, the institute's program manager, is now livestreaming the class every Wednesday at 6 p.m. on Instagram.)

Best of all, cooking together during quarantine gives busy families a chance to view meal-times with a little more reverence. Instead of a quick stop for fuel before the next thing, meals can be a treasured part of each day.

"A lot of us get into this zone of, 'OK, feed the kids, go on to the next activity,' and we don't actually show kids what's going on behind the scenes," said Amy Petersen, a St. Cloud-based dietitian with Coborn's supermarkets. "Right now, we all need some type of routine in life, and having family meals together, sitting down for snacks, having conversations, can be a sense of normalcy that a lot of families can really use."

See Kids/Page 2B

Wait for wings? No way!

By Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A collective cheer probably went up among Buffalo wing lovers when reports came out in April that the coronavirus was giving rise to something quite unexpected — a sudden surplus of chicken wings.

Finally! Some good news in the food world that consumers could really sink their teeth into.

Chicken wings are a staple food during major sporting events like Super Bowl, the NHL playoffs and the March Madness championships. Americans gobbled up some 1.4 billion chicken wings during Super Bowl LIV weekend alone, according to The National Chicken Council, and chicken producers had every reason to believe the finger food would be equally in high demand during the iconic college basketball tournament.

Then the COVID-19 crisis erupted, prompting calls for social distancing and the closing of restaurants. On March 12, the NCAA announced it was canceling the men's and women's games.

Seeing the vast majority of chicken wings are sold in mom-and-pop restaurants and bars, the meat industry was immediately over-

whelmed with wings it couldn't sell.

According to Agriculture Department data, poultry producers sold 1.235 million pounds of wings the week the tournament was scheduled to start. The week ending April 3, they sold barely a third of that, just 433,000 pounds.

Not surprisingly, jumbo wing wholesale prices in the Northeast have fallen pretty dramatically, from about \$1.75 per pound wholesale in mid-March to just 97 cents last week. That's less than half the price for the same period in 2019.

This might seem like a win for consumers because all those wings formerly destined for your favorite hangout have to go somewhere, right? Well, not exactly.

Chicken wings bound for food-service come in large bulk quantities — hundreds of fresh pounds at a time — in 40-pound cases. While producers are being forced to explore alternative channels for sales, including freezing and storing them in cold storage warehouses until the market improves — they're not really designed for retail, said Russ Whitman, senior vice president at New Jersey-based Urner Barry, a business publisher that provides market information on the food

industry.

"They don't have the Styrofoam packaging" seen in grocery store meat sections or 10-pound bags to vacuum seal them, he said.

Even if they could get a larger supply of fresh wings into grocery stores, they're just not a big draw for the average consumer. Drumsticks, boneless chicken breasts and rotisserie chickens are currently the big items on many shoppers' lists, he said. According to the USDA, bagged fryers also are a bright spot of the whole bird sector.

Whether it's a matter of convenience or the fact it's a pain (and something of a mess) to pull out the deep fryer, "Wings are just largely consumed outside of the home," he said.

Bill Fuller, president of Big Burrito Group, which pre-coronavirus sold hundreds of orders of wings in five flavors each week at its Mad Mex restaurants, concurs. Save for sports parties, they're a protein of last resort. "I don't know anyone who cooks them at home," he said.

A few decades ago, no one would have ever stooped so low as to eat chicken wings.

See Wings/Page 3B



Gretchen McKay / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

Crispy wings are more fun when served with two sauces, including Buffalo and ginger-soy.