

# NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



## NEWS



JULY 2012

### RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

Why do we worry about ragweed in the Garden? Many gardeners are mildly or seriously allergic to the pollen of *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, common ragweed; it can spoil their pleasure of being in and working in the garden.

A Garden goal is to get rid of as many ragweed plants as possible before they flower. 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, its seeds will continue to ripen 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.

If you don't know what ragweed looks like, see the photo below, or look at the sample plant near the garden shed.

On **Sunday, July 15**, inspection teams will walk through the Garden



Ragweed – *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

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!

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. 🍀

### GARDEN NEWS

#### GARDEN GOODBYES

The Garden says goodbye this summer to **Patricia Wood**, long-time gardener, Garden Neighbor, and fine community member. Pat's garden, Q/R 9/10, was a source of pleasure for other gardeners for many summers. Pat is moving to Shelburne Falls, where she will soon be at work installing a new garden.

We also say goodbye to **Jack Wright**, who leaves the Garden this year; he has probably gardened here longer than any other gardener.

#### SPECIAL THANKS TO

**William Gural**, who is again coordinating Survival Center deliveries. See the accompanying article for details on times to leave donations.

**Johanna Halbeisen**, who continues to coordinate tool shed volunteers.

**Elsa Vitols**, for her photo essay on Garden structures in this Newsletter.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

Many of you have heard by now about the community service assignments in which you indicated interest. If you have not yet heard, chances are you signed up for something that was already oversubscribed. So if you need community service hours, please check the bulletin board for tasks that currently need doing. Also check the May Newsletter article **In the Cloud** for instructions on recording your hours.

### CELL PHONES AND RADIOS IN THE GARDEN



Here is a reminder for cell phone users: Please limit your calls to ones of necessity, and keep them brief. The Garden is just that – not an extension of your office. Many gardeners place high value on peace and quiet in the Garden,

continued...



### 2012 GARDEN CALENDAR

**\*\* RAGWEED/WEED WALKTHROUGH \*\***

July 15

**FALL CLEANUP DAY**

October 20

**FALL INSPECTION**

October 21

**GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Second Monday each month  
@ 6:30 P.M. at the Garden.

with the loudest sounds the wind in the trees and a mockingbird's song. Please allow them to experience that quiet.

The same caution goes for those who bring a radio. Sound really travels in the Garden, and your musical choices may destroy the quiet that others value. Please use your ear buds to listen to music.

## MOWERS AND MOWING

There have been several questions from gardeners about the status of lawn mowers. Here are some answers:

- We purchase mowers; your Garden fees pay for them.
- There are currently four power mowers and two hand mowers. One of the power mowers (the Ahrens) works by rapidly rotating a string (like a weed whacker); the others use standard blades.
- The mowers are maintained by volunteers as their community service. That means repairs are made as soon as possible, but usually not immediately. Parts may need to be ordered and picked up. Repairs have to be fitted into someone's busy schedule. Therefore, some – or occasionally all – of the mowers may be out of operation at the same time.

There are some guidelines for use of the mowers.

- First, they should be used only on grassy areas and grass paths. Do not mow plots with them: The grass and weeds in a plot may conceal stones and bricks that will wreck the blade of the mower (\$20 to replace, plus someone's time); or there may be wire or string that will wrap around the wheels and be extremely difficult to remove.
- Second, do not tip mowers to

the side; oil will be spilled and will foul the mower.

- Third, please clean mowers of grass before returning them to the tool shed.
- Fourth, if you *do* break a blade or do other damage to a mower, please attach a note saying what happened, and sign your name: You are responsible for using the mowers in an appropriate fashion.
- One mower is reserved for the mowing crew, volunteers who keep the main paths and large grassy areas mowed. Because so much damage is done to mowers, this one is kept locked so that it will always be available for path maintenance. Do not ask a member of the mowing crew for the combination – they are sworn to secrecy.

## SURVIVAL CENTER DONATIONS

Do you have an big batch of beans? – a plethora of peas? – or a zillion zucchini? Donate your extra fresh produce to the Northampton Survival Center!

Please leave your donations in the containers in front of the bulletin board on the tool shed on **Tuesdays and Thursdays before 6 p.m.** Volunteers will pick up the bounty between 6 and 6:30 and deliver it to the Survival Center.

If you will be away and want us to harvest the surplus, please notify Bill Gural: [w\\_gural@yahoo.com](mailto:w_gural@yahoo.com) 🍀

## GARDEN TIPS

I've been so busy in my own garden coping with the challenges of the weather – torrential rain followed by extended dry periods, cold days followed by super-hot ones – that I haven't found the time to write more about weeds, as was

my intention. So this column will contain some advice on watering and a recipe for seasonal produce.

## WATERING

**RULE #1.** It's better to water less frequently but more deeply than to sprinkle your garden every day. The rule of thumb is one inch per week, which you can deliver in a single watering. You might even buy an inexpensive plastic device that records the amount of water falling on a given spot. Because the Garden's soil drains quickly, you might want to water a little more frequently when the weather is in the 80's and 90's.

An old gardener's tale is that you should water only in the early morning. However, there is some research suggesting that watering in the afternoon is just as beneficial. And, as a practical matter, if you can't make it in the morning, better to water in the afternoon than not to water at all.

**RULE #2.** Mulch, mulch, mulch! Straw, chopped leaves, compressed straw will all work as mulch. Mulch serves two purposes: first, it helps hold moisture in the soil by reducing surface evaporation from the soil surface; second, it discourages weed growth. So what's not to like?

**RULE #3.** Think carefully about the structure of your garden. Many gardens feature either raised beds or sunken paths. Raised beds improve drainage, which isn't really necessary in the Garden, and they do dry out more quickly than level beds. The sunken paths are water sinks; all the rain that falls in them is lost to your plants. A plot with beds and paths at the same level is the most water-savvy strategy.

## PASTA WITH CORIANDER PESTO

adapted from Melissa Clark's *Cook This Now*

This recipe uses **garlic scapes, coriander, basil, and sugar snap peas** – an advertisement for seasonal cooking. You'll also need **pine nuts, Parmesan cheese, olive oil, and 1 lb. of pasta** (your choice). It will feed four modest eaters or 2–3 eager ones.

Toast 1/3 C **pine nuts** in a small skillet until they turn golden (be careful not to burn).

In a food processor or blender, combine 1 C **cilantro**, 3/4 C thinly sliced **garlic scapes**, 1/3 C freshly grated **Parmesan** cheese, and 1/2 tsp. **salt** (or more, to taste), and process until well-combined and herbs are finely chopped.

Add the pine nuts and 2/3 C virgin olive oil, and process until smooth. Taste and add more salt if needed.

In a large pot of salted water, cook the **pasta** according to package instructions.

While the pasta is cooking, trim and cut into 1/4" slices 1/2 lb. **sugar snap peas**. Melt a little **butter** (or olive oil) in a skillet and sauté peas just until they are tender, about 3 minutes.

Drain the pasta (reserving 1/2 C cooking water). Toss with enough of the pesto to coat the pasta. (Add the cooking water if the result is too thick.) Top with the peas, and sprinkle on more Parmesan cheese and lots of black pepper.

Note: Extra pesto can be refrigerated or frozen for later use.

Moises Diaz (who gardens in E/F 27 and H 26/27) says to add a little basil to the pesto to give it a little sweetness. I thought it worked. Try this recipe and you will be...

—The Happy Gardener 🍀

## IMAGINATIVE GARDEN STRUCTURES

— Photographs by Elsa Vitols



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



## CART ETIQUETTE

Garden carts and wheelbarrows are meant to be shared. Please use them only when transporting material; then return to the central area.

## NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN IS ON FACEBOOK

Check it out!

[http://www.facebook.com/  
groups/183723795531/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/183723795531/)



Where possible, please park at an angle (not parallel) to Burt's Pit Road. More cars will fit this way.



## DON'T BE A TOOL HOARDER!

Please limit the number of tools you take to your garden so that everyone has access to them! If you are not going to be using a tool in relatively short order, please do not take it to your plot. There are often no tools of one or another kind available. This happens, not as a result of not enough tools, but of too many tools being with one gardener!

Let's all ensure that our fellow gardeners have access to tools too! If we all follow this principle, then we'll all have the tools we need!

DO YOU HAVE A  
SIGN THAT CLEARLY  
DISPLAYS YOUR  
PLOT NUMBER?

G17  
G18

## GUIDELINES FOR HAPPY GARDENING

- ▶ MOW ON PATHS ONLY – NOT IN PLOTS
- ▶ HOLD THE HOSE WHILE YOU WATER; DON'T LAY IT ON THE GROUND AND WALK AWAY
- ▶ COIL THE HOSE AFTER YOU'VE FINISHED USING IT
- ▶ TURN OFF THE FAUCET (with the handle) – NOT JUST THE SPLITTER
- ▶ DON'T HOARD TOOLS
- ▶ CATS DO NOT BELONG IN THE GARDEN; cat manure should never be added to garden compost or left to decompose in vegetable beds; cat feces often carries parasites that can infect humans, and you certainly don't want it near your growing vegetables!