Eggplant-Tomato Gratin

Makes 8 servings

From The Gardeners’ Community Cookbook By Smith & Hawken; Contributor: Debra Abbott, Dallas, TX

“A lively variation on the theme of eggplant Parmesan…”

Olive oil

3 medium classic/globe eggplants, peeled and sliced into ½ inch-thick rounds

2 medium onions, sliced ¼ inch thick

2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped

4 large tomatoes, peeled, coarsely chopped, and drained

¼ c. mixed chopped fresh herb leaves, such as oregano, basil, parsley, and/or thyme

8 kalamata olives, pitted and chopped

2 Tbsp capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped if large, left whole if small

¼ tsp black pepper

salt

2 c. coarsely grated mozzarella cheese

½ c. grated Parmesan cheese

1 c. coarse bread crumbs, preferably homemade, browned in 2 Tbsp. butter

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a 13x9 inch baking dish.
2. Generously grease a large skillet with oil and heat until beginning to smoke. Add as many eggplant slices as will fit without crowding and sauté, turning once, until golden on both sides, about 6 minutes altogether. Transfer to a plate and continue with another round, adding more oil as necessary, until all the slices are browned.
3. In the same skillet, add enough oil to make about 3 tablespoons. Stir in the onions and garlic and cook over medium heat until wilted but not browned, about 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the tomatoes, herbs, olives, capers, and pepper. Taste and add salt if needed. Set aside.
4. Arrange half the eggplant slices in the baking dish, overlapping if necessary. Spread half the onion and tomato mixture over the slices. Sprinkle half the mozzarella and half the Parmesan over the onion and tomato mixture. Make another layer in the same way, ending with the cheese. Top with the bread crumbs.
5. Bake for 40 minutes, or until the cheese is very bubbly and the bread crumbs are quite browned. Remove and let cool slightly, slightly slice and serve.