

# NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



## NEWS



MAY 2010

### JUNE INSPECTION

Your plot(s) must be worked by Sunday, June 6; otherwise, the plot(s) will be assigned to a prospective gardener on our waiting list. Inspection teams will walk through the Garden on the afternoon of that day. Your plot(s) should be reasonably free of weeds, have seeds, sets, and/or plants in place, and have a sign with your plot number(s). One tomato plant in a sea of weeds won't do the trick, but you don't need to have every square inch cultivated or planted. The teams just want to make sure that your plot is being gardened.

If your plot is unworked, we will send you a notification by mail that it is being reassigned to a person on the Garden wait list. 🌱

### GARDEN NEWS

**WEATHER.** The 2010 gardening season has featured an assortment of weather even more varied than usual: We have had 90° days (in April!) and mini-tornadoes, as well as more than a few perfect spring days. Nights have been cool, with the occasional frost: The average last frost date for Northampton is May 10 (the average of last frost dates for the past 30 years); the date after which you can pretty much count on no frost is May 24.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE.** The Garden asks each gardener to spend a few hours each season on

some task that benefits the garden community. Everyone indicated her/his preference on the registration form. We match as many people with preferred tasks as possible. Since some tasks are oversubscribed, you may receive a message to that effect. In that case, you should check the bulletin board to find tasks that need doing and select one of those.

Be sure to file a log slip for the time you put into community service. You will find the slips on the white mailbox beside the bulletin board on the tool shed; fill out the slip and return it to the box. Don't forget to file a log slip if you came to Spring



### 2010 GARDEN CALENDAR

#### IS-YOUR-PLOT-PLANTED? INSPECTION

Sunday, June 6

#### RAGWEED/WEED WALKTHROUGH

Sunday, July 18

#### FALL INSPECTION

Sunday, October 17

#### FALL CLEANUP DAY

Saturday, October 23

#### SECOND INSPECTION

Sunday, October 31

#### GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

Cleanup or did serious clearing on your assigned plot(s).

**MOWING.** Members of the mowing crew take care of the broad grassy paths and common areas. The narrower paths between plots are the responsibility of the gardeners in those plots. When you are mowing, keep in mind that 1) the mowers are all set at the proper height, so please don't try to change them, 2) you should clean mowers of grass before returning to tool shed, and 3) you should avoid mowing when the grass is wet (bad for the grass, bad for the mower). Check out the push mowers for small jobs – they are easy to use and non-polluting.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO

► **Muriel and Carole Goulet**, for their invaluable service in keeping our community service records for the past several years.

► **Norma Sandowski**, who is leaving the Garden, for her many contributions as a Garden Committee member and liaison to South African community gardens.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES.

Contact [MTEx@SMITH.EDU](mailto:MTEx@SMITH.EDU) if you are interested in the following tasks:

► **Maintaining our Garden Web site.** If you have computer smarts, the Garden needs you as its Web master.

► **Keeping community service records.** You would keep the mail box supplied with blank slips, and collect the filled-out slips and record them in a spread sheet.

► **Monitoring compost piles.** On a pleasant Saturday or Sunday, you would sit under a tree, read a book, and make sure folks who add to the compost pile are informed about what materials may be added and where they should be put.

► **Garden Neighbors.** Garden Neighbors introduce themselves to the gardeners in their neighborhood, introduce the gardeners to each other, provide advice on gardening when asked, keep an eye out for problems, and serve as a liaison with the Garden Committee.

► **Refurbishing dog signs.** Our signs along the back road asking dog walkers to leash their dogs are in need of repair; one has lost its message entirely. It's time for a new rhyme, along with the needed fixes.

**BICYCLISTS NEEDED.**

One improvement to the Garden that a number of gardeners suggested in their answers to the questionnaire was the addition of bike racks. Are there a couple of bicyclists who would like to form a committee to consider what kind of racks to get (could they be built by Garden volunteers?), how many to have, and where to put them? And, in a longer time frame, whether the bike path could have an extension to the Garden? If you are interested, get in touch at [MTEX@SMITH.EDU](mailto:MTEX@SMITH.EDU) .

**BRUSH PILE.** Look for a new brush pile next to the wood chip pile. Please toss your branches and sticks *here*, not in the dumpster.

**FARMERS' MARKETS.**

Both Northampton Farmers' Markets are now open. Tuesday's market is held in the plaza beside the parking garage, 1:30-6:30 p.m. Saturday's market is held on Gothic St., 7 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 🍀

**COMMUNITY GARDEN WATERING EXCHANGE for GARDENERS on VACATION**

Again this year Andy Donson has generously offered to broker a watering exchange for gardeners who will be out of town and in need of watering assistance. Here's how it works:

1) Gardeners who need watering while on vacation fill out the form below and e-mail it to Andy Donson, the watering exchange agent, at [ADONSON@YAHOO.COM](mailto:ADONSON@YAHOO.COM). You can also mail the info on a postcard to 40 Winthrop St., Northampton, MA 01060.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PLOT NUMBER(S) \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF DAYS OF WATERING NEEDED \_\_\_\_\_

DATES OF WATERING NEEDED \_\_\_\_\_

DATES AVAILABLE TO WATER OTHER GARDENS \_\_\_\_\_

(THE MORE OPEN, THE BETTER)

WATERING INSTRUCTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_  
(E.G., ONE INCH ONCE A WEEK)

2) Andy will broker one-to-one exchanges between participating gardeners and put them into contact with each other by e-mail or (less preferably) telephone.

3) Gardeners taking longer vacations may have to make multiple exchanges.

4) The exchanges are based on plot-days. Example: A gardener with two plots that need watering for three days can make an equal exchange with a gardener with one

plot that needs watering for six days or with two gardeners, each of whom has one plot that needs watering for three days.

5) The Mother Nature's good luck rule holds: Gardeners under obligation are not expected to water on days when there is sufficient rain, but nonetheless still get credit for those days.

6) Participants agree to let the watering exchange agent give out contact information to the other gardener in the exchange.

7) Participants should send information as early as possible to facilitate the brokering. 🍀

**PLOT MARKERS**

If you've ever volunteered to do end-of-season inspections, you know how frustrating it is to be out in the garden on a cold October day, trying to locate the numbers of garden plots. Make it easy on those inspectors –or anyone else who is trying to find you amid 400 plots. Mark your plot!



Garden plots should have a sign showing the plot number in place by Sunday, June 6. The style is up to you – utilitarian (cardboard inside a plastic bag) to creative (look around you in the Garden for examples). But each sign must be large enough to be found without extended search and should be legible from outside the plot.

Plot signs make it easier for everyone to find plots in the Garden; make it easier for inspection teams to know which plot is which; and prevent new gardeners from digging up a plot other than the one assigned. 🍀



Lima Bean Seeds by Heather McQueen

## FOREST GARDEN IMMERSION COURSE

The garden curriculum at Williamsburg's Dunphy Elementary School will get a boost this year, when a special kind of garden, known as a Forest Garden, will be built on the school grounds. A Forest Garden includes perennials and annuals, and mimics the layered structure of a forest, utilizing trees, shrubs, vines, and ground covers. The garden will include common plants such as strawberries, and lesser-known species such as honeyberry, and perennial climbing spinach.

A group of local permaculture teachers and their students will establish the garden during a 3-day Forest Garden Immersion Course, taking place at the Dunphy School over Memorial Day Weekend, May 29–31. The course is offered to adults, who learn through a mix of classroom and outdoor time. Course participants spend 10 hours of classroom time learning Forest Garden theory and design, including how to design for beneficial ecological relationships between plants, insects, and wildlife. The work of course participants, and funds generated by the course make possible the Dunphy School garden installation.

The course kicks off with a special lecture open to the general public:

“Gardening Like the Forest: A Forest Garden Introduction” by Dave Jacke, co-author of *Edible Forest Gardens* on Friday May 28, 7 PM, Williamsburg Grange, Rt. 9/ Main Street, Williamsburg, MA

For course information visit [WWW.MOSAICFARM.COM/FOREST-GARDENCOURSE.HTML](http://WWW.MOSAICFARM.COM/FOREST-GARDENCOURSE.HTML).

Visit [WWW.EDIBLEFOREST-GARDENS.COM](http://WWW.EDIBLEFOREST-GARDENS.COM) for more information on Forest Gardening. 🍀

## COMPOST COURTESY

Please put compostable material on top of the pile, not in front of or beside it. Otherwise, compost piles turn into compost monsters, engulfing first the paths, then neighboring plots, and eventually the whole Garden.

Please don't put material over the fence of the compost pile near the dumpster; add it from the front of the pile. We need to maintain a two-foot path between the pile and the fence.

If you add large heavy stalks (like sunflower stalks) to the pile, break them down into manageable lengths (not more than, say, 12"). Long stalks take a long time to decompose and make turning the pile difficult.

NO (repeat, no) wood (branches or stakes), stones, or plastic of any kind should be added to the pile.

Consider having a personal compost pile in your own plot. A 4' x 4' area is large enough, and it's only 4% of a 20' x 20' plot. For neatness, you can enclose it with wire mesh, stakes, boards.... You won't have to lug stuff to a distant pile – just throw it over your shoulder. Turn your pile at the end of the season, rake it out over your plot, and have better soil next year. 🍀

## THE PRISON BIRTH PROJECT GARDEN PLOT

The Prison Birth Project (PBP) is an organization focused on reproductive justice, working to provide support, education and advocacy with woman and girls at the intersection of the criminal justice system and motherhood. We envision a world where all mothers are treated with respect and dignity and have the support needed to reach their full potential. We believe that when a mother has the support and resources to take care of herself, a ripple effect will extend to her children, family and community.

### **85% of women in local prisons and jails are mothers.**

Many of us understand the importance of fresh food while pregnant, but incarcerated women do not have the same options or access to healthy resources that woman outside of prisons can take advantage of. When we began teaching childbirth education sessions at the jail and realized that we could not simply tell the women to eat nutritious food, we quickly recognized importance of bringing this food to them. We started a garden plot at the Greenfield Community Garden that was able to provide PBP with bountiful salads, sliced veggies, and even zucchini muffins. This food was a hit! The women at the jail loved it and always asked for more. The officers, staff and women in our groups were impressed with the healthy food we were able to provide and were curious about where we were able to get it.

This year we extended our Mothers Among Us program to include a group outside of jail and in Northampton. ... At the request of a group participant to have more

healthy snacks we have decided to expand our gardening efforts to have a plot in Northampton as well.

The Garden Plot will have multiple purposes. One will be to provide fresh locally-grown food to incarcerated pregnant women and postpartum mothers. We will also invite past and current members of the Mothers Among Us program to participate in growing food for themselves and their children. Our goal is to increase access to nutritious food for mothers and children in all our program areas.

PBP operates three programs that respond to crucial needs of incarcerated and previously incarcerated women in Western Massachusetts... Each of our program areas addresses freedom from violence and the unique needs of incarcerated mothers and girls. ... PBP is creating an organizational structure that will elevate incarcerated and previously incarcerated mothers to positions of leadership and power within the organization and its board. We believe that actively involving women at the margins in community organizing and support groups within their communities is radical social change.

We are glad to be making another connection in the community with the Northampton Community Garden! We are looking for volunteers to help with the garden plot, and this will qualify as part of your community service requirements for your garden plot! If you are interested, we will be having a garden work day on Friday, May 14, 3-5 PM. If you would like to be involved but cannot make it to the work day, don't worry, there are lots of other ways to be involved. Contact: [LISA@THEPRISONBIRTH-PROJECT.ORG](mailto:LISA@THEPRISONBIRTH-PROJECT.ORG). For more information

about The Prison Birth Project please visit our website: [WWW.THE-PRISONBIRTH-PROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.THE-PRISONBIRTH-PROJECT.ORG) 

—Lisa Andrews

## LET'S TALK WATER.

If you're growing vegetables this year, they'll need about an inch of rain each week. When fruiting or flowering, they'll probably need a little more to help maintain good resistance to pests and diseases.

To determine how much it has rained, use the rain gauge located across from the tool shed door. Weekly readings will be posted on the bulletin board. You can also check soil moisture by scratching an inch beneath the surface. If it's moist, no need to water.

We stewards of the garden should think about our total water usage. 2009 plot rental income barely covered the cost of water for the season. Make sure plots stay affordable by conserving water.

How do you conserve? **Mulch, mulch, mulch!** Your plants love it; weeds hate it. Straw works great, and is easy to get nearby. Throw at least an inch on beds after plants have reached a few inches tall. An even easier way to conserve is by not watering when it's raining. It seems simple enough, but I've seen it more than a few times in my 5-year tenure.

—Cathleen O'Keefe



## FAUCET AND HOSE ETIQUETTE

- ▶ Please coil your hose after each use, and hang it on the hose rack.
- ▶ Watering cans take precedence at the faucet.
- ▶ Soaker hoses should not be left unattended.
- ▶ Sprinklers are not allowed.
- ▶ If a community hose needs a new washer or has other leaks, please follow up. Washers are usually available in the Garden Shed.
- ▶ Questions? Elaine Pourinski, our volunteer water manager, helps us keep our water fees reasonable. Reach her at [AZULHERON@AOL.COM](mailto:AZULHERON@AOL.COM)

**DUMPSTER USE:** 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.

Northampton Recreation Dep't.  
90 Locust Street  
Northampton, MA 01060