



## Household Items that are good for your Garden

Now is a good time to start saving household items to use in your garden for fertilizer, pest control, or weed control.

- o **Eggshells** have many purposes in the garden. They break down to give your plants calcium. Simply rinse and air dry your eggshells, crush them as you go, or leave them whole. Apply to the surface of the soil. Coarsely crushed they provide a scratchy surface on the soil surface to injure and deter soft bodied bugs. Rumour has it, but I can't say it is true: try scattering whole pieces of shell around broccoli and cabbage family plants to keep white cabbage moth away, thinking it is another moth.
- o **Coffee Grounds** add nitrogen to the soil. Ants don't like the strong smell so will stay away from where they are applied; eating them is harmful to ants. The scratchy surface of coffee may also deter soft bodied insects. Make sure the coffee grounds are dry and don't apply too thickly. Coffee filters will decompose so add them too.
- o **Banana Peels** give your plants potassium as they break down. This makes your plants strong and healthy to fight off pests. To save them simply chop them up and freeze them, or dehydrate them in the air, a dehydrator, or the oven.
- o **Big Cardboard boxes** can be used to cover the ground to prevent weeds from growing, the bigger the better, make sure to overlap them so light doesn't get to the soil, then cover with woodchips, a mulch, or hold in place with heavy objects.
- o **Newspaper** can be used in the same way, several layers thick and overlapped, shredded it can also be used as a mulch around your plants.
- o **Fireplace Ash** will supply potassium and calcium carbonate to the soil, it will also increase the pH of your soil so don't use too much in NB as our soil is usually acidic anyway. Make sure you use ash from untreated wood.
- o **Epson Salts** add magnesium and sulphate to the soil, very important for tomatoes and potatoes. Add directly to the soil or dilute in water.
- o **Pine needles** add nitrogen to the soil, can be used as a mulch, but also make the soil more acidic. Best used for plants that love acid soil like blueberries.
- o **Leaves** that fell last fall can be saved this spring to use as mulch around your plants as they start to grow, or in a compost pile to alternate browns and greens.