



Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Apple cider donuts are a seasonal favorite in fall, when Pennsylvania apple cider is widely available at markets.

By **GRETCHEN MCKAY**
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

My granddaughter, Greta, and I have a lot in common: We're both always moving, easy to smile (if occasionally cranky) and love to be outdoors in the sunshine.

We also share a passion for apple cider doughnuts, which she gets on Saturdays at a farmers market in New Jersey and I snag from Soergel Orchards in Franklin Park whenever I'm in the area. Made in-house year-round, they're one of Pittsburgh's true sugary,

guilty pleasures — if you can stop at two, you're a champ.

Luckily, and perhaps surprisingly for those who don't spend a lot of time cooking, cider doughnuts are easy to make. You just have to be comfortable around (really) hot oil and

know how to use an instant-read thermometer.

This classic recipe from Yankee Magazine features dough that mixes together in no time and is easy even for novices to work with. It delivers doughnuts that are wonderfully

moist on the inside and crunchy on the outside.

Buttermilk and boiled cider add a rich, slightly tangy flavor that's irresistible. The traditional way to serve them is sprinkled all over with cinnamon sugar, but you also could use confectioners' or sanding sugar or dip them in a simple glaze.

To make boiled apple cider (which is super-concentrated), pour 1 1/2 cups of cider into a small saucepan and cook over low heat until it reduces to 1/3 cup, about 25 minutes.

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Fall favorite

Apple cider doughnuts are an autumn essential

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The zucchini bounty, and putting your garden to bed

By **WENDY SCHMIDT**
BETWEEN THE ROWS

Ever had so much zucchini that you left it in any unlocked car (sometimes in broad daylight)? If you were anxious about getting caught, you waited until after dark. ...?

Zucchini is a very productive vegetable, and can be a blessing to those who have no garden, and too much of a good thing for those whose garden is doing well.

There are ways to deal with your problem blessing. Zucchini bread, for instance. Freezing ground up zucchini to make bread later, like in the middle of winter. Oven bake a whole zucchini that got too big, with meat and/or seasoned vegetables in the middle after cutting it in half lengthwise and scooping out the seeds.

Then there's zucchini relish:

ZUCCHINI RELISH

10-11 cups zucchini
4 onions
1 yellow bell pepper
1 red bell pepper
3 green bell peppers (or use all green)
Add:
2 1/2 cups vinegar
2 1/2 cups sugar
1 Tbsp cornstarch
1 Tbsp dry mustard
2 tsp celery seed
1/2 tsp black pepper



Anastasiia Malinich/Shutterstock

Zucchini is an especially productive vegetable.

2 tsp mace
1 tsp turmeric
Grind together, let sit 1 hour, drain:
Cook 20 minutes and seal.

There's even a use for lots of extra yellow summer squash:

COUNTRY CLUB SQUASH (casserole)

6-8 yellow squash (can use zucchini)
Salt and pepper to taste
2 Tbsp butter, 1 bouillon cube
1-2 Tbsp grated onion
1 egg well beaten
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup bread crumbs
1/2 cup shredded cheddar

Coarsely cut up squash and cook in a small amount of water until almost tender, drain. Mash lightly with a fork; add salt and pepper, butter, onion, and

bouillon. Add egg and sour cream. Pour into a one-quart Pyrex dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and (optional) cheese. Bake at 350F for about 30 minutes. It's good hot or cold.

I didn't go into botanical names and how to grow the squash, but it is too late in the autumn to fill in those details. Hopefully you have neighbors or your own generous garden. Now is the time to enjoy the fruits of the earth!

Put your garden to bed

This is also the spooky time of year when the spiders in all the trees and bushes. The landscape takes on a Halloween vibe. There are cloth ghosts in trees, and jack-o-lanterns on steps and porches. Soon smoke will be in the air from burning leaves, fields, and bonfires for cocoa and marsh-

mallow roasting.

The spiders and flies sense winter's closeness and try to live in our houses. (Those are the kind of squatters we really don't want.) At least the spiders are quiet roommates.

It is time to think about bringing the houseplants in from the porch. If your tomatoes and herbs are growing well, think about digging them up, potting them, and having them in the house. You won't have to lose your whole garden when it freezes.

It is time to share. Dig up some of your extra plants (or cuttings you have started), and share them with gardening friends. There's always room for another perennial.

Some pruning has been done earlier to the yard bushes, and the rest of the pruning will be done when trees, grape vines, roses, etc. are dormant.

The leaves will need to be raked later, and mulch added before the first frost. If you intend to start cuttings in the future, think about buying a bale of peat moss.

I'm starting a garden web blog, which will be a format for discussing garden tips and problems, and I'll install a garden calendar of chores and when they need to be done (it's from the Missouri botanical garden). The blog address is: [GreenGardenWhimsy.com](#).

■ Wendy Schmidt is a longtime gardener who has been a Master Gardener since 1997. She lives in La Grande.



JENNIE HAGEN
GARDENING WITH GRANDMA



Mark Torregrossa/MLive.com-TNS

Garlic bulbs dried and ready to plant in October.

Time to get your garlic in the ground

It seemed like centuries ago when I first started gardening on the east side of the Cascades, but we'll just say four decades and call it good.

Summers were short and hot. You could always count on the first killing frost on or shortly after Labor Day. Always. We all talk about how odd this weather has been this fall. But I do think a lot of us have secretly been glad to see our flowers blooming on into mid October. My marigolds are bright and numerous, the perennial asters are smothered in blossoms, and the bees can't seem to get enough of any of them.

My garden is very, very much alive. I am pleased.

Here is one fall assignment for anyone contemplating harvesting garlic next summer (usually August). You still have time to get your garlic in the ground.

Garlic is one of those delightful plants that wants its feet frozen in winter after setting on new root growth. Spring-planted garlic will always disappoint you and I am saddened each spring by the number of retailers and even some seed companies that offer garlic for planting. It is a waste of your money.

When you separate the cloves from the bulb, select the largest ones for planting. This will yield increased results for what size the cloves are usually decides the size of the bulb next year. Just plant the cloves 6 inches down and 6 inches apart (pointy side up!). Mulch with a small amount of steer manure and loamy soil. Steer manure is usually recommended unless you have well-composted horse or chicken manure.

Do you like saving seeds? I do. The number one reason why seeds fail to sprout when planted next spring is that they weren't saved properly. Seeds like to be dried before being thrust into whatever makeshift containers we have on hand. If stored in an airtight container they absolutely have to be dry. If not, they will mold. I speak from experience!

All the beautiful leaves we will be inundated with before long will make excellent mulch, just not yet. Please do not place them on your garden areas too soon. Our soil freezes, and needs to freeze, solid in the winter.

Most plants that are grown successfully in our tri-county area are used to this. If leaf mulch is applied before the ground freezes, the cold period so many of our fruiting trees and perennials need may not be reached.

When mulch is applied after the ground freezes then it stays frozen until spring and is not subject to frost heave. Frost heave occurs when the ground freezes and thaws repeatedly, this action has even been known to shove new plantings completely out of the ground.

Until next time, this is Grandma hoping all of you had fun gardening this year. I certainly did!

■ Jennie Hagen is a native Oregonian who has spent 40 years gardening east of the Cascades. She is a member of the Garden Writers Association and has previously written for the Home & Garden section of The Oregonian, and for The Observer, the Baker City Herald, and the Burns Times Herald.