

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



NEWS



JULY 2008



GARDEN NEWS

▶ RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

Because ragweed pollen is a notorious allergen, a Garden goal is to get rid of as many ragweed plants as possible before they flower. If you don't know what ragweed looks like, there is a labeled sample plant growing in front of the tool shed, to the right of the door. Please pull up any ragweed you find in your own plot(s). Keep an eye out for ragweed growing in public spaces, and pull that up too. Once ragweed has flowered, it will continue to ripen seed even after it is pulled up.

Because ragweed seed remains viable for many years, you should throw flowering ragweed in the **dumpster** – not in the compost.

On Sunday, July 13, inspection teams will walk through the Garden to check plots for ragweed. When they find plants in a plot, they'll tag one or two samples with red tape. Avoid that red badge of shame, and get rid of the ragweed now!

The teams will also check for plots that seem overtaken by weeds. If yours is one of these, you'll receive an e-mail or a phone call to make sure you are still working your plot.



This is ragweed!

▶ GARDEN OPEN HOUSE – SAVE THE DATE!

The Community Garden will hold an **Open House** on Saturday, **July 19**, 11 AM–3 PM, to which the wider Northampton community is invited. Mark the date on your calendar. Come enjoy our garden – and bring your friends to see it, too. We hope many gardeners will be at their gardens to welcome visitors. Plans are being made to sell various garden-related items to benefit the Garden.

You can help in the following ways.

- 1 Volunteer to be present at your garden for one hour, to talk to visitors about what you are growing and how you do it. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.
- 2 Volunteer to provide a bouquet, cherry tomatoes, herbs... to sell.
- 3 Volunteer to work for an hour or two as a welcoming host, or to sell contributed items.

Contact Nancy First if you can help: NANCY.FIRST@COMCAST.NET or 584-5190.

▶ GREEN OUR GARDEN

About three dozen gardeners have taken advantage of the rebate offer – a \$2 refund for a first purchase of compost or organic fertilizer. The offer remains in force all season. If you buy compost from Ed McGlew (emcglew@ehs.umass.edu for orders), he has rebate slips; if you buy compost or fertilizer from another source, put the receipt in the envelope on the bulletin board and we'll get the refund to you.

The first **winner** of our monthly contest for the best idea for reducing the Garden's carbon footprint is **Anne Lafontaine**. Here's her excellent suggestion:



"Put things in the dumpster only if absolutely necessary. Take home paper and plastic that can be recycled. Bring plastic pots back to the place they came from: many nurseries and farmers' market stands will take back their own. You can also bring pots to the Hadley Garden Center on Rt. 9; they have a box for them. If you MUST place something in the dumpster, compact it by breaking it up or stepping on it; sometimes large items get "hung up" and we end up with a lot of space filled with nothing but air."

You, too, can win a \$5 credit at a local farmers' market by submitting your own idea, either by putting a note in the envelope on the bulletin board or by e-mail to INFO@NOHOGARDENS.ORG. And, even if you don't win the monthly contest, your suggestion will be entered in a year-end raffle for \$30 worth of compost.

- Try our new light-weight, efficient push mower and give us feedback on how you like using it.
- We're still looking for a couple of volunteers to try watering with a soaker hose. If you're interested, we'll supply the hose and connectors in return for your report on the pros and cons of using it. ▶



GARDEN CALENDAR

RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

Sunday, July 13

GARDEN "OPEN HOUSE"

Saturday, July 19

GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Second Monday each month
@ 6:30 P.M. in the garden

► SURVIVAL CENTER DELIVERIES

Starting in July, produce will be picked up twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays around 9 AM, for delivery to the Survival Center. Put produce in the cooler (under the bulletin board on the tool shed) no earlier than mid-afternoon Monday/Wednesday. If you will be on vacation when produce is ripening, we will be glad to arrange to harvest it for the Survival Center. Let us know via e-mail at INFO@NOHOGARDENS.ORG.

USING THE DUMPSTER

Anything left outside the dumpster will not be picked up. Put it in Take-It-or-Leave-It beside the tool shed if it might be useful for someone else (but no trash, please). Put it in the dumpster if it fits. Take it away if not.

Do *not* use the dumpster for compostable material. You may put *diseased* plant material, brambles (raspberry and blackberry canes), and sunflower stalks (broken down, please) into the dumpster. Otherwise, put the material on the compost pile.

Remember to compact boxes, etc., before placing them in the dumpster.

► COMPOST PILES

Pile up, not out. Do not – DO NOT – dump material in front of the pile. Put it on top of the pile. 

► COMMUNITY SERVICE

Every gardener owes the Garden some time devoted to community service – two hours for one plot, and an hour for each additional plot. Community service opportunities are listed on the bulletin board. It's better to give your hours *now*; in October, the opportunities are few and far between.

► SPECIAL THANKS TO

- **Stephanie Vasiliades** and **Jim Ferguson** for the new bulletin board.
- **Stan Gryszan**, **Jim Ferguson**, and **Art Larson** for keeping our mowers in working order. 



GARDEN TIPS

What's happening in July in the garden besides abundant crops of weeds? Here are a few suggestions for increasing the productivity of your plot.

Onions. Remember that onions don't like weeds – keep their feet clean – and *do* like water – keep their feet mulched and moist.

Eggplants. Flea beetles love them. Best to keep them under row cover until they flower.

Garlic. When should you harvest garlic? One grower suggests that when the plants have five or six green leaves, with no more than one or two beginning to turn brown, it's time. Drive a garden fork beneath the plants, pry them loose, and pull them out. Shake off excess soil. Move the plants to an airy location out of sun and rain. If you plan to store your garlic, you need to cure it. Hang the bulbs in bundles, or spread them out on a table. After 3–4 weeks, you can trim the stalks to an inch or so above the bulbs, rub off the outer layer of skin, and trim the roots close to the bulb, brushing off soil clinging to the base.

Lettuce. If you continue to plant lettuce during the summer, use varieties intended for summer planting. I had good success last year by elevating a trellis placed horizontally, planting cucumbers that grew up over it, and planting lettuce in the shade of the cucumbers.

Iris. Now is the time to divide overgrown German iris – every three years or so for the larger ones, every two years for the dwarf varieties. Dig them up, trim back the leaves, cut away old or rotting rhizomes, separate them into bunches with about three fans each, then replant them. Make yourself popular by giving away the extras.

Zucchini. It's not too late to start zucchini, and plants put in after July 1 have a much smaller chance of being infested by the squash borer. Then you, too, will be, like me...

—The Happy Gardener 

SIGNS, SIGNS, SIGNS

Many, various, and wonderful signs have sprouted up to mark plots in the Garden. Two-thirds of plots are now signed. The remaining plots should have their plot numbers prominently displayed before the Ragweed Walkthrough on July 13. 

TICK REPELLENT

– an all natural tick repellent! –

125 drops of Geranium oil
1 tsp. vodka 8 oz. water

Mix the oil with the vodka; then add that mixture to the water. To apply, put the final mixture into a spray bottle, and spray it on. There's oil in it, so I'd suggest avoiding contact with clothing, but since it's all natural, applying directly to the skin hasn't been a problem. Of course, if someone has sensitive skin or an allergy to geraniums/geranium oil, they probably shouldn't use it!!! 

—from Steph Vasiliades