

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



NEWS



MARCH 2016



GARDEN NEWS

NEW GARDENER REGISTRATION

will be held on Saturday, March 26, from 10:00 to noon, at the Northampton Recreation Dep't. (90 Locust St., behind Smith Vocational High School). If you know someone who would like to garden, pass on the word that plots are available.

NEW GARDENER ORIENTATION

For new gardeners who register for 2016, we'll offer an orientation meeting on Wednesday, April 20, at 7 P.M., in the Calvin Coolidge Museum at Forbes Library. Garden Committee members will introduce themselves, outline important things to know about the Garden and gardening, and answer your questions. If you attend, you'll receive 1/2-hour's worth of community service credit (25% of what you owe). Besides all that — there will be door prizes!

GETTING STARTED WORKSHOP

The first workshop of the season will be given by Julie Abramson, Master Gardener and friendly person. The date: Saturday, April 23; the time: 10:30–noon; the place: Casa Latina in the *Florence Community Center. Topics discussed will be: 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. Julie will also answer your questions. Registration is not required. If you have questions, e-mail Julie at

JABRAMSON@ALBANY.EDU.

*The Florence Community Center, 140 Pine St., Florence, is a big red-brick building. Park on the other side of the building from the main parking lot. Enter there, go up a half-flight of stairs, and look for Casa Latina on your right.

SPRING CLEANUP DAY

On Saturday, April 30, gardeners will help get the garden ready for the gardening season (cleaning out the tool shed, testing and setting out hoses, working on the compost piles, weeding invasive plants, and more). Hours are 10–noon and 2–4 P.M. There will be bales of mulch straw for sale from Pine Brook Farm. (Sorry — no Red Bag compost this time). Master Gardeners (from the Western Massachusetts Master Gardeners) will be on hand to test your soil pH and answer your gardening questions. This is a good way to meet other gardeners, help the Garden, and earn community service hours. (Rain date: Saturday, May 7.)

SPECIAL THANKS TO

- ▶ **Dan Ladd**, who looks after the Garden's trees, pruning and cutting as necessary.
- ▶ **Liz Tiley**, who continues to maintain our handsome home page, <NOHOGARDEN.ORG>.
- ▶ **Carol Wasserloos**, of the Master Gardeners, who contributes updates to the Newsletter on the latest developments in the demonstration gardens.



2016 GARDEN CALENDAR

NEW GARDENER REGISTRATION

Saturday, March 26, 10–noon
Northampton Recreation Dep't.

NEW GARDENER ORIENTATION

Wednesday, April 20, 7–8:30 P.M.
Forbes Library

GETTING STARTED WORKSHOP

Saturday, April 23, 10:30–noon
Casa Latina,
Florence Community Center

SPRING CLEANUP DAY

Saturday, April 30,
10–noon / 2–4 P.M.
At the Garden
(Rain date: Saturday, May 7)

IS-YOUR-PLOT-PLANTED? INSPECTION

Sunday, June 5

RAGWEED/WEED WALKTHROUGH

Sunday, June 19

FALL CLEANUP DAY

Saturday, October 8,
10–noon / 2–4 P.M.

FALL INSPECTION

Sunday, October 16

LAST-CHANCE INSPECTION

Sunday, October 30



GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Third Monday each month
@ 6:30 p.m. at the Rec. Dept.
(or in the Garden during nice
weather; call to confirm)



► **Justine Bertram**, whose much-admired garden has been in S/T 6, is leaving the Garden — forsaking Northampton for retirement in Mexico. Justine is a long-time member of the Garden Committee and has lent a hand with just about everything. We'll miss her good cheer and her hard work. 🍀

GARDEN TIPS

The Happy Gardener is too happy buying seeds and making garden plans to write new garden tips. So here are some past columns you might find helpful.

PEAS. You can plant peas as soon as the soil temperature reaches 40 degrees F, although they will germinate more rapidly at higher temperatures. You'll improve germination rate if you soak your peas overnight in a solution of one 375 mg aspirin in one quart of water. For much more about peas, consult Garden Tips in the March '07 Newsletter.

ROTOTILLING. To rototill or not to rototill — that's the question, indeed. It's very tempting to pay \$30 to someone who turns over the soil in a few minutes and leaves you with what looks like a weedless plot. Consider, however, that the tilling exposes all the weed seeds that lay buried and which will now sprout when exposed to warmth and light. For more on the subject, consult Garden Tips in the March '09 Newsletter for pros and cons.

WEEDS. Which brings up the question of weeds. For more about that, consult the March '11 Newsletter, *Weeds Are Always with Us*.

Now that spring is here (the Vernal

Equinox is on Sunday, March 20, this year), we are all...

— *Happy Gardeners*

WANTED

The **Newsletter seeks**

- Articles on garden-related topics
- Drawings, paintings, photos of the Garden
- Reviews of books of interest to gardeners

Submit your offering to WOLFSON110@GMAIL.COM, to get community service credit. 🍀

WATER in the GARDEN

A SHORT HISTORY AND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

At the inception of the Community Garden, in the mid '70's, there was no water source. Gardeners brought water from home in whatever handy receptacle they could find, and watered by hand. By the '80's, a single connection to City water was made, and a couple of hoses stretched east and west from the central spigot. Later in the '80's, a second connection to City water was made, underground pipes were installed, and 10 spigots were enabled. Shortly after the turn of the century, 4 more spigots were added to the existing 10.

CAN WE HAVE MORE SPIGOTS?

Unfortunately, no. Greater pressure than exists would be required to move water from the water mains through the pipes to additional spigots.

IS THE WATER SAFE TO DRINK?

Yes — it's City water, just like the water that comes from your

faucets at home. Best to bring a cup or bottle and take water directly from the spigot; some hoses add unhealthy substances to water that runs through them.

CAN WE HAVE BETTER HOSES?

The Garden Committee is replacing failed hoses with high-quality 100-ft hoses. There are four of them now, and this summer we hope to add several more where they are most needed.

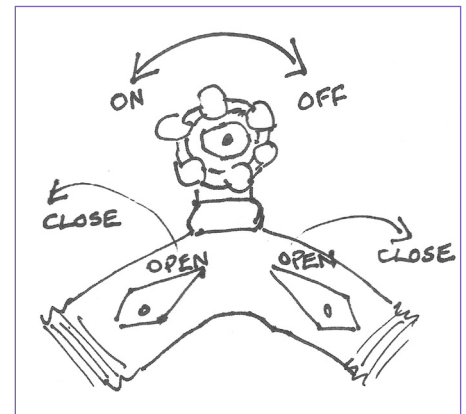


Illustration by Frankie Dack

WHAT CAN WE DO TO KEEP HOSES IN GOOD CONDITION?

Our water guru Tom Bassett reminds us "Kinks kill." Absolutely, you must recoil a hose after you use it, and you should be careful to unkink it as you go.

DO WE PAY FOR OUR WATER?

Yes, we pay at the going City rate, but we don't pay the sewer fee. Water is one of the Garden's big expenses, which is why we ask gardeners to use it only for garden purposes: Don't wash your dog or your car with Garden water! Conserve water by mulching and watering only when the soil is dry to a depth of an inch. A good guideline is that most plants need an inch of water a week: If it rains an inch, you probably don't need to water.



CAN I FILL A BUCKET OR OTHER CONTAINER WITH WATER AND LET IT STAND?

Bad idea! Various unpleasant growths will take over, making a nasty smell — and standing water is an invitation for mosquitoes to breed. If you have a bird-bath, it should be emptied, cleaned, and refilled frequently. 🍀

— *The Happy Gardener*

20TH ANNUAL SOS PLANT SALE

The Northampton Support Our Schools (SOS) **Plant and Garden Sale** will be held on Saturday, May 7, 9 A.M.–1 P.M. Organizers are looking for plant donations from local gardeners. If you're a community member who has perennials to divide, or plants you're removing from your garden, please pot them up, and take them to Smith Vocational School on Friday, May 6, 4–7 P.M.

Plants can also be delivered before May 6th to 12 Forbes Ave., from April 25–May 5. Should you need pots, helpers for digging, dividing and potting, or picking up potted plants, volunteers are available.

We need donations as well as people to attend the sale. We also need volunteers to collect and organize donated plants on Friday May 6th, and to work at the event on May 7th. Any way that you can contribute to SOS will be greatly appreciated.

Should you decide to attend the sale, there will be treasures from local gardens, as well as local artisans. There will be handcrafted garden furniture donated by local woodworkers, bags of compost, and raffles for a handmade quilt

with a botanical theme and garden furniture made by Smith Vocational woodworking students. Last year the event raised \$12,000 for the book fund. Come help support our public schools by donating plants, volunteering, or attending the event.

For information, contact:
Judy Leeds 413-537-4437

LEEDSJUDY@GMAIL.COM

or for PR: Robin Freedenfeld

RFSTUDIOS@AOL.COM

For plant donations – Please try to pot them up early, and water them so they look happy on the day of the sale.

What's for sale?

- Vegetable starter plants
- Shrubs
- Trees
- Hanging plants
- House plants
- Annuals
- Herbs
- Garden Furniture made by local woodworkers 🍀

— *Robin Freedenfeld*

FOR BIRD LOVERS

Cornell's Red-tailed Hawk, Big Red, laid her first 2016 egg on March 13. She and her mate Ezra, usually have three offspring each year.



Watch the eggs hatch and the chicks grow! Guess what enticing snacks the parents will deliver to the nest — small birds, chipmunks, squirrels, yum!

Check out the Bird Cams at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology:

[HTTP://CAMS.ALLABOUTBIRDS.ORG/CHANNEL/16/RED-TAILED _ HAWKS/](http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/16/red-tailed-hawks/)

There are also Owl and Albatross cameras! 🍀