

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



NEWS



OCTOBER 2008

PLEASE...DO NOT FEED WILD ANIMALS

Some gardeners and neighbors have recently been feeding hawks in the garden. This is NOT a good idea!

THE EFFECTS OF FEEDING WILDLIFE

- ▶ When wild animals begin to depend on humans for food, their foraging skills may be diminished.
- ▶ Wild animals that are used to being fed by humans commonly lose their fear of people. An instinctive wariness of people is important to a wild animal's survival.
- ▶ The food fed to animals by humans is inadequate nutritionally and can cause serious health problems for the animals, especially when they are young and still developing.
- ▶ Animals are opportunistic and will go for the most convenient food source available.
- ▶ Reproduction rates may be affected when an artificial food source is readily available.
- ▶ Feeding migratory animals can interfere with the animal's awareness of seasonal changes in natural food supplies which tell the animal that it is time to migrate. Please do not feed wild animals. Help wildlife by enjoying them from a distance; their lives depend on it. 🍀

SOURCES: www.paws.org/wildlife/resources/fact_sheets/feedingwildlife.php AND www.dfg.ca.gov/news/news06/06087.html

GARDEN NEWS

SMALL FOOTPRINT CONTEST

The winner of September's contest for the best suggestion to reduce the Garden's carbon footprint is **Jane Noll**, long-time gardener in plots G/H 13/14. Jane's idea: Mail out the Newsletter by folding it and placing the label on the outside page, thus saving the envelopes we've been using. We'll implement her suggestion in 2009. Jane wins a \$5 voucher to spend at a local Farmers' Market.

Additional suggestion from the Garden Committee: Elect to read the Newsletter on the Garden Web site and save paper as well.

Submit your own idea for October's contest to **MTEX@SMITH.EDU**, or place a slip in the envelope on the bulletin board.

Remember that all suggestions for 2008 will be entered in a lottery; the winner will receive \$30 worth of Red Bag Compost!

REBATES FOR COMPOST, ORGANIC FERTILIZER

The offer of a \$2 rebate for your first purchase of compost or organic fertilizer is still good. Put receipts in the envelope on the bulletin board, and we'll send you the \$\$.

FALL CLEANUP DAY

Sat. Oct. 25, 10 AM-12, AND 2-4 PM. Pitch in to help tidy the shed, clean up abandoned plots, turn the compost piles, and get the garden

ready for winter. Show up at the shed, and ask for a cleanup job to work on.

If you haven't yet fulfilled your community service requirement, now is the time to do it – remember you won't be able to register for your plot(s) in 2009 until we have a record of your service hours. Submit a log by filling out a slip from the mailbox beside the bulletin board, or by e-mail to murielgoulet@comcast.net.

FALL PLOT INSPECTION

Fall inspection is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 19, 2-4 PM (rain date one week later). You may ask for an automatic extension to a specific date no later than November 2 by e-mail to **MTEX@SMITH.EDU** or by letter to the Recreation Dep't.; we need to receive your request by Friday, Oct. 17. (No phone calls, please.)

See the article on page 2 for specifics about what needs to be done to get your plot(s) ready for



GARDEN CALENDAR

FALL PLOT INSPECTION

Sunday, October 19

FALL GARDEN CLEANUP

Saturday, October 25

SECOND INSPECTION

Sunday, November 2

GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Second Monday each month @ 6:30 P.M. at the Rec. Dep't.

winter. Please note that you must have a **sign** (or signs) indicating your plot number(s) in place by that date, and that it must be **clearly visible** and **readable**. If you don't pass this inspection, you'll be notified and may ask for a second inspection on November 2 (a \$10 fee is assessed for the second inspection).

REGISTRATION FOR RETURNING GARDENERS

If ❶ your plot passes Fall Inspection, ❷ you have completed the necessary Community Service hours, and ❸ your plot is clearly labeled with its plot number – you will receive registration forms by mail around December 1. You may register for your current plot and also request an additional plot or plots at the same time.

GARDEN OPEN HOUSE

The first annual Garden Open House was held July 19. In spite of oppressive heat and humidity, many gardeners and some town folks turned out to enjoy refreshments, learn about community gardens in South Africa, and purchase Garden T-shirts, bouquets, and note cards. **Nancy First** and **Sheila Murphy** did a terrific job of organizing the Open House, and **Elizabeth Armstrong**, **Rich Aaronson**, **Stacy Dakow**, **Bill Griffiths**, **Art Larson**, **Devorah Levy**, **Norma Sandowski**, **Stephanie Vasiliades**, and **Donna** and **Don Zuckerman** helped to make it happen.

GARDEN WEB MASTER

E. Michael Brandt is moving cross-country and must resign as our Web master. He's responsible for our new, handsome home page, and for our efficient system of e-mail communication. We will miss his skill

and send him off with thanks and good wishes. He hands the reins to **Chris Sparks**, who gardens with Darcy Lambert in Plot G3.

SOUTH AFRICA

As our garden season comes to an end, it is planting time in South Africa. Thanks to our gardeners, we are sending more than 200 packs of seeds to the Southeastern Cape Epilepsy Foundation's Community Garden project. The seeds should arrive there the first week in October, the beginning of the gardening season there. A special thank you goes to Manchester Hardware (in Easthampton) and the Hadley Garden Center (Route 9 in Hadley) for their donations of seeds, and to **Rich Aaronson** for soliciting the donations.

Another thank you goes to those of you who purchased NoHo Garden T-shirts to send to South Africa. More than three dozen shirts will be shipped and should arrive there around the end of October. (There's still time to contribute. Your check for \$12 – made out to the City of Northampton and mailed to Nancy First, 77 Hawthorn Lane, Northampton 01060 – will send a T-shirt to a community gardener in South Africa.)

FIRST AID KIT



Alex Diamond has organized a first aid kit, now mounted on the left-hand wall of the tool shed. If you cut yourself or are bitten by a wasp, you'll find supplies on hand for emergency care. Thanks, Alex!

MAKE YOUR SIGNS VISIBLE!

Please be sure your plot number sign is visible. If inspectors cannot find your plot, you will not pass inspection.

TUESDAY MARKET

There's a new Farmers' Market in Northampton! – the "Tuesday Market" – 3 to 7 PM every Tuesday through October 28, in the plaza behind Thornes Market. 🍀

FALL PLOT CLEANUP

As gardening season winds down, it's time to prepare your plot(s) for the winter. Follow these guidelines, and cleanup will be a snap!

- Cut down all dead plant material and dispose of it. Compost it in your own plot or in one of the community compost piles. This includes old tomatoes, squashes, etc.; leaving them lying in your plot un-composted attracts animals.
- Toss *diseased* plant material – such as tomato plants with brown blight spots – in the dumpster.
- Cut down tall grasses and weeds around your plot – to no more than six inches tall.
- Cut back perennials where appropriate.
- Dispose of all paper and plastic debris, paper and plastic bags, and plastic plant pots – in the dumpster.
- Lay flat any stakes, tomato cages, etc. that you leave in your plot.
- Firmly anchor any structures – arbors, trellises, birdhouses – that remain in your plot. The wind blows hard during the winter, and you run the risk of losing anything that is not well secured.
- Remove all tools and watering cans if not in use.
- Take home hoses if they are not in use; if you must leave them – coil, and store flat. 🍀

HOW TO REGISTER FOR YOUR 2009 GARDEN PLOT(S)

Here's what you need to know to sign up for next year's season.

If you've cleaned up your plot(s) this fall, completed your community service hours, and posted a legible sign with your plot(s) number(s), you may register for these plots for 2009.

QUESTION: *What if I can't clean up my plot by the October 19 deadline?*

ANSWER: You may request an automatic extension to a specified date when you can complete the cleanup, by mail to "Community Garden, Recreation Dep't., 90 Locust St., 01060" or by e-mail to mtex@smith.edu. (No requests by phone, please.)

Q: *What if I haven't put in enough time on community service projects?*

A: You could come to Fall Cleanup Day and pitch in on one of the tasks we're working on. You could also make arrangements (via e-mail to mtex@smith.edu) to work on some project that you see needs doing.

Registration forms will be mailed early in December; be sure we have your current address. Please return your completed registration by the specified date in January. There's a \$5 charge for late registration, although registration forms are accepted until mid-February. After that date, your plot could be given to a returning gardener who requested it.

Q: *Why is the deadline so early?*

A: So that the Garden Committee has time to process the forms, fill requests for plot changes in February, and prepare a list of available plots for New Gardener Registration in March.

Q: *What if I'm not sure I'll be able to garden next year?*

A: Send in your registration form without a check, explaining the circumstance. We'll hold your plot(s) until mid-March, with no penalty for late registration.

Q: *What if I can't pay the registration fee by the January deadline?*

A: Send in your registration form without a check, with a note saying when you'll be able to pay the fee. We'll hold your plots until then, with no late fee.

Q: *How do I request more plots?*

A: The registration forms have a space for indicating that you wish to add a plot or give one up. Returning gardeners have priority in signing up for available plots. There is a limit of four plots per gardener.

Q: *How is it decided whether a request for a plot is granted?*

A: The Garden Committee tries to meet all requests. A request received earliest has priority. If more than one gardener asks for a plot, the Committee tries to find equally desirable plots for each. If this isn't possible, a coin toss decides. 🌿

GARDEN TIPS

► Now that we've passed the Autumnal Equinox, we have shorter days and cooler nights. Newcomers to the Garden should know that we get frost here earlier than other places in town: If there is a frost warning for low-lying areas, expect a frost in the Garden. Harvest tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers, as well as your last bouquets of dahlias, nasturtiums, and zinnias.

► Here is a miscellany of tomato facts, tips, and recipes.

...Tomatoes picked when they are not quite ripe (orange rather than

red) and allowed to ripen off the vine will be tastier than those picked when fully ripe.

...Contrary to popular belief, you can put tomatoes in the refrigerator without any loss of flavor (if you warm them to room temperature before eating). After three days, although they retain flavor, their texture deteriorates.

... The seeds and gel that surrounds them contain much of the tomato flavor. If your recipe says to squeeze out the seeds, ignore the instruction. You'll save time and improve your dish.

...Put cherry tomatoes (red and yellow if you have both) in an oven-proof dish in a single layer. Drizzle with olive oil. Add garlic, thyme sprigs, and a little salt. Bake in a 375° oven for 45 minutes. If they have not browned a little, raise the temperature to 400° and cook for 15 minutes more. Keep in the refrigerator for a few days, or freeze. This makes a delicious sauce for pasta.

...Cut tomatoes in half, put in a plastic bag, and freeze. Use them during the winter to add flavor to any dish.

...And, if you still have too many tomatoes, donate them to the Survival Center.

► Fall is a time when seeds of many plants are ripening and being distributed – by wind and by bird – about the Garden. As soon as a part of your garden has been cleared, cover it – you can use cardboard or newspaper, weighted down so it doesn't blow off, or – even better – topped with straw or chopped leaves. The migrant seeds will not be able to settle in your plot, to germinate in the spring. Then your weed-free garden will make you, like me...

—The Happy Gardener