

*Now is the time to enter the world of culinary expertise.*

## ZUCCHINI 2006

It is that time of year again when zucchini are invading Lynchburg. The local cooks are valiantly rising to the challenge, their ovens blazing. Many days at work another zucchini cake or loaf of bread appears in the break room. Those gals are getting pretty creative.

Now that my cute little garden is a viable entity, I, too, am deluged by zucchini. This is the first year that I can brag of any decent supply.

When we first moved here in 2002, I noticed a raised flower bed in the back yard. Neighbor Becky told me that was where our septic tank resided. It seemed to have a thick layer of mulch over the top so, the first spring we lived here, I tried to plant tomato plants in the mulch. My spade hit concrete. Oh, oh! So much for planting tomatoes in that plot. Flowers didn't do worth a hoot there either. Last year I planted some seeds from a butternut squash we had purchased in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the fall before. The plants were lush but not one single squash set on those vines. Bummer! But the leaves certainly looked nice and green! Must have been the fumes from below.

This spring I noticed the mulch had pretty much turned to dirt so I planted some zucchini seeds there. Well, those babies are doing just fine, thank you very much! Black nylon netting around them and the rest of the garden protects everything from deer (but not those blasted groundhogs! Speaking of groundhogs, Patricia at work tells that her husband is on the hunt for one in their backyard and she plans to serve him groundhog calzones if he ever catches the little critter. Yummy!!) And our crop is progressing nicely.

Jim loves fried summer squash and onions so he has been a happy camper. One day I dug out an old zucchini dessert recipe and made it for supper. Jim said it tasted fine.... but not as good as some of his favorite desserts.

What to do with the ever-enlarging supply of zucchini..... Ah, yes, zucchini cookies. Would you believe, in all of my literally hundreds of cook books, not one recipe for zucchini cookies could be found. This called for drastic measures. After keying in a search engine on the internet, I found all sorts of cookie recipes. One sounded like something even I could manage so I copied it off the screen and set to work in the kitchen.

Oops! This recipe called for Butter Crisco but none was in my cupboard so I substituted oleo...shouldn't matter...it looks about the same color, doesn't it? The paper instructed me to shred two cups of zucchini and drain it. I grated the little jewels and they looked pretty dry to me so I dumped 'em in "as is". After adding the required three and a half cups of flour, the dough

looked a bit soft. In fact, it was mighty runny. No matter, I ladled some of the soup onto a cookie sheet and baked a couple of sample cookies. What I got were flat zucchini pancakes for my trouble. Hmm...I added another half cup of flour and, this time the samples looked more like little lumpy waffles with green streaks. Another cup of flour later, the dough looked better so I baked them up and they smelled pretty good.

Today at work Jim was eating one of them with his lunch. When asked if he liked them, he answered that they were good...but he hesitated with that answer just long enough to be suspect. (Remember, this is the guy who tells me supper is good when I serve him a can of beans.) So I asked him if he wanted me to bake more of them. He said that would be fine. Again, I questioned him about his enthusiasm for the zucchini cookies. He finally admitted that they were good but he had preferred the last kind of cookies I baked...except he couldn't tell me what kind those were. Alrighty then, the next time Jim gets out the document shredder, that recipe for zucchini cookies will be the first in line. It is time to go back to the tried and true zucchini and onion masterpiece.

