

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



NEWS



MAY 2018



"UNDER THE MULBERRY TREE" WORKSHOP SERIES NO-TILL GARDENING

presented by Mimi Teghtsoonian;
Saturday, May 12, 2:00 P.M.;
Rain date: May 13; Max 12
gardeners; Meet at the tool shed.

Mimi will start with a brief talk about what no-till gardening entails and what benefits it confers on your soil, you, and the climate.

Most of the workshop will be devoted to developing a Garden plot (or part of one) the no-till way. We'll provide the materials (fertilizer, rock dust, straw, newspaper, wood chips). One or more of the people who sign up may volunteer her/his/their plot for a hands-on demonstration.

Count on about two hours — or longer, if folks wish to start on other plots with help from participants.

If you want to read or see more about no-till methods, pick up *Weedless Gardening* by Lee Reich; or watch Australian permaculture gardener Morag Gamble here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9Wq32IRrPQ&t=549s>

This is just the first of several workshops planned for this season. Watch for future announcements! 🍀

"CLEAN PLANT" SALE JUNE 2, 2-6 P.M.

On **Saturday, June 2nd**, from

2:00-6:00 P.M. we'll have a **Clean Plant Sale** at the Garden. Our goal is to make it easy for our gardeners to find clean, non-pesticide treated herbs, vegetables, perennials, and annuals, and to help support small, local growers who grow them. 🍀

JUNE INSPECTION

Sunday, June 3, is the date for our annual **IS-YOUR-PLOT-PLANTED? INSPECTION**. Volunteer inspection crews will be checking that you've been working in your plot this season: i.e., seeds planted or starter plants in place; weeds under control; and grass at the edges of the plot trimmed.

Perfection is not required, but evidence of gardening activity is. No one wants weed seeds blowing onto another gardener's plot. If your plot is a sea of weeds, it'll fail.

The inspection crews will also check to make sure there is a **permanent, visible, legible plot sign** that displays your **plot letter and number**. Please make the letters at least 1 1/2" tall, and set the sign 18" off the ground. You may wish to write your first name somewhere on your sign, so neighbors can say Hello.

For new gardeners: The temporary marking tape should be removed and a permanent plot sign put in place; look around the Garden for clever ideas about how to satisfy the requirement and ornament your plot at the same time. 🍀



2018 GARDEN CALENDAR

"UNDER THE MULBERRY TREE" WORKSHOP SERIES NO-TILL GARDENING

with Mimi Teghtsoonian
Saturday, May 12, 2:00 P.M.;
(Rain date: May 13)

"CLEAN PLANT" SALE

Saturday, June 2
2:00 - 6:00 P.M.

IS-YOUR-PLOT-PLANTED? INSPECTION

Sunday, June 3

RAGWEED WALKTHROUGH

Sunday, July 15

FALL CLEANUP DAY

Saturday, October 6

FALL INSPECTION

Sunday, October 14

LAST-CHANCE INSPECTION

Sunday, October 28

GARDEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Third Monday each month
@ 6:00 p.m. at the Rec. Dept.
at JFK Middle School
(or in the Garden during nice weather;
call to confirm)

HOW TO EXTEND THE SPINACH SEASON — WITH KNOWLEDGE OF GENDER

If you like spinach, you'll want to

prolong its harvest. You can do so if you understand the plant's reproductive particulars. The spinach plant is dioecious, as I learned in the book *Seed to Seed: Seed Saving and Growing Techniques for Vegetable Gardeners* by Suzanne Ashworth. "Spinach is a unique annual vegetable, because its plants produce either all male flowers or all female flowers." This means that the male spinach plants have pollen-spreading structures, and the female ones don't. The male ones bolt and the female ones pretty much continue as they were. Wouldn't it make sense to pull the male plants once they identify themselves by bolting and leave the female plants for further eating and possibly seed forming?



Photo by Rebecca Martin

So the procedure is to pull half of the spinach — gradually, as the guys raised their heads — maybe leaving some for a while to pollinate the lush females. Meanwhile keep harvesting good leaves from both genders. The female flowers are located where leaf stems meet the main stem. That geometry allows the pollen to fall to its

destination, perhaps without much help from insects. Anyway, while plucking the bolters you will shake around plenty of pollen. That might even spread some nitrogen and other nutrients around your garden. The narrow straight roots of spinach plants allow the thinning out of mature plants without disturbing the neighbors.

SUMMER SPINACH HARVESTING.

Spinach leaves don't get bitter late in their season like lettuces do. The large lower leaves of the females are perfect much later in the season than you would expect. Besides those, you can take the top few inches, which form a canopy, for light steaming or salad. Plan for a long spinach harvest!

SAVING SPINACH SEEDS. Spinach seeds finish maturing by late summer – in time to drop and grow a fall crop. You can also save the seeds by pulling or cutting down the mature plants and leaving them in a brown bag. Many of the seeds will be in clusters which should be broken apart before planting. 🌿

— David Lovler

**FORBES LIBRARY
NORTHAMPTON
GARDEN TOUR
AND RELATED EVENTS**

★ WORKSHOP ON SEASONAL FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Saturday, May 12, 2018, 2–4 P.M.

Forbes Library Community Room,
20 West St., Northampton

Kate Stafford, Horticulturalist

Learn how to use plant materials gathered in the yard and garden to create beautiful arrangements

for your home. First, we will head outdoors for a demonstration of best practices for collecting plant materials; we will then return to the classroom to create unique display pieces. Bring pruners and a container or vase for your arrangement.



Photo by Rebecca Martin

Recommended for a Mother's Day gift extraordinaire

\$20 (limited to 15 participants). Pre-registration encouraged at <https://forbeslibrary.org/friends/events/garden-tour/> or <https://www.facebook.com/pg/FriendsofForbesLibrary/events>.

Same day walk-ins if space permits. Organized by Friends of Forbes Annual Garden Tour committee to mark our 25th Anniversary Garden Tour.

★ Volunteers are needed for the day of the **FORBES LIBRARY NORTHAMPTON GARDEN TOUR**, on **Saturday, June 9**, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Volunteers will work morning or afternoon shifts in one of the 7 tour gardens. Volunteers are either: 1) greeters at one of the

SORREL SOUP

Makes: 6 servings

For the SOUP

1/3 cup minced green onions or yellow onion

3 olive oil (The recipe calls for butter but I use oil because I serve this soup cold.)

3 – 4 cups packed sorrel leaves

½ tsp salt

Pepper to taste

6 cups boiling stock, chicken or vegetable

To FINISH

2 eggs

1 – 2 cups plain yogurt, not strained

Wash the sorrel and trim off the stems. Cut roughly and do not dry or drain. Heat the oil over low to moderate heat and add onions. Stir and cook very slowly in a covered pot. Do not let the onions brown. When they are tender and translucent, add the sorrel, salt, and pepper. Raise the heat to medium and cook until sorrel is dark green and wilted. Add the chicken broth and simmer for 5 minutes. Meanwhile beat the eggs with a wire whip in a medium sized bowl – I use the measuring cup that I mixed the chicken broth in – and when they are well mixed add the soup very slowly to the eggs mixing all the time so that the eggs don't curdle. I do this a cup at a time until I am sure the eggs are well blended and cooked a bit then you can put the egg/soup mixture back into the pot and whisk to blend thoroughly. Cover and let sit for few minutes to make sure the eggs are fully cooked. Then do the same thing with the yogurt, mixing it and adding the soup, cup by cup. When it is well blended, add the yogurt/soup mixture to the pot. Taste for seasoning, especially salt and pepper. The soup can be eaten hot, at room temperature, or cold.

I like my version better than Julia's because it is much lighter than the original recipe which calls for 2 egg yolks and a half a cup of heavy cream instead of one egg and yogurt. It also uses 1 – 2 T of softened butter to be added at the end. If you want to use the original recipe sauté the onions in 3 T butter rather than oil, and after you sauté the sorrel, sprinkle the mixture with 3T of flour and cook over moderate heat for about 3 minutes stirring all the time to cook the flour. Then proceed with the stock and add eggs and cream. The soup can also be made with watercress, which I have never done but which sounds great.

Adapted from *Mastering the Art of French Cooking, Vol. 1* by Simone Beck, Louisette Bertholle, Julia Child. 1963.

— Arlene Avakian

gardens who take tickets and provide handouts or 2) garden guides who walk around the garden, asking visitors if they have any questions and responding to questions they are asked.

To volunteer, contact Deena Sarvet at dsarvet@gmail.com or (413) 320 2804. All volunteers receive a free ticket to the tour.

★ 25TH ANNIVERSARY FORBES LIBRARY NORTHAMPTON GARDEN TOUR.

Saturday, June 9, 10:00–3:00.

SEE SEVEN LOVELY GARDENS!

Get ideas for your own gardens. Be introduced to unfamiliar plants. See familiar ones in their glory. Get a sense of the lively and unique ways that different gardeners find to create outstanding gardens. Tickets cost \$15.00, if purchased prior to the day of the tour, at Forbes Library, Baystate Perennials, Cooper's Corner, Hadley Garden Center, North Country Landscapes and Garden Center, and State Street Fruit Store. On June 9th, the day of the tour, tickets are \$20 and are available only at the library.

★ QUILT RAFFLE.

A special quilt with a flower theme has been donated in honor of the **25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORBES LIBRARY NORTHAMPTON GARDEN TOUR.** View the baskets of raffle items and buy raffle tickets for 2/\$5 or 5/\$10 or 12/\$20 at **Forbes Library** from mid-May to June 7 as well as at one of the gardens on the day of the tour. The raffle baskets include gift certificates, garden supplies, a landscape consultation, organic

compost and more. Drawing will take place at the end of the tour.

🌿 — Julie S. Abramson, MSW, Ph.D.
jabramson@albany.edu

IT'S SPRINGTIME! TIME TO FEED THE POLLINATORS

The happy bobbing yellow daffodils finally opening now after a long, cold spring are a sight for sore human eyes. Newly emerged pollinator eyes, such as those of the orange-belted bumblebee (*Bombus ternarius*), also welcome seeing early-spring flowers as they buzz around a variety of blooming purple groundcovers.

Here at the Northampton Community Garden we have a unique, wonderful opportunity this spring-time to support the pollinators we need to grow our food by planting our gardens with flowers, vegetables, and herbs that intentionally welcome them as they emerge from their eggs, chrysalises, and nests to begin their new life cycles.

Imagine what we can do with our 413 garden plots at NCG. At 20'x20' each, these 413 plots add up to 170,400 square feet on the Garden's 7.5 acres of pollinator-friendly habitat potential. And if the pollinators are happy, we gardeners are happy!

A BIT ABOUT BEES

Bees are some of the best-known pollinators. There are 4,000 species of bees native to North America with 250+ of them native here in New England. These native bees are different from domestic honey bees. The European Honey Bees (or simply, Honey Bees) (*Apis mellifera*) were brought to North America 400 years ago by the

early settlers. Native bees, contrarily, are just that — native — having lived here pollinating our food and flowers for millions of years. They are the original and best pollinators.

Honey bees are waking in their hives now with workers gathering protein-laden pollen for making bee bread to feed to their developing baby bees. Native bees are stirring now, too. In particular, the native bumblebees' (*Bombus*) fertilized queens who overwintered here are awake and will forage for several weeks searching for nectar to feed themselves before finding a new nesting spot and laying eggs. They will then search for pollen sources as food for their new broods.

BUTTERFLIES, TOO

So many different species of butterflies, including rare ones, come to Northampton Community Garden that butterfly clubs come to visit us. Swallowtails and Fritillary, for example, sleep through the winter in the pupal/chrysalis stage, ready to emerge as adults in spring. Skippers — quick little butterflies — spend the winter as caterpillars. Monarchs are starting their northward migration but are not here yet. All are starting to look for food and shelter.

FEEDING BEES

All bees need both pollen, which is protein, and nectar, which is sugar/carbohydrates, to feed their young and themselves. Among bees, there are both generalist feeders, who love to forage on all types of flowers, and specialist feeders, who forage only on particular flowers or sometimes even just one flower. Native Mason bees (*Hoplitis*),

honeybees and bumblebees are all generalists. Some plants generalist bees particularly like are Blue Giant Hyssop, Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Milkweed, Eastern Purple Coneflower, Buckwheat, Smooth Oxeye, Sunflowers, Sulphur Cinquefoil, Black-Eyed Susan, Canadian Goldenrod, Gloxinia, Red Clover and Mint. The specialist squash bee, though, forages only on squash, pumpkins, and zucchini.

FEEDING BUTTERFLIES

Unlike bees, butterflies require host plants as a place to lay their eggs and as a source of nutritious leaves for their caterpillars as well as nectar and pollen plants for adult food. Different butterfly species are specialized for different host plants.

Fritillary butterflies are one such example. Emerging now, specialist Fritillary caterpillars enjoy one plant: Violets. Eastern Black Swallowtails (*Papilio polyxenes*), another specialist soon to emerge, relishes Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*), Garden Rue (*Ruta graveolens*) and related Carrot family (*Apiaceae*) members Fennel, Parsley, Celery, and Dill. Buckeye (*Junonia coenia*) use Narrowleaf Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) as a host plant.

FEEDING POLLINATORS IN GENERAL

There are many pollinators besides bees and butterflies, including moths, hummingbirds, flies, ants, and more. Each pollinator has its own lifecycle timing, so plant a web of nectar, pollen, and host plants to ensure they always have food appropriate for any lifecycle phase. Overall pollinator-friendly perennials include Milkweed

(*Asclepias syriaca*, *Asclepias tuberosa*, and *Asclepias incarnata*), Joe Pye Weed, Fall-blooming Asters, New York Ironweed, and Goldenrod. Also, a couple kinds of Hyssop, Broadleaf Mountain Mint, Narrow Leaf Mountain Mint, native Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), and native grasses (Little Blue Stem) and Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*).

Good general pollinator annuals include Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), Ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*), Borage (*Borago officinalis*), Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*), Spider Plant (*Cleome*), Sunflower (*Helianthus*, but avoid pollen-less varieties), Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia*), Pineapple Sage (*Salvia elegans*) and some types of Zinnia and Verbena, such as *Verbena bonariensis*.

Herbs highly attractive to pollinators if they are allowed to bloom include Basil, Catmint, Chives, Lavender, Oregano, and Rosemary.

BABY STEPS

Start with just one pollinator-friendly plant. Perhaps Dill. Or Mountain Mint. Or airy, purple *Verbena bonariensis*. Find a home for it in your garden. Creating a pollinator habitat starts by taking one simple, baby step in that direction. Add more as you can. Soon, you will be attracting beautiful butterflies and good busy bees to your garden and benefiting from their services. With 413 garden plots, each with at least one pollinator-friendly plant, that makes at least 413 sources of pollinator food and shelter. Imagine the pollinator love we will get! And the good people food, too. 

— by Priscilla Touhey

SIXTY! NEW GARDENERS

Hello, new garden friends. Welcome to our paradise! As a gardener who has been here for ten or twelve years, I'd like to share some thoughts and tips.

I first learned there are many ways to do something. Each one works (more or less.) We here are eager to share what we may know, so please ask questions.

In the beginning of joining the Northampton Community Garden, I asked one of our Master Gardeners if I should purchase a worm farm to improve my soil. With gentle humor she responded "If your soil is lousy, the worms will quickly desert and head for better chomping ground."

If you have carefully cultivated a plant which looks somewhat like an exotic feathery oriental Xmas tree, you are harboring the dreaded and abhorred Ragweed. Many here are highly allergic to it and this weed is king of kings. One thing you can brag about is how many you've killed as you go about your day

I like to say gardening is not work, but that's a bold faced lie. The word arduous may sound pleasing and manageable, yet the dictionary definition is; requiring strenuous effort, difficult and tiring, onerous, hard, heavy, burdensome and BACK-BREAKING!

My little trick to keep overwhelm and discouragement at bay, is to pick a small area to work while never glancing around to see how much needs doing. I complete one task at a time, because to move around willy nilly uprooting this and that gives no feeling of

accomplishment. And I do love the adrenaline rush when I can see substantial improvement.

Speaking of work, turning over your soil manually is the way to go. I've been told gas run rototillers spread weed and grass seeds which will be a lot more arduous when your plot is rife with weeds. Get a friend or two to help you with the task. Then wine and dine them. [Ed. note: Or go the No-Till route! See page one.]

I dearly miss friends who have come and gone. Bill, who had four plots just across from mine. A retired, gallant lawyer who had been here for many years. He was in his late eighties. He was a Vegan. He watered with a watering can! Kind and warm he always had time for a chat. He grew enough food to feed himself and his beloved wife for ten out of twelve months a year.

I miss Stan, Angelina's son. So funny, helpful, and informative. He died far too soon, and I'll always keep him in my heart along with Bill and several others whom I've met over the years.

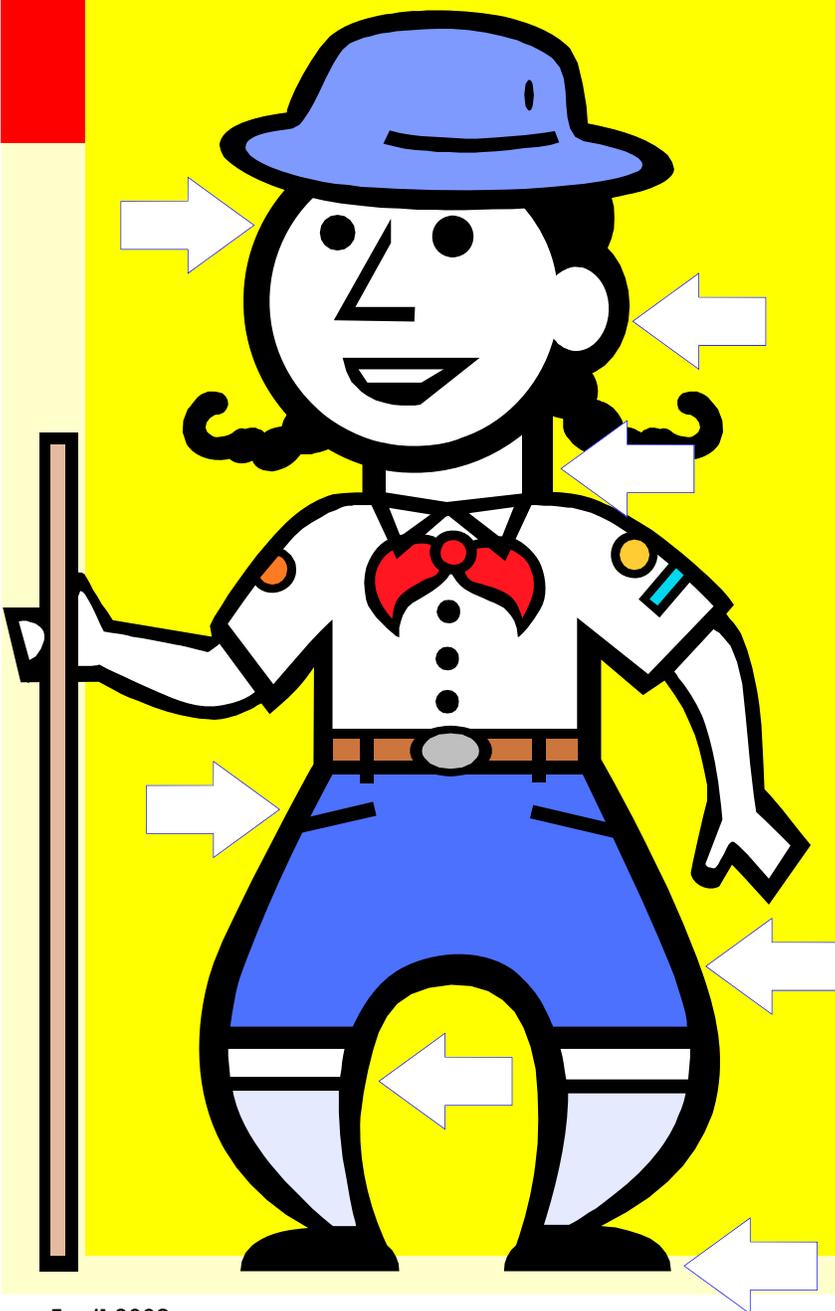
Seeing my gardening friends when spring rolls around is an exciting pleasure. We haven't seen each other since October. Big smiles and hugs. We are here to do what we love, what we are passionate about. I am privileged have land to work, a free tool shed with all the accoutrements, and friends known and soon to be known. Once again...

WELCOME! 

— Becca Merrill

Is there a tick on you?

Do a tick check!



Here's where to look:

- ⊙ **Inside and behind the ears**
- ⊙ **Along your hairline**
- ⊙ **Back of your neck**
- ⊙ **Armpits**
- ⊙ **Groin (where your legs join your body)**
- ⊙ **Legs**
- ⊙ **Behind the knees**
- ⊙ **Between your toes**

Ticks are tiny, so look for new "freckles."



Actual sizes of nymph (left), adult female dog tick (center) and adult female deer tick (right)

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

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NOHOGARDEN.ORG