

# NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

# NEWS

MAY 2016



## GARDEN NEWS

**SPRING CLEANUP DAY.** There was fine weather for gardeners to get the Garden ready for the 2016 season: Hoses were tested and put in place; the tool shed was cleaned and organized; mowers were tested and repaired; the rock dust pile was consolidated; material in both compost piles was moved to the proper bins; invasive plants were pulled or cut; many neglected plots were cleared for the next gardener. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked so hard and so effectively.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO

**THE HADLEY GARDEN CENTER**, for their generous donation of a gift certificate as a door prize at New Gardener Orientation.

**JOHANNA HALBEISEN**, for scheduling all tool shed tasks.

**BETSY YOUNT**, for managing the

herb garden by the tool shed, and for scheduling gardeners.

**ZELDA SCHLADWEILER**, for scheduling mowing volunteers.

**ELLIE COOK**, for keeping in touch with Garden Neighbors, providing advice and support, and serving as a liaison to the Garden Committee.

**TOM GAGNON**, for researching grapevine varieties, procuring appropriate vines, and planting them to grow up the pergola.

**TOM BASSETT**, for tending our water spigots, checking our hoses, and generally keeping the Garden hydrated.

**GARDEN CALENDAR.** The next date for gardeners to keep in mind is **JUNE 5** — the annual **IS-YOUR-PLOT-PLANTED? INSPECTION**.

If your plot is still a sea of weeds, you'll fail. The volunteer inspection crews will be looking for seeds



## 2016 GARDEN CALENDAR

**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

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**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)



Every plot must have a marker showing your plot number.

planted or plants in place, weeds under control, and grass at the edges of the plot trimmed. Perfection is not required, but solid evidence of gardening activity is. The inspections crews will also check to make sure there is a **permanent, visible, legible plot sign** that displays **plot letter and number**. For new gardeners: The temporary marking tape should be removed and a permanent plot sign put in place; look around for good ideas about how to satisfy the requirement and ornament your plot at the same time.

## EAST-END COMPOST PILE.

Gardeners will find the compost pile toward the east end of the Garden (just beyond the dumpster) has been completely renovated. More than special thanks are due **JIM FERGUSON** for the remake. Let's thank him by following the rules about compost piles: **1) Put new material in the designated space. 2) Do not put anything where it says not to. 3) Add only compostable material.**

Don't put in boards, branches, thorny cuttings (rose, raspberry, blackberry), paper, or plastic.

**THEFT IN THE GARDEN.** Gloria Santa Anna reports that fencing, fence posts, and plants have been stolen from her plots (S/T 5/6). It's really important to know who gardens in the plots around you, so you can check on anyone you don't recognize — especially if that person is digging up plants or harvesting veggies or flowers. If you suspect theft, it's good to get a license plate number and report it to the Northampton Police Dep't. 🍀



## FUNGUS ALERT!

**FUNGUS ALERT.** There's really bad news for all of us who have planted tulips. Mine looked fine when they opened, but soon developed grayish spots and withered leaves. An on-line search revealed that they were suffering a fungus infection, *Botrytis tulipae*, called "tulip fire" for the speed with which it can spread.

The only preventive measure is to dig up all bulbs showing signs of infestation; put them, with their foliage and flower if still attached, in sealed plastic bags, and place in the dumpster. (Burning is recom-

mended, if you can figure out how to manage it.) Tulips should not be planted in the affected areas for at least three years.

Authorities differ about whether other flowers may be targeted by the fungus. Some suggest that lilies can be infected as well (and mine are showing signs), so I think they should also be dug up and discarded.

Here's a link to the clearest description and prescription that I've found: [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-05-03/features/ct-home-0502-garden-qa-20140503\\_1\\_tulips-fungus-dry-weather](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-05-03/features/ct-home-0502-garden-qa-20140503_1_tulips-fungus-dry-weather) 🍀

## GARDEN TIPS

Wondering what's the big pile of grey stuff on the road behind the tool shed? It's **ROCK DUST**, and its purpose is to remineralize the soil in your plot(s).

Is rock dust better fertilizer than the regular NPK (for nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash) that many of us regularly apply, or better than compost, also widely used? Just as NPK fertilizers supply those nutrients to soils from which they have been depleted by the growing crops that require them to flourish, rock dust is intended to resupply other minerals, also necessary for crops and also depleted by their growth. A typical rock dust might contain iron, copper, chromium, zinc, cobalt, nickel, molybdenum, and boron, among other substances — a far greater variety than NPK fertilizer.

Sounds convincing, right? And there's a lot of anecdotal evidence that remineralization works to improve soil quality, crop produc-

tivity, and crop health. But is there science to back up the claims? Yes, there have been controlled studies showing that rock dust applications increase crop yields and provide protection from certain plant diseases. There is also evidence that nutritional value and flavor of fruits and vegetables is enhanced by remineralization.

In short, remineralizing the soil in your plots sounds like a good bet. And it's easy. One 5-gallon bucket is about the right amount for a single plot. Once you've carted it to your garden (it is heavy!), you may 1) till it into the soil, 2) scratch it into the soil, or 3) just sprinkle it on. You may need to break it up — it shouldn't be in big chunks. In a given year, only one application is necessary, and at least several years can go by before the application is repeated.

Apply rock dust, and you, too, should be, by the end of the season,

— *The Happy Gardener* 🍀

## SEEKING GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Being a Garden Neighbor is a great way to fulfill your Community Garden work requirement. We will meet within the next few weeks to discuss our work and get to know one another.

We need more Garden Neighbors! In a general sense, your work is to get to know the gardeners in your area of the Garden — contacting each one (in person or by leaving a note in their plot with your contact information) and letting them know that you will listen to their concerns, help with any



gardening expertise they need (you don't have to be an expert!), and be a liaison to the Garden Committee if there are concerns.

Can you be a Garden Neighbor in your area? You'll get credit for five hours' worth of community service for your work.

Stop by my plot and talk, or contact me via phone or e-mail.

Thanks, and good gardening!

*Garden Neighbors coordinator*  
—Ellie Cook, 015&16, N16; 584-1404  
eleanor.cook@comcast.net 

## COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMUNITY SERVICE LOG — YEAR SIX!

Hello, Fellow Gardeners,  
Thank you for helping the fifth year of our system run so well by being clear, concise, and nice! I appreciated the patience you all gave me last year — a year that was quite difficult for me personally.

This year, once again you will have two options for sending your community service to me. Once again, we encourage you to use the e-mail method; I will automatically add to your community service hours a one-time 15-minute credit!

Please remember: If you want to receive accurate credit, I need all the information listed below in "a" to "d." Missing information makes it difficult to give you full credit.

Here are the two options:

**1) E-MAIL:** You can send me an e-mail at [GLORIANOHOOG@GMAIL.COM](mailto:GLORIANOHOOG@GMAIL.COM), including the following:

**a.** The **name of the person the plot is registered** to (which may not be your name)

**b.** Your plots numbers, (please provide this important information)

**c.** The date and amount of time of community service

**d.** A **brief** description of the community service

**2) PAPER:** This is the less preferred option. I realize that a few of you do not have e-mail addresses, so I have created a paper form you may use. On this form you may write all the information needed to properly credit your community service (as in a–d above). **Please, please — write legibly!**

**PLEASE NOTE:** I am sorry, but we cannot accept teeny tiny pieces of paper. Little pieces of paper get lost or are too difficult to keep track of. Please use the form, so we can properly credit the correct people with the community service. I will keep the mailbox stocked up with the appropriate forms — but feel free to take one and copy it a few times for your use. Expect the first batch to be in the mailbox by the end of April.

Thank you in advance for embracing e-mail as a way of recording community service in the Garden. This system has cut down on confusion around community service hours served — and has saved a few trees in the process.

Your patience and cooperation has been much appreciated.

— Gloria A. Santa Anna,  
T5/6, S5/6;

[GLORIANOHOOG@GMAIL.COM](mailto:GLORIANOHOOG@GMAIL.COM) 

**WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!**

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

## HOW DO I TRIM MY PLOT EDGES?

In the "old days," it was the responsibility of each gardener to mow the paths around her or his plot. Now, our mowing team mows the common paths — as close to the plot edge as possible without intruding into your plot. Sometimes this means there's a narrow border of tall grass left around the edge. That is our responsibility to trim.

The Garden no longer provides gas-powered string trimmers, because they're too hard to keep in service. But — there are several alternatives. You could:

- 1 Buy your own string trimmer, or share one with garden neighbors, or borrow one from a friend
- 2 Use hand clippers (such as Felco); a manual weed whacker; adjustable grass shears; or other hand tools.

The hand tool methods are a little more time-consuming, but they use less fossil fuel, and they create no noxious fumes. 

## MONTHLY PLANT SWAP

**WHEN:** 6:00 P.M., on the 4th Wednesday of the month

May 25 | June 22 | July 27 |  
August 24 | September 28

**WHERE:** Forbes Library, back lawn (next to the perennial edibles garden, by the picnic table). This event will not take place in extreme weather.

**QUESTIONS?** Jessica Gifford:  
[JESSICA@GROWINGWELLNESS.LIFE](mailto:JESSICA@GROWINGWELLNESS.LIFE) 

## NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Northampton Recreation Department  
90 Locust Street  
Northampton, MA 01060

### NOTES FROM THE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN / MAY 2016

It has become an annual pleasure, seeing fellow veteran gardeners revitalize their plots and new gardeners implement their green dreams for the first time.

Three Master Gardeners were privileged to do both, while providing soil testing and general garden advice on Clean Up Day, April 30. We did a couple dozen soil tests (for pH only), and discussed summer bulbs, garden design, potatoes, herbs, fertilizers, mulches, weed control and assorted other topics. We always learn at least as much as we impart in these exchanges!

This year we're excited about our new and our continuing projects. We finished renovating our raised beds in October, almost too late for a cover crop of oats and vetch. Now, we've turned that cover over, and we've installed a drip irrigation system. (It was relatively inexpensive. If interested, contact us for purchase information). We hope that it will save water and time, and that it will alleviate a major

drawback of raised beds — a tendency to dry out quickly. Of course, given “gardener’s luck”, this spate of rainy weather will continue and it will be next year before we find out how it really works!

We've moved to two new plots — O13 and O14, nearer our raised beds, and we're continuing with N17. O14, N17. The raised beds will generate produce for the Northampton Survival Center. N17 will, we hope, feature a modified “Three Sisters” garden, with corn, beans and squash. Our plantings in the raised beds continue our experiments with vertical and small space gardening. Throughout, we'll try to emphasize the kinds of produce that the Survival Center has requested — “just regular kinds of middle American vegetables: lettuce, cilantro, tomatoes, beans, garlic, snap peas, cukes, squash. Kale, not so much...” We will be continuing and expanding the herb beds that our predecessor cultivated at O14 and hope to experiment with some lesser known plants, like ginger, turmeric and fenugreek.

Those are the plans for May. We'll see how it goes. Please feel free to

visit us. We're there Monday mornings and as the season warms, on Thursday evenings. If nobody is around, leave questions/comments on one of the file cards we've left in our mail box, and someone will get back to you.

Welcome Spring!

— Carol Wasserloos  
Western Massachusetts Master  
Gardener Association 🍀

### HANDY CHECKLIST

Thanks to **ANDY PAUKER** (L19/20) for providing the following list of **useful things to bring to your plot when you garden.**

**CLOTHING:** sun hat, gardening gloves, sturdy shoes

**PROTECTION:** bug stuff, sun stuff

**TOOLS:** knife, scissors, pruner, trowel, mini-rake

**PLANNING:** pad of paper, pencil, twine and tape measure (for laying out planting beds)

**WATER:** hose nozzle, hose guides

**MISCELLANEOUS:** paper towels, plastic bags, garbage bags 🍀