

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



NEWS



MAY 2006

GARDEN NEWS

The Garden **SPRING POTLUCK** in April was held at the Florence Civic Center, in their newly-renovated and handsome space. The event featured delicious food from gardeners, informative talks about compost (thanks to **Ed McGlew**, the Red-Bag Compost guy) and the bees at the Garden (thanks to **Megan Wechsler** and **Dillon Sussman**), and lively music (thanks to **Matt Delaney** and **Dennis Caraher**). Special thanks go to **Linda Wallack**, who did a terrific job of organizing the affair.

SPRING CLEANUP DAY saw about 40 gardeners turn out on a splendidly warm and sunny day. Herculean labors were performed by many, including

- The compost team, led by **Denny Wolfe**
- The wood chip team, led by **David Brownlee** and **Art Larson**
- The bluestone paver team, led by **Norma Sandowski** (check out the border under the tool shed bulletin board)
- A wildlife border team, led by **Beth Paulson**

as well as gardeners who toted hoses to all the water outlets and mounted new hose holders, cleaned and organized the tool shed, assembled a wagon, planted the tree by the picnic table (*Amelanchier x grandiflora*, known as shadblow or service-berry), and pulled an invasive weed (garlic mustard) from the edge of the back road.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Gamaliel Lodge, who rehabilitated broken forks and shovels with new handles

Alex MacPhail, who continued his renovation of the tool shed with space for outdoor storage of the yard carts

Patricia Wood, who carried out extensive research on wheel barrows and selected the excellent new one
Mary Jo Stanley, who has taken over the tending of the garden

beneath the mosaic Northampton Community Garden sign
Donna Cohn, who has supplied gardeners with plot markers in the form of rocks with stencilled plot numbers (and who will continue to do so – if you'd like one for your plot, contact her at 586-2904 or donnacohn@comcast.net)



GARDEN CALENDAR

Memorial Day Inspection.

MONDAY, MAY 29, is the deadline for starting work on your plot. Teams of gardeners will walk through the Garden at 2 P.M. to check on plots. Inspectors will be looking, not for perfection, but for evidence that you have tilled and weeded your plot(s), and that you have planted seeds or sets, or tended your perennials.

We will send you a notification if the inspection teams see that your plot has not been worked, and your plot may be assigned immediately to another gardener on our wait list. If you cannot work your plot before May 29, but wish to keep it and intend to start soon, please let us know that and specify a date by which you will start; send an e-mail to mtex@smith.edu or a note by mail to the Recreation Dep't., 90 Locust St., 01060. Please do not request an extension by phone.

Garden Committee Meeting.

MONDAY, JUNE 12. The Garden Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 P.M.; during the summer, meetings are at the picnic table in the Garden (weather permitting). All gardeners are welcome to attend and to introduce their concerns at the meeting.

Lydia Rackenberg, who shared her experiences with weedless gardening in a workshop on Cleanup Day

Julie Abramson, who shared her expertise with new gardeners in a workshop on Getting Started on May 13

Gretchen Siegchrist, a new gardener and the owner of a video production company, Media ShowerProductions, is planning to produce a video on the community garden and the gardeners there. She will be interviewing various gardeners over the course of the summer and hopes to show the unique and interesting things that people are doing in their gardens. Her work may eventually be shown on our local community TV station as well as at the next Garden potluck. 🍀

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

The next issue of the Newsletter will appear around the first of July. Now is the time to start thinking about writing an article of interest to gardeners, working on photos or illustrations, or compiling seasonal recipes. Submit material to Betsey Wolfson (to bwolfson@bikher.org, or by mail to Community Garden, Recreation Dep't., 90 Locust St., 01060) by June 16. 🍀

GARDEN FACILITIES & HOW TO USE THEM

DUMPSTER –The dumpster is rented with funds from gardeners' fees. It's emptied every other Wednesday.

To make the most efficient use of the dumpster:

- DO NOT put compostable organic material in the dumpster; carry it to the compost pile. Diseased plant material, sticks and branches, and brambles (raspberry, blackberry, and rose canes) are OK.
- DO NOT even think of leaving material outside the dumpster –

it will not be picked up. DO NOT dump it over the hill. If the dumpster is full, take the material home or keep it in your plot 'til the next pickup.

- Use the dumpster for Garden waste ONLY.
- Please BREAK DOWN material before you put it in – a flattened box takes up a lot less room.

WOOD CHIPS – The wood chips on the back access road behind the tool shed are available to all gardeners. A garden fork works well for loading them into a cart. Chips are best used as cover for paths, not as mulch for plants (as they decay, they take nitrogen from the soil and away from your veggies and flowers).

COMPOST PILE – The compost pile provides a place for you to put compostable organic material from your plot(s) and to take finished compost. There are a few simple rules:

- The pile is organized into rows separated by aisles. Pile stuff on top of the rows. Keep the aisles clear.
- DO NOT ADD these to the compost pile:
 - Kitchen waste – it's smelly and attracts unwanted animals
 - Sticks, boards, logs, branches – wood takes a long time to decompose and makes the pile hard to turn
 - Plastic of any kind (bags, boxes, plant containers, plant labels, string, film . . .) – it never decomposes and must be hand-picked from the compost

TOOL SHED

The Garden maintains hand tools, wheelbarrows, garden carts, and power and push lawn mowers for all gardeners to use.

- Slots for tools are labeled – Shovels, Spades, Hoes, Rakes. Please RETURN TOOLS to the appropriate slots.
- CLEAN TOOLS before returning them to the shed – don't return dirty tools. Wire cleaning brushes are provided.
- CLEAN WHEELBARROWS before returning them – you can use a stream of water from a hose.
- SWEEP GRASS OFF MOWERS before putting them back in the shed.
- There were thefts of tools from the shed last year, so please **LOCK THE SHED** when you take out tools and after you return them. If you're the last person in the Garden in the evening, check to make sure the shed is locked.

GARDEN PATHS

Please remember that nothing should be left in garden paths. This includes plants overhanging a path, especially plants with brambles or nasty thorns. Beware the wounded gardener with pruners! 🌿

GARDEN TIPS

The average last frost date for our area is past, so gardeners may plant frost-sensitive plants like tomatoes with some confidence that they will be OK. Although you could plant egg-plant, pepper, and basil starts now, they will only sulk until the weather warms up. Corn can be planted as soon as the soil temperature reaches 55° F; cucumber and bell pepper will germinate well after soil temperatures reach 65°; squash and beans want you to wait for soil temperatures of 72°.

NOXIOUS WEED OF THE MONTH ► GARLIC MUSTARD (*Alliaria petiolata*)

is in blossom right now – a stand of it just to the north of the Garden was pulled up and the area heavily mulched to prevent it from spreading on Cleanup Day. It has triangular to heart-shaped, coarsely toothed leaves that give off an odor of garlic when crushed. First-year plants appear as a rosette of green leaves close to the ground, while flowering plants reach from 2' to 3-1/2' in height and produce buttonlike clusters of small white flowers, each with four petals in the shape of a cross. Garlic mustard poses a severe threat to native plants and animals in forest communities in much of the eastern and midwestern U.S. Many native wildflowers that complete their life cycles in the springtime (e.g., spring beauty, wild ginger, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, hepatica, toothworts, and trilliums) occur in the same habitat as garlic mustard. Once introduced to an area, garlic mustard outcompetes native plants by aggressively monopolizing light, moisture, nutrients, soil and space. You can find out more about garlic mustard and see pictures of it here: [HTTP://WWW.NPS.GOV/PLANTS/ALIEN/FACT/ALPE1.HTM](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/alpe1.htm)

If you see it in the Garden, or elsewhere for that matter, pull it up!



Alliaria petiolata [Bieb] Cavara & Grande
Mustard family (Brassicaceae)

INSECT PEST OF THE MONTH – Are you finding small holes in your broccoli leaves? Is something besides you eating your arugala? Chances are the culprit is **FLEA BEETLES**. Symptoms of flea-beetle feeding are small, rounded, irregular holes; heavy feeding makes leaves look as if they had been peppered with fine shot. They are also



a problem on seedlings of tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, turnips, radishes, and corn. There are various genera and species of flea beetles, all members of the Chrysomelidae family. They are extremely difficult to control. For more information and suggestions for organic control, click on this link: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/fleabeetle.html>. 🌿

—The Happy Gardener

(Photo courtesy of <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r735301811.html>)