



The Green Thumb
By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Freezing cherry tomatoes: A reader tells us that nothing freezes better than the small cherry tomatoes.

She writes: "I pick them, wash and dry them. Then they are placed in plastic freezer bags and placed in the freezer. When ready for use, they are thawed out (not fully) and cut up for salads."

She writes: "I've frozen tomatoes for several years now and find my method best. First, I cut out the stem end, hold the tomato upright and cut like a pie in about six wedges. I use a pie tin for this job as this keeps the juice contained. Lay the wedges skin side down on a cookie sheet and put in deep freeze for three hours or until frozen solid. Then package and return to freezer."

"When ready to use remove as many pieces as needed from package and lay out at room temperature for about 10 minutes. Skins will peel off nicely. They can be cut up into a tossed salad or any way you want to fix them. Don't thaw too long or they will get mushy!"

GREEN THUMB BONUS: Got a lot of green tomatoes left? Don't throw them out. Send me a self addressed, stamped envelope for our bulletin, "Tricks for using Green Tomatoes." My guide is full of good tips on using surplus tomatoes.

GATHERING nuts: One reason why walnuts or chestnuts do not start from

seed is that they are allowed to dry out too long. Most nuts are perishable and must be planted immediately after ripening. Did you know that the chestnut, like the English Walnut, will germinate immediately after it falls from the tree? It must never be permitted to dry. Or you can store the nuts successfully in winter, and retain viability, by

keeping in a refrigerator with humidity not too high. Best way to produce seedlings is to plant shallow in fall when it is too cool to cause germination, until the following spring.

Put a light mulch and screen over to keep out rodents. Freshly gathered Chinese chestnuts planted in a flower pot immediately after falling, and kept moist in a warm place will produce a nice little tree by Christmas. Strangely, they won't need a cold storage treatment for germination.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "I have a large fuchsia and shrimp plant growing in pots outdoors. Should I bring them inside for winter?"

Answer: No, take cuttings from the tips and root them in perlite or tap water, and start new plants. Plants brought in are usually large and woody. Your best bet is to start new ones for winter.



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