

# JANUARY 2024

# GARDENING TO DO'S

**Happy New Year!** Here's to wishing you a successful gardening season! For a little assistance, here are a few mis-steps to avoid when planning your 2024 garden.

## 5 Common Gardening Mistakes

### Poor Water Management

- Water the base of your plants to reduce overspray which puts foliage at risk for disease.
- Water deeply once a week in the earlier part of the day to reduce evaporation.



### Choosing the Right Plants

- Know the hardiness zone of your plants. Redford is in Hardiness Zone 6b (-5°F to 0°F).
- Consider plant spacing and height. Be sure plants have proper air flow and light.

### Over Fertilizing

- When it comes to fertilizers, too much can be detrimental to the environment. Whatever your plants cannot take up, leaches into groundwater.
- Be sure to read instructions and follow proper ratios.

### Using Pesticides

- Did you know only 3% of insects are considered pests? Rely on beneficial bugs to do the natural work for you. Beneficial insects include ladybugs, praying mantids, spiders, and wasps.



### Feeding the Soil

- Soil is filled with microbes that break down organic matter which, in turn, becomes nutrients for your plants. Adding compost, shredded leaves, or a slow-release, nitrogen-based fertilizer like fish emulsion will help your plants thrive.

According to the Farmers' Almanac Redford's 2024 Frost Dates are:

Last Spring Frost: May 8  
First Fall Frost: October 9  
That's 153 Days for the Growing Season!



## Get a Head Start

This month, you can start plants that require a longer growing season inside:

- Alliums
- Herbs
- Perennials



**Seed Savers!** If you have an abundance of seeds, we will happily accept your donation for our Seed Library!

For more information on our Seed Library,  
please visit [rtdl.org/seed-library](http://rtdl.org/seed-library)

# JANUARY RECIPE

Garden harvests can contribute to making the most delicious recipes!

## Beef Stew with Bay Leaves and Red Wine

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds cubed beef chuck or beef stewing meat
- Flour for dredging
- 2 tablespoons olive oil + more as needed
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 2 stalks celery chopped
- 6 cloves garlic minced
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- 1 cup dry red wine (can sub more beef broth if you prefer)
- 3 cups beef broth
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs
- 3 dried bay leaves or 1 fresh bay leaf
- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes peeled & diced
- 4 medium carrots peeled & sliced fairly thick
- 1 cup frozen peas optional



### Directions

1. Prep ingredients.
2. Coat the beef cubes in flour, and shake off any excess.
3. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil to a pot/Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, sear the beef in two batches until nicely browned (if you crowd the pot it won't brown). Add the remaining oil to the pot for the second batch. Transfer the meat to a plate after each batch.
4. If the pot seems quite dry, add another teaspoon or so of olive oil, then add in the onions and celery and sauté for 5 minutes.
5. Stir in the garlic and tomato paste and cook, stirring often, for 1-2 minutes.
6. Stir in the wine, broth, and Worcestershire sauce. Scrape up any brown bits from the bottom of the pot.
7. Add the beef back to the pot (and any juices on the plate) as well as the herbs and bay leaves. Bring the stew to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat, cover the pot, and simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
8. Stir in the potatoes and carrots, cover the pot again, and continue simmering for another hour or until the potatoes, carrots, and meat are nice and tender. Continue to stir occasionally.
9. Take the bay leaves out of the stew and stir in the frozen peas. Let them warm through.
10. Season with salt & pepper as needed and serve.