

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



MARCH 2011

GARDEN NEWS

NEW GARDENER REGISTRATION will be held on Saturday, March 26, 10 to noon, at the Northampton Recreation Dep't. (90 Locust St., behind Smith Vocational School). Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. About 40 plots will be available; a wait list is maintained for those who can't be accommodated on Saturday.

The Garden Committee will hold a **MEETING FOR NEW GARDENERS**

 (at a date and location to be announced). We will review Garden rules and guidelines, give tips about making the most of your plot, and answer your questions. If you attend, you'll have a chance to win one of several great door prizes and to choose from a selection of veggie and flower seeds!

The first **GARDEN WORKSHOP** of the season will be "**GETTING STARTED**," with Julie Abramson, Master Gardener and friendly person. Meet on Saturday, April 23, at 10:30, at the Recreation Dep't, 90 Locust St., behind Smith Vocational School (where New Gardener Registration was held). Julie will discuss: clearing your plot, use of compost, fertilizer, and mulch; deciding what plants to grow and how to space them in the garden; organic practices – and more. She'll also answer your questions. Registration is not required. If you have questions, e-mail Julie at

JABRAMSON@ALBANY.EDU.

SPRING CLEANUP DAY will be Saturday, April 30. Come, meet fellow gardeners, help get the



2011 GARDEN CALENDAR

March 26

NEW GARDENER REGISTRATION

TBA

NEW GARDENERS' MEETING

April 23

GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR GARDEN WORKSHOP

April 30

**SPRING CLEANUP DAY
COMPOST WORKSHOP
WEEDLESS GARDEN WORKSHOP**

May 14

NATURAL PEST CONTROL CLASS AND DISCUSSION

June 5

LAST DAY TO GET YOUR GARDEN PLANTED

July 17

RAGWEED / WEED WALKTHROUGH

October 16

LAST DAY TO CLEAN UP YOUR GARDEN FOR WINTER

October 22

FALL CLEANUP DAY

GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

Garden ready for the 2011 season, and earn community service credit. There will be workshops on composting and no-weed gardening and a seed and plant swap. Ed McGlew will deliver his excellent Red Bag compost (order from Ed ahead of time at EMCGLEW@EHS.UMASS.EDU) and Sandy Jaescke will have mulch straw available for sale.

Learn about **NATURAL PEST CONTROL** on May 14, 10–11, in the Garden by the tool shed. **Jim McSweeney** (former Community Gardener, certified MA Arborist and horticulturist) will provide information about insect pests, diseases, and weeds. You'll find out what organic control methods work (or don't work) in the garden. Bring sample pests and questions.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- ▶ **JUDY CRANE**, for setting up our new database with relevant information about gardeners.
- ▶ **GLORIA SANTA ANNA**, for organizing reporting of community service hours.
- ▶ **DENNY WOLFE**, who is now our Web master.

We were sorry to learn of the passing of **CHARLIE BAKER**, who served as a Garden Neighbor for a number of years. His presence in the Garden will be missed. 

15TH ANNUAL SOS PLANT SALE

The Northampton **SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS (SOS) PLANT AND GARDEN SALE** will be held 9 A.M.–1 P.M. on Saturday, May 7, at Smith Vocational School.

Organizers are looking for plant donations from local gardeners. If you have perennials to divide or plants you are removing from your gardens, please pot them up and take them to Smith Voke on Friday May 6, from 4 to 7 P.M. Should you need pots, or help digging, dividing, and potting, or picking up potted plants, there are volunteers available. Donations of plants are needed, as are volunteers to collect and organize donated plants on Friday, May 6 and to work at the event on May 7. However you can contribute will be appreciated.

This sale is one of the highlights of spring in Northampton. You'll find treasures from local gardens as well as from local artisans. Hand-crafted garden furniture donated by local woodworkers, bags of local compost, and raffles for a hand-made quilt and garden furniture made by Smith Vocational wood-working students will be offered for sale.

Last year the event raised \$10,000 for the school book fund. Come help support our public schools by donating plants, volunteering, or attending the event. For information contact: Judy Leeds 537-4437 (JDLEEDS@GMAIL.COM) or Sue Breines 586-7476 (SUEBREINES@GMAIL.COM). 🍀

— Robin Freedenfeld

COMMUNITY OVEN NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are being sought to help manage the Pioneer Valley Community Bread Oven. The oven, built on a trailer, is available for community events, schools and fund-raisers.

WHY A COMMUNITY BREAD OVEN?

My great-grandmother told me tales of a community oven in her little village of Razon, Poland, used by everyone to bake delicious breads and cholent on the Sabbath. The sourdough starter was passed from home to home. People worked together to fire and manage the oven. Yet today these rich traditions are almost lost.

The community oven will be used at the NE Grain Festival, July 14, at UMass and July 15 in Colrain, MA for taste-testing of einkorn, emmer and other rare heritage wheats.

Let us work together to restore the web of a healthy community food system, seed by seed, bread by bread. Free workshop to manage the wood-fired oven on April 10

and April 17 in Colrain. Register at GROWSEED@YAHOO.COM. 🍀

—Eli Rogosa | GROWSEED.ORG
Heritage Grain Conservancy

A GREAT RESOURCE FOR GARDENERS!

There's a Yahoo group dedicated to sharing plants, seeds, bulbs, gardening information and gardening tools within the Massachusetts Pioneer Valley. It's like Freecycle, with a focus on gardening. To sign up go to [HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/CHLOROPHYLLPV/](http://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/CHLOROPHYLLPV/) or Google chlorophyllPV (Pioneer Valley) and enjoy swapping! 🍀

—Jessica Gifford

MEADOW CITY CONSERVATION COALITION FOR WARD THREE

The Meadow City Conservation Coalition for Ward Three has been established by a group of Ward



Three residents who wanted to have an organization akin to the Broad Brook Coalition to be stewards of the wonderful open spaces we have in the Ward. Some of the public land is owned by the state and some by the city.

They describe themselves as cross country skiers, dog walkers, runners, gardeners, property owners, and renters who share a love of open space and want to have a role in how it is maintained and preserved. The group chose its name from city historical archives which depict Northampton in the 18th and 19th centuries as "The Meadow City".

—Jane Potter

JANEPOTTER@COMCAST.NET



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.

Please do not turn your car around in our neighbors' driveways on Burt's Pit Road.



Drive down to the ball field to turn.

WEEDS ARE ALWAYS WITH US

The soil in your plot may contain as many as 5,000 weed seeds per square foot. Whenever you dig or rototill, some of them are exposed to light, and about 250 of them will germinate in each square foot. They will grow rapidly, flower quickly, and produce many more seeds. In the process they will take water and nutrients from the cultivated plants which are at a competitive disadvantage. Roughly speaking, you have about three weeks to get rid of weeds after they have sprouted before they start doing damage.

What's to be done? One tactic is to weed (by hand or by hoe) before the weeds set seed. Then, if the soil is cultivated yearly, the number of weed seeds present decreases by half each year: In seven years, you will be down to about 50 seeds per square foot, and about three will germinate. Since new seeds blow in each year, you are not likely to do better than that.

Another tactic is to practice no-till gardening. Do not spade up or rototill your soil. Instead, dig as little as possible. Then, (1) build the soil by layering compost and organic fertilizers on the soil surface, 2) covering all with several layers of newsprint, and 3) mulching so that bare soil is never exposed to blown seed. You may consult Lee Reich's book *Weedless Gardening* (Workman's Press, 2001) for a detailed description. The Garden is also offering a *Weedless Gardening* workshop on Spring Cleanup Day. 🍀

—The Happy Gardener

COMPOSTING FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT

This year the Garden is offering a \$4 credit for gardeners who maintain a compost pile in at least one of their plots. Our communal compost piles are growing ever larger and unmanageable, and any steps we can take to limit the amount of material they are asked to handle will improve the situation. There are advantages to you to building compost in your plot: You do not have to cart material to a distant compost pile and you do not have to haul compost from that pile back to your plot; you know what goes into your own compost; you may be able to establish a hot pile, which will kill weed seeds.

A pile 4 x 4 ft, the minimum for establishing a hot pile, requires only 16 square feet, only 4% of the 400 square feet in a 20 x 20 foot plot (and correspondingly less if you have several plots). It need not be ugly, either: Stroll around the Garden and see what enclosures other gardeners have devised; plant vining nasturtiums to grow up the sides of your pile and see how beautiful it can be.

The Garden will sponsor a Composting workshop on Spring Cleanup Day. 🍀

—The Happy Gardener

THE NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY FARM IS COMING OUR WAY!

Thanks to 1300 generous donors, Grow Food Northampton, Inc. raised sufficient funds to purchase all 120 available acres of farmland on the site of the former Bean and Allard farms on Meadow and Spring Streets in Florence.

As of February 25, 2011, GFN owns the farmland, and is (very) busy devising plans to bring the Northampton Community Farm to life. The portion of the acreage leased to Nate Frigard and Jen Smith is now Crimson and Clover CSA, offering fresh produce starting this June to shareholders and food pantries. (A few CSA shares are still available – see CRIMSONANDCLOVERFARM.COM). Other portions of the farmland will be planted with cover crop this summer to prepare for future organic farming operations.

Planning is actively under way for a community garden on the 17 acre

parcel south of Meadow Street, which will ultimately provide another 400 garden plots to supplement the existing Northampton Community Garden, as well as include a community orchard, educational demonstration gardens, and hopefully a barn for food preservation, educational workshops, and community gatherings, and even a greenhouse (someday). Watch for notice of a public forum for discussion of the garden's design (likely late April). The title for this project is the "Florence Organic Community Gardens and Agricultural Education Site." To finance installation of necessary infrastructure (e.g. water, parking) and important drainage and plantings, a grant application has been submitted to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Anyone who would like to speak on behalf of the importance of additional community garden space is welcome to do so at the CPC meeting starting at 7 PM on April 6 in the City Council chambers just behind City

Hall. This meeting is designed to hear from the public about the projects under the CPC's consideration for funding this round.

The first **COMMUNITY WORK DAY** on the Northampton Community Farm will be held on April 16, 10 AM to 2 PM, weather permitting (and provided the soil is dry enough). STONES will be moved off the field and into a windrow. Everyone age 12 and up is welcome to help move stones (and even take some home!) Bring work gloves and a drink. (If you have a truck or other equipment suitable to help with this task, please write to INFO@GROWFOODNORTHAMPTON.COM or call 584-0081). If gathering stones, making mountains, and having fun isn't enough enticement, there will also be a raffle for prizes from business sponsors. 🍀

—Adele Franks

ADELE.FRANKS@GMAIL.COM

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