

# NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



# NEWS



JULY 2015



## GARDEN NEWS

### RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

The next all-Garden event is scheduled for Sunday, July 12. At 2:00 that afternoon, teams of gardeners will walk through the Garden looking for ragweed and excessive weediness in gardeners' plots. See the article in this Newsletter for details of how to get your plot in shape.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO

**MOLLY HALE**, who has resigned as the go-to person for water and hose problems. Her service for the past three years has been greatly appreciated by all who tangled with kinky hoses and leaky spigots.

**TOM BASSETT**, who has taken over from Molly and will now handle water issues. Tom gardens in Q5; his e-mail is [SHAWBASS@COMCAST.NET](mailto:SHAWBASS@COMCAST.NET).

**PETER PAYNE**, who designed the arbor now under construction, and is supervising its erection. Everyone who enjoys the shade that will be provided for the picnic table will owe a debt to Peter.

**TAIGA ERMANSON** (L15), who arranged with the Survival Center for delivery of donated produce and manages signups for those deliveries.

**ELLIE COOK** (O15/O16), who has taken on the responsibility of contacting Garden Neighbors, letting each know who is in her/his

neighborhood, and serving as liaison between them and the Garden Committee.

**GARDEN COMMITTEE.** We've welcomed two new members to the Garden Committee: Peter Payne (F1/F2), our construction supervisor, and Dan Ladd (S1/S2), our tree expert. If you think you too might like to join the Committee (we meet once a month during the gardening season), get in touch with Mimi Teghtsoonian (H/I 28/29, [MTEX4.NCG@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MTEX4.NCG@GMAIL.COM)).

### COMINGS AND GOINGS

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Stan Gryszan, who for several years maintained two handsome garden plots and kept our lawnmowers in working condition. Our sympathy goes out to his mother Angie and his brother Jim, both community gardeners.

**BOOK COLUMN.** Starting in this issue of the Newsletter, we're introducing a book column – brief reviews of gardening books that readers have found interesting and/or helpful. If you have a book to share, send your review to Betsey Wolfson ([WOLFSON110@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WOLFSON110@GMAIL.COM)). 🌿

## SORRY, NO DOGS ALLOWED

We've tried being polite. We've tried asking nicely. We've tried posting signs.... But *some* dog owners just don't get it!



## 2015 GARDEN CALENDAR

**RAGWEED/WEED WALKTHROUGH**  
Sunday, July 12

**FALL CLEANUP DAY**  
Saturday, October 10

**FALL INSPECTION**  
Sunday, October 18

**2ND INSPECTION**  
Sunday, November 1

### GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Third Monday** each month  
@ **6:00 p.m.** at the Rec. Dept.  
(or in the Garden during nice weather; call to confirm)  
All gardeners are welcome.

They love to watch their dogs run around, even if the dogs run through a garden plot and defecate in it. They don't seem to realize that vegetable and flower gardens are not places for dog pee and poop.

So the Garden Committee has instituted a new rule: **NO dogs in the Community Garden.** This applies to dogs of gardeners, as well. We hope all gardeners will help to enforce this – if you see dog walkers coming through the garden, please politely ask them to go around. 🌿

## RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

**July 12** is the date for our annual **Ragweed /Weed 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.



Ragweed – *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

Our goal is to get rid of as much ragweed as possible before it flowers. Please pull up any ragweed plants 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 (above), or look at the sample plant near the shed.

On **Sunday, July 12**, 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!

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

## GARDEN TIPS

Ah, those weeds. Those insects eating my plants. That fungus destroying my tomatoes. What can a person do – especially if that person wishes to be ecologically correct in her choice of remedies? Here are a few suggestions: Some have some support from research on effectiveness; others are supported by anecdotal evidence only. All of them are considered organic and can be used in organic farming. Any of them is worth a try.

### WEEDS

Of course, the first defense against weeds is **WEEDING** – either by hand or by hoe. If the weeds get ahead of you, and especially when they are in paths, there are things you can apply to get them under control.

First to try is **VINEGAR** – plain white vinegar, which you can buy cheaply at the grocery store in gallon containers. Put it in a spray bottle and anoint your weeds: Most will wilt quickly. Some will require repeated applications. This seems most appropriate to me for paths – lots of vinegar might not be good for the soil in which you are growing fruit and veggies.

I haven't tried it, but there is an alternative to glyphosate-based sprays, **ECOSMART'S WEED & GRASS KILLER**. Its active ingredients are a derivative of peanut oil and eugonal (smells like cloves). Again, this is probably best for paths.

As a **last resort**, you can try a glyphosate-based product like **ROUND UP** for the really tough guys – in my garden, that's mugwort and quack grass. Some will disagree, but used sparingly, foam application only (so no drift to your neighbors), the evidence is that it will biodegrade and not contaminate your soil.

A season-long tactic to combat quack grass, suggested by an article in *Horticulture* magazine, is to plant a **COVER CROP** of buckwheat, cut it down when it flowers and plant a second crop, then finally cut it down and plant a crop of rye. I'm trying it in a plot overrun by quack grass and will report on its success (or failure) in 2016.

### INSECTS

**INSECTICIDAL SOAP**. Insecticidal soap (made from long-chain fatty acids) works best on soft-bodied insects and arthropods such as aphids, adelgids, mealybugs, spider mites, thrips, jumping plant lice, scale insects, whiteflies, and sawfly larvae. It is effective against the blister beetle. Many pollinators and predatory insects such as ladybugs, bumblebees, and hoverflies are relatively unaffected.

**NEEM OIL**. Neem oil comes from the fruit and seed of the neem tree. It's used as a biopesticide for organic farming, as it repels a wide variety of pests including the mealy bug, beet armyworm, aphids, the cabbage worm, thrips, white-



flies, mites, fungus gnats, beetles, moth larvae, mushroom flies, leafminers, caterpillars, locust, nematodes and the Japanese beetle. Neem oil is not known to be harmful to mammals, birds, earthworms, butterflies, honeybees and ladybugs, although it should not be concentrated directly into their area of habitat or on their food source.

**MONTEREY GARDEN SPRAY.** This is a commercial product containing **spinosad**, an insecticide based on chemical compounds found in a particular bacterial species. It kills insects via hyperexcitation of the insect nervous system. It's effective against a wide range of insects (including the potato beetle), and I have found it particularly useful in controlling larvae. Spinosad has high efficacy, a broad insect pest spectrum, low mammalian toxicity, and a good environmental profile

### FUNGI

**SERENADE.** This is a broad-spectrum biofungicide. It contains a unique, patented strain of *Bacillus subtilis*. It provides protection against many of the most common fungal and bacterial garden diseases, such as early and late blight of tomato. It will not harm bees or other beneficial insects.

**COPPER FUNGICIDE.** This is a widely-used fungicide, more difficult to use than Serenade but, in my experience, more effective for early blight of tomatoes (not so effective against late blight). Like Serenade, it is a protectant and must be applied prior to infection. It will not "cure" infections – just prevent new ones. Don't apply on very hot days and don't over-apply. The dried spray

will degrade and needs to be re-applied in 7-10 days.

Folks at a local garden center are knowledgeable and can help you select the best product for your problem.

Here's a bonus – a recipe for the garlic scapes you may be getting from your garden now. And remember that you can harvest some of your garlic now: Green garlic is milder in flavor and excellent to use in cooking.

### GARLIC SCAPE PESTO

- 1 1/2 C garlic scapes, cut into short pieces
- 2-4 T pine nuts or walnuts
- a handful of herbs – your choice (parsley, basil, tarragon)
- 1 T vegetable oil – just enough to help the food processor chop up the ingredients
- salt to taste

Put these ingredients in a food processor and process until thoroughly chopped and blended. It doesn't hurt to have a little texture to the sauce, but you don't want big chunks of garlic scapes.

- 1/2 C extra-virgin olive oil
  - 1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese
- Add the olive oil and grated cheese. Process briefly, just to mix. The olive oil will become bitter if you extend the processing time.

- 1 lb. pasta (fettucini is good)
- Taste, then add salt, pepper, more olive oil, or more cheese if necessary. Mix with the pasta cooked *al dente*; reserve a little pasta water and stir into the mixture.

Eating this will make you...

— *The Happy Gardener* 🌱

## HELP US CONSERVE WATER (AND SAVE MONEY)

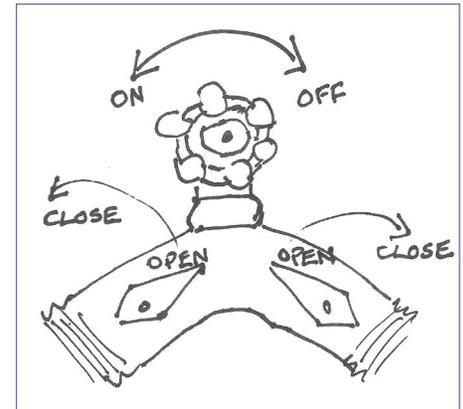


Illustration by Frankie Dack

Please turn off BOTH the handle and the little lever.

**EVERY faucet! EVERY time!**

## TOOL SHED ETIQUETTE

- Be considerate of the next user of the tools you are returning to the shed.
- Brush off grass from the chassis and wheels of lawn mowers before you take them into the shed.
- Clean dirt from tools before taking them into the shed. Use your gloved hands or, if necessary, hose them down.
- Clean wheelbarrows and carts after you use them.
- When you lock the shed, remember that the right-hand door has two sliding latches, top and bottom, that need to be closed before the lock is put in place. 🌱

## THE BIBLIO-VERMI-POST!!!

("Book Worm" Post for gardeners!)  
Welcome to The Biblio-Vermi-Post!  
What on Earth is that? It's a new "plot" for "Book Worms" in the

Northampton Community Garden Newsletter! Here you will be able to read about and contribute your own suggestions, for gardening-related books that have really come in handy! If there is a title that you find yourself consulting, time after time, or a new gem you've discovered, we'd love to share it with the gardening community! To kick things off, I'd like to share three titles with you. Since these books are covered with earthy fingerprints and smudges, have the cover corners turned up, several pages dog-eared and have become a "Don't leave home without them" addition to my gardening tote, I hope you'll find them helpful, amusing and maybe even reassuring as you enjoy and toil in your gardens!

In the beginning of the gardening season, and also throughout the summer, since learning about "successional sowing", I've repeatedly found myself reaching for *Carrots Love Tomatoes: Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening* by Louise Riotte. The very nature of working a plot at the Community Garden, means there are SEVERAL pests to try to keep in check. Louise Riotte gives her readers pertinent information about gardening practices that will teach you what veggies compliment each other by returning nutrients to the soil, which veggies DON'T like being planted near each other, what herbs are effective in repelling certain pest insects and what flowering plants will attract beneficial insects! This knowledge greatly increases your chances of saving some of your crops from hungry predators! For instance, did you know that:

"Parsley planted with asparagus gives added vigor to both"(p.5)

"Hyssop, thyme, wormwood and southernwood are helpful in repelling the white cabbage butterfly"(p.8)

"Lamb's-quarters, which sometimes harbor the leaf miner, also may play host to the beneficial ladybug."(p.156)

Louise Riotte was a lifetime gardener and shared her wisdom, often with witty narratives that are very easy to understand and have stood the test of time, with the initial copyright date of 1975!

Two other books I've turned to repeatedly are:

*Good Bug, Bad Bug* by Jessica Walliser

*What's Wrong With My Vegetable Garden?* by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth

I hope you have a chance to leaf through the pages of these sanity-savers! If you have any book titles you'd like to recommend to fellow gardeners, please send the title and author, with a brief review, to Betsey Wolfson at: [WOLFSON110@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WOLFSON110@GMAIL.COM). 🌿

— Steph Vasiliades

## WHAT IS PEPPER'S PLACE and WHY DONATE SURPLUS PRODUCE?

**Pepper's Place** is a relatively new small animal sanctuary in Florence, MA, caring for several rabbits, chickens, a turkey and other small birds, including parrots, one of whom is named "Pepper." The founders of Pepper's Place have converted much of their own living

space, indoors and out, into this animal sanctuary with their own money, through fundraising efforts and donations. One way we can help as members of the Northampton/Florence community is by donating any surplus veggies and greens to help feed and nourish these creatures back to health. Some of the vegetables and greens that Pepper's Place would GREATLY appreciate include: kale, swiss chard, lettuces, collard greens, beet greens, broccoli stalks, carrot tops/ greens and other leafy greens. Some veggies are toxic to some of the animals there, so very shortly, there will be a donation collection crate and a more detailed list of produce that is safe for consumption by the animals who reside at the sanctuary. These will be located behind the tool shed. Please feel free to visit the website([WWW.PEPPERSPLACE.NET](http://WWW.PEPPERSPLACE.NET)) of this wonderful young non-profit sanctuary, right in our own backyard, or visit their Facebook page! Thank you so much, in advance, for your much appreciated donations of surplus veggies and greens! 🌿

— Steph Vasiliades

## WESTERN MASS. MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

### NOTES FROM THE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

What's next? We've gone from cold and wet, to warm and dry, and back again – sometimes in the same week. We wished in early March that the wet stuff would stop, but then it did. And tem-

peratures were down into the low forties in the first week of June. Surely not weather that's fit for warm weather crops.

We've finished the reconstruction of our first raised bed. Two more to go. We plan to dismantle the strawberry bed, the smallest of the group, by next week, weather permitting. Then it will be on to number three.

The strawberries will go to a new home, near the blueberry bushes, and the rebuilt small bed will be home to our new herb garden. The exact variety of strawberry is lost to inadequate record keeping, but we've all been impressed with the vitality and productivity of these plants. We have more plants than space, so if you want some, just leave us a note in the mail box and we'll be in touch to arrange a transfer!

In the meantime, we've put short season crops in the old bed, and replanted the new raised bed. We've also finished planting in the Northampton Survival Center plots. We've harvested lettuce and radishes for the Survival Center, and we have cabbages, peas and potatoes well on their way. As the weather warms, we'll be donating tomatoes (6 varieties), peppers, and beans (4 kinds of pole beans, including our favorite prize winning red noodle beans), as well as summer squashes and cucumbers. For the end of the season, we're planning late broccoli and brussels sprouts. Of course, this time of year, the garden changes every day. And sometimes our plans do, too.

Our crew is around Monday mornings, and, starting July 1, on Thursday evenings as well. Please feel

free to come by and visit. If no one is around, you can leave a question or message in our mail box located at the rear of our plot. 🍀

— Carol Wasserloos

## GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Community Garden Neighbors met June 21, after the rainstorm, in the hot sun, with almost all of us there (hard to do in the summertime, what with vacations and all!). We got together to discuss our work and figure out our areas.

We all agreed that we should let everyone know what garden neighbors do: what our responsibilities are. An article in our newsletter seems the perfect way to do that.

Our main duty is to contact everyone in our assigned area (we each have a map and email addresses for all in our area) at least once in the summer to find out what you as a gardener might need: advice, answers to questions, help with problems, discussion of compost, and amendments to the soil, how to deal in as earth-friendly a way as possible with common garden woes like weeds, bugs and rodents. Beyond that, we're just there for you. We are your liaison to the Garden Committee. Some of us might attempt an event with our area, but that can be tricky with people's schedules.

Please note: We are not responsible for weeding or watering your plot or plots if you are away.

In return for our efforts, we get up to 5 hours' work credit.

You'll be hearing from your Garden Neighbor soon. 🍀

— Ellie Cook  
Garden Neighbors coordinator

## REMEMBER THE "COMMUNITY" IN COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Please share tools.
- Please clean tools before you return them to the shed.
- Please use wheelbarrows only when you're ready to take your weeds to the compost pile. — please, no hogging!
- If you use paper or cardboard for mulch, please weigh it down with rocks, and water it in. We don't want it to blow around the neighborhood.
- If the dumpster is full, please don't leave trash outside it. Take it back to your plot and throw it away next time, or take it home.
- Please don't use neighbors' driveways to turn around your car. Go to the playing field driveway or to the road on the other side of the tall evergreens. 🍀

The Garden Committee has instituted a new rule:

**NO DOGS IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN**

(see page 1)



**NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Northampton Recreation Department  
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Northampton, MA 01060

**WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/183723795531/>