Funds for this project were provided through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.
This calendar was created as a tool for Iowa growers and consumers and was developed by the Iowa Department of Agriculture, Iowa Farm to School Program in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education. Some of the pictures and information for this calendar were provided by: Berry Patch Farms, Andrea McKern, Emily Kelly, NE Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative, DMPS Central Kitchen, Des Moines Public Schools, Iowa FoodCorps, Sawmill Hollow Family Farm, Virginia Keppler, Iowa Weed Commissioners Association, Grade A Gardens, Iowa Choice Harvest, Small Potatoes Farm, Wabi Sabi Farm, Iowa Food Hub, and Quad Cities Food Hub.

RESOURCES:

Iowa Farm to School Program  
http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/AgDiversification/FarmToSchoolProgram.asp

Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Directory 
http://www.idalsdata.org/fmnp/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.showLogin

Iowa Department of Education  http://educatciowa.gov/

Iowa Choice Harvest  http://www.iowachoiceharvest.com/

Iowa Food Corps  https://foodcorps.org/where-we-work/iowa

Iowa Weed Commission  http://iowaweedcommissioners.org/

Iowa Food Hub  http://www.iowafoodhub.com/

Quad Cities Food Hub  http://www.qcfoodhub.com

Like us on facebook  https://www.facebook.com/pages/Iowa-Farm-to-School/86636413383926?sk=timeline

Please contact Tammy Stotts with any questions regarding this calendar and resources at: Tammy.stotts@iowaagriculture.gov.
WEEDS
Let’s Start Planning!

January is a good time to start seeds indoors and get them ready for planting. Consider starting herbs like parsley and thyme.

Think about how you want to set up your garden outdoors and learn about the importance of weeding.

What is a weed? A weed can be defined as any plant that is out of place. A noxious weed is a weed that can cause harm to crops, people, animals or the environment and must be controlled by law. An invasive plant is a plant that was brought into a new environment from somewhere else and is now harming that environment by crowding out the species that should be there.

Most noxious and invasive plants are not originally from Iowa or the United States. And, thus, are often very competitive in the natural areas since they have no natural enemies.

In Iowa

In Iowa we have a noxious weed law (Chapter 317 of the Iowa Code) that tells us 26 weeds, and a few related species, are noxious and should be managed if found. Each county has a designated person called a county weed commissioner that is responsible for identifying and coordinating the control of these weeds.
Iowa farmers have responded to the increased organic demand by converting some or all of their farm ground to the production of organic crops. Iowa ranks second in the country for organic corn production, third for the production of organic soybeans and sixth in the nation for the number of organic farmers.

What is organic food? Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. Before a product can be labeled ‘organic,’ a government-approved certifier inspects the farm where the food is grown to make sure the farmer is following all the rules necessary to meet USDA organic standards.

More and more customers are purchasing organic food. Organic food options are also increasing in availability, not only at farmers markets, but at grocery stores and restaurants.
Des Moines Public Schools and Central Nutrition Center
The Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) Central Nutrition Center (CNC) just celebrated its tenth year of operation as one of many shining stars in the foodservice operation. The CNC and over 400 staff members across 60+ schools serve more than 30,000 meals on a daily basis. The CNC and school staff are busy all year long with the addition of the Summer Feeding Program that provides 3,000 daily meals at 30 locations when school is not in session.

A common question that comes from students and parents is: “Where does our school food come from?” We are so proud that we can now answer those questions with the response—“Some of our foods have been supplied by Iowa farmers.”

DMPS has committed its food sourcing network to include local foods. We are participating with School Food Focus to examine how we can purchase more wholesome, less processed food for our students.

Submitted by Chad Taylor, Food & Nutrition Management Specialist Executive Chef

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**Sweet and Tangy Broccoli Salad**

4 lbs broccoli flowerettes
9 oz diced red onion
¼ cup sugar

3 ½ cups mixed dried fruit
2 ¼ cup coleslaw dressing
½ cup cider vinegar

Directions:
Wash broccoli and break into smaller pieces. Combine diced onion with dried fruit. Mix vinegar, sugar and coleslaw dressing. Stir to coat all pieces with dressing and let sit for 1 day. Stir again before portioning.

(submitted by Des Moines Public School)
FoodCorps is a nationwide team of AmeriCorps leaders who teach kids about real food and how to grow up healthy. FoodCorps envisions a future in which all our nation’s children know what healthy food is, care where it comes from, and have access to it every day. Across the US, service members teach kids hands-on nutrition education, build and maintain school gardens, and connect local food to the school cafeteria. By building healthier school food environments, FoodCorps hopes that our next generation will lead longer, healthier and more productive lives.

To learn more about Food Corps go to: https://foodcorps.org/where-we-work/iowa.
A food hub is defined by USDA as a “business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of course-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand. Food hubs have the potential to increase the economic vitality of food businesses in a region.
Consider Planting
Seeds: cabbage, cantaloupe, cucumbers
Seedlings: tomatoes, pepper, eggplant, squash, cucumber, melon, blueberries
Herbs: basil

Strawberry, Spinach, Cheese and Pecan Salad
1 bunch fresh spinach
1/2 cup crumbled cheese (Gorgonzola, Feta)
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1/2 cup olive oil

1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
Handful of pecans (or other nut)
2 tablespoons honey
salt and ground black pepper to taste

Directions:
Combine spinach, strawberries, cheese & pecans in a large bowl. In a separate bowl mix balsamic vinegar & honey together; Whisk in olive oil & season with salt & pepper. Drizzle the dressing over the salad just before serving.

Iowa’s food hubs are non-profit organizations that connect farmers, families, and food grown close to home. They offer education and training programs, market development and research. They help farmers reduce their risk while increasing the demand of local and nutritious food. Learn more by visiting their websites: http://www.iowafoodhub.com/ http://www.qcfoodhub.com
ONIONS
Grilled Onions

4 Vidalia onions
Salt and pepper
4 oz. shredded cheddar cheese
2 t minced garlic

Directions:
Cut a thin layer off the top of the onion and remove the peel. Place onion on large piece of aluminum foil and cut an x about ½ way through the center of the onion. Separating it just a little, add (¼ per onion) cream cheese, cheddar cheese, garlic and salt and pepper. Tightly wrap onion in foil, gathering the extra at the top. Now, rewrap the onion so you do not lose any of the juices. Place wrapped onions in a disposable aluminum pan on a medium-heat grill. Cook for approximately 1 hour. You may substitute your favorite cheese, or use 1 t beef bullion instead.

Consider planting
Corn, squash, cucumbers, green beans and melon.
Cucumber, Strawberry, Lime and Mint Water

1 cup sliced strawberries
2 limes, sliced
1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
Water

Directions:
In a half-gallon jar, or a 2 quart pitcher, layer the strawberries, cucumbers, lime slices, and mint leaves with the ice cubes. Fill jar or pitcher with water. Let chill for 10 minutes, and then enjoy!
Aronia Berries
aka the “Chokeberry”
What are aronia berries?
Aronia berries are highly regarded as a “superfood.” The aronia berry industry is relatively new to the United States and was first planted for production at Sawmill Hollow Family Farm located in the Loess Hills of Missouri Valley, Iowa. What was a novelty item at farmers markets just a few years ago has experienced a huge boom in production and can be found not only in specialty markets but also health food and grocery stores across the nation.

These dark pigmented berries are being recognized as one of the world’s most potent antioxidants, a healthier alternative to more common berries. Aronia berries can be enjoyed in sauces, jams, syrups, dressings, baked goods, healthy recipes, and more!
**How do you store garlic?**

After harvesting the garlic, dry the garlic in a warm, dry, well-ventilated location. Place the garlic on an elevated wire screen or slotted tray to promote drying. When the tops have dried, cut off the dry foliage 1 inch above the bulbs. Also, trim off the roots and brush off any loose soil. Place the bulbs in a mesh bag or open crate and store in a cool (32 F to 40 F), dry (65 to 70 percent relative humidity) area. Garlic can be stored for three to six months if properly dried and stored. An alternate way to store garlic is to braid the foliage together immediately after harvest, dry and then hang the braided garlic in a cool, dry location.
October is Farm to School Month so be sure to get involved with your local school and farmers!

Honey Glazed Carrots

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 (16-ounce) bag Grimmway Farms Baby Carrots
2 tablespoons brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons fresh dill
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves

Directions:
Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add carrots, honey, brown sugar, dill and thyme and gently toss to combine. Stir occasionally and cook until carrots are tender, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.
BUGS & INSECTS
Did you know that only 1% of the insects on Earth are harmful to humans? Some insects are even beneficial, and without them, our world would be very different. Several insects function as pollinators, and many plants rely on them for help with reproduction. Without these pollinators, your options for produce at the grocery store would be drastically reduced and there would be no honey. Insects also function as predators on pest insects, processors of waste, and aerators of the soil.

Entomology is the study of insects. Insects are one of the most successful and diverse groups of living organisms in the world today. Approximately 1.5 million species of insects have been identified by scientists as of the end of the twentieth century. The number of insect species is greater than the number of all other species of organisms combined. (source encyclopedia.com)

A male luna moth’s antennae (pictured below) can detect pheromones released by a female luna moth from as much as 5 miles away.
Their story:
In 2006, thirteen farmers began planning a new company that would help expand opportunities for Iowa farmers to market their fruits and vegetables. These farmers had a strong belief in crafting a local food system that would provide a fair value to the farmer while producing a quality product for Iowans. After much planning and hard work, the company was launched in August 2013.

Iowa Choice Harvest’s mission is to connect their customers with earth-conscious Iowa farmers who grow high-quality fruits and vegetables.

For more information on Iowa Choice Harvest go to: http://www.iowachoiceharvest.com/

Sweet Corn Salad

2 teaspoons vegetable oil
½ cup diced, seeded red bell pepper
½ teaspoon salt
Optional: 1 minced jalapeno, ½ cup minced onion, ½ cup chopped cilantro, 1 tbsp lime juice

Directions:
Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the corn and bell peppers. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cooking, stirring, until the vegetables are just tender, about 4 minutes. Stir in any of the optional ingredients you like, and taste for seasoning. Refrigerate until cold.

*Recipe courtesy of Iowa Choice Harvest
### Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar

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