

# Pegi's Patch

by Pegi Holtz

As we enter the harvest season and the time of glorious autumn colours, I am busy bottling honey, freezing yet more tomatoes, trying to decide which plants I'd like to take slips from to overwinter and trying new recipes for the abundance of apples that I have. There is a new puppy who stays with me while her mistress is at work and fun as she is, it's rather like having a new born around again (she eats, poops, pees and sleeps). She also nips at my pant legs and tries to gnaw my ankles but I enjoy her roley poley antics and waggy tail.

Below are two things that I would like to share. One is a recipe for an interesting soup which uses lots of things from the garden and the other is a grace, of sorts, that I first heard at an OHA convention. I think it is appropriate as we head towards the Thanksgiving weekend. We've had quite a year with covid restrictions, a drought in May/June, really hot, humid weather in the summer months and what seems to me as too little time to get together with family and friends. And yet, there is much to be grateful for and many wonderful memories to look back on.

Cheers, Pegi

## Apple cheddar soup with sage croutons

- serves 4 to 6

### Ingredients

3 tbsp butter, divided  
1 tbsp olive oil  
3 apples, peeled, cored and chopped (about 3 cups)  
1 cup each: chopped onion, parsnip and carrot  
½ cup chopped celery  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
½ tsp finely chopped sage  
1 tsp salt (or to taste)  
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper  
2 cups each: water and apple juice  
2 tbsp all-purpose flour  
1 cup milk, warmed  
6 oz old cheddar cheese, grated  
1 sage croutons (see recipe)

### Preparation

Heat 1 tbsp butter and oil in a heavy bottomed pot over medium heat. Add next nine ingredients (apple through black pepper). Cook, stirring often, until vegetables soften, about 5 minutes. Add water and apple juice; bring to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Working in batches, purée soup in a blender or use wand blender. Return to pot and set aside.

In a separate saucepan, heat remaining 2 tbsp butter over medium heat. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Slowly whisk in milk and stir until mixture thickens, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, add cheese and stir until smooth. Pour sauce into soup and warm over low heat; do not boil again. Serve with sage croutons.

## Sage croutons

### Ingredients

2 tbsp unsalted butter  
1 tbsp olive oil  
3 sage leaves, finely chopped  
2 cups cubed focaccia or sour dough bread  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Preparation

Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat butter and oil in a small sauce-pan over medium heat until butter is frothy. Add sage leaves, stirring to combine. Pour over focaccia pieces in a bowl, tossing to coat. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Spread bread cubes in a single layer on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and toast in oven until croutons are crispy and golden, about 15 to 20 minutes, stirring halfway through. Serve with soup.

# **A Gardener's Thank You**

(first heard at an OHA convention)

Give thanks for the bounty of friends...

For children, who are our second planting, and though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and fondly remember where their roots are.

Let us give thanks...

For generous friends, with hearts and smiles as bright as their blossoms.

For feisty friends, as tart as apples.

For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us that we've had them.

For crotchety friends, sour as rhubarb and just as indestructible.

For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn, and the others, as plain as potatoes and so good for you.

For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem artichokes.

For serious friends, as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini and who like parsnips and can be counted on to see you through the winter.

For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes,

For loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts, and withering.

And finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been harvested, but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter.

For all these we give thanks.