

Lingnan Gardeners Newsletter No.9

8 August 2015, Autumn Begins

(中文版本請見下)



Liqiu, the solar term for *Autumn Begins*. The fall of Chinese Parasol tree leaves indicates the advent of autumn, generating a Chinese idiom *luoyezhiqiu* – autumn is imminent with falling leaves. Autumn is a transition from the hotness of summer to the coolness of autumn and then to the chill of winter. However, the period between *liqiu* (*Autumn Begins*) and *qiufen* (*Autumn Equinox*) is called *changxia* (long summer) during which it is still summer in southern China and the weather can be even hotter when

the rainy season goes away.

Apart from *liqiu* as the season of harvesting mature crops, it is also the time that the Yang is declining and the Yin is growing in the human body. Thus, the autumn regimen is very important. People should eat less spicy food, but more food that can nourish the Yin, lung, and *chi*, and should also go to bed and wake up early in this season, because it is thought that in their daily life people should not be self-indulgent during autumn, but self-regulated.

Our Garden Produce

The leaves of amaranth are delicious. How about the stems and roots? Are they edible? This is a hot topic we discussed in these few days. If people grow amaranth just for the delicious leaves, the plants would be discarded when they grow “old”. However, in the Lingnan Garden, you can see our amaranth plants growing to 4 feet, or even 8 feet tall! Why? Besides giving the plants a chance to grow naturally old, and we nurture our own seeds, we are also asking from them well grown stems and roots.



The stem and the root of the amaranth are very good for health as they not only have the effect of clearing internal heat, detoxification, stanching bleeding, and skin healing, but also are rich in iron and calcium. Amaranth stem soup with lentils, rice beans and pork are good for clearing liver heat and the damp in the body. Lingnan Garderners will cook this in August and you are welcome to join us and taste our soup.



We harvested Ipomoea, Malabar Spinach, amaranth, peppers, okra. But for eggplant, cowpea, luffa and corn which are expected to be harvested this time, they do not blossom and fructify, but only grow a little bit. Why? As we mentioned in the June newsletter, El Nino has been raging this year and greatly affects the growth of the crops in Lingnan Garden. It is difficult for the flower buds of the vegetables to blossom with too much rain. Even if the plants blossom, hot weather can lead to poor pollination, causing them not to produce fruits.

Besides, eggplant, cowpea, luffa and corn are short-day plants. The lamp lights in the campus extend the length of their exposure to light, slowing down the plants' growth and delaying blooms. The plants also need a rest, absorbing energy in the daytime and accumulating it at night for healthy growth.



When night falls, the lamps still light our garden.

Upcoming Events in August:

12 August (Wed), 12:30-2:00pm: Food sharing with steamed lemongrass rice, corn spaghetti and red amaranth soup. (Please share food with us if you make some to bring along.)

18 August (Tue), 5:00-6:30pm: Harvesting vegetables, consolidating the land and planting autumn vegetables.