

GARDENING MATTERS

A quarterly newsletter published by GardenWorks

Winter/Spring 2006

COMMUNITY²: OUR COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

Across the metro area, community gardens represent great diversity; from who is involved, to what they do, how they do it, and their reasons for being, the 200 garden groups we've spoken to have many different stories to tell.

What all these gardens share is that they are a community of people who have come together to grow. Even though we may face different challenges, we can learn from each other.

The following are several stories from gardeners describing their gardens and the benefits of coming together through GardenWorks.

-Kirsten Saylor, GardenWorks Program Manager



The welcoming entrance to Totem Town Community Garden

The Growth of Totem Town

John McDermott, Garden Coordinator, St. Paul

Community gardens have their ups and downs. Totem Town Community Garden (TTCG) in the southeast corner of Saint Paul has certainly experienced them. During the early and mid nineties, the county extension service managed the garden. By 1997 participation had dropped, garden vandalism increased, and destruction by deer had taken its toll. Early in 1998, the county announced that the garden would close.

Several gardeners organized and with the help of the Urban Lands Program and the Ramsey County Corrections Department, which owns the land, the TTCG was saved for the 1998 season. Seven gardeners participated that year on the two-acre garden site. The gardeners inherited a broken irrigation system and a site full of head high weeds.

Since then, the TTCG has prospered. Now more than 50 individuals and families grow food on plots up to 30 feet by 30 feet. Water is distributed through an underground irrigation system. Arbors, pergolas, and compost bins have been constructed. Salvaged plant gardens grow in the common areas.

Like many Twin Cities' community gardens, TTCG faced an insurance and lease predicament in 2003. The Green Institute's Greenspace Partners program

was instrumental in keeping the garden operating and growing.

TTCG draws gardeners from many parts of Saint Paul and nearby Ramsey County suburbs. Garden styles reflect the diversity of our gardeners. Asian, African and Hispanic gardens share space with raised beds and classic Minnesota farm gardens. Gardeners share our green wealth by planting a plot for the east side's Merrick Community Services.

TTCG provides a place for people to grow their own food, re-establish long standing ties with the land, and, in some cases, learn how to work the land. It is a place where urban and rural meet, skills and knowledge pass between generations, and people grow with pride.

TTCG looks forward to working with GardenWorks. For new and established gardens alike, we believe that GardenWorks offers the opportunity to become a frontline resource for growing more productive community gardens and communities. We invite you to stop by for a visit.

(Community² continued page 3)

Inside....

Events Calendar, p. 5
Tips for your Community Garden, p. 7
GardenWorks Staff News, p. 2

GardenWorks

Our mission is to promote and preserve community gardening in the Twin Cities.

Collaborators

The Green Institute
Farm in the City
The MN State Horticulture Society

Steering Committee

Gail Dorfman,
Hennepin County Commissioner
Mark Granlund,
St. Paul Parks and Recreation
Stephanie Hankerson,
SE Como Improvement Assn.
Jon Hunter,
Dunning Community Garden
Kwangja Kwan,
Korean Peace Garden
Patsy Noble,
Farm in the City
Don Oberdorfer,
Dodge Nature Center
Russell Raczowski,
Soo Line Community Garden
Chuck Repke,
District 2 Community Council
Jeff Schmitt,
Waite Park Community Garden
Claudia Slovacek,
12th and 13th Avenue Block Club
Lorrie Stromme,
Minneapolis City Council

Staff

Kirsten Saylor, Program Manager
Coordinators:
Marjorie R. Hegstrom, East Metro
Ila Duntemann, West Metro

Contact Us:

Phone: 612-278-7123
Fax: 612-278-7101
gardensworks@greeninstitute.org

We would like to recognize our
2005/2006 Funders:

Beim Foundation
McNeely Foundation
McKnight Foundation
Nash Foundation
Wedge Co-op, Green Patches
Program

Thank you for your support and
commitment to Community
Gardening!!!

GardenWorks Staff News

Kirsten Saylor, Program Manager

It amazes me even now how far we have come in such little time. As my son's first birthday approaches, I'm reminded of where we were a year ago. The second draft of the sustainability plan was underway, planning for the spring resource fair had begun, and the COMGAR listserv was getting set-up thanks to Steph Hankerson. It was an exciting time. Things felt like they were beginning, but it would be months yet before we learned that the McKnight Foundation would give us enough funds to start implementing the plan. So we were already making plans for how the three cooperating organizations (The Green Institute, Farm In The City and MN State Horticultural Society) could encourage a network of community gardens - the heart of the sustainability plan.

Who said, "be careful what you wish for"? Today, that saying just makes me grin. In September we began working on the first recommendation of the sustainability plan: a program that would have member gardens at its foundation, and would seek, with a unified voice and presence, to educate the general public, advocate for supportive policies, and collaborate with other organizations that share the same values as community gardens. By November, both coordinators were hired and then it was crazy time. Training, educating, meeting, calling, writing and writing, emailing, phoning, writing some more, and always talking, talking, talking.

It has been a whirlwind as we create the pieces of this program that will allow us to talk about it and garner input even as it is taking shape. I cannot say it strongly enough: It is you, the community gardener, who makes this program what it is. The program only provides staff support. Success will come from gardeners working together to achieve the needed outreach. Even with only 50% of known gardens submitting a survey (as of February 1), we have identified over 1,500 community gardeners. Just think what we could accomplish if everyone was doing just a little something to further the cause of community gardening via GardenWorks.

Ila Duntemann, West Metro Coordinator

The West Metro, while having many viable gardens, is experiencing some loss due to development. Fortunately, there are supportive ties to some neighborhood organizations to assist with relocation. Other creative opportunities have arisen. A collaboration is forming between two gardens, an alternative school, and a history museum. One garden is losing a portion of its land to development, while the other needs more help working the land. These are a few examples of the perseverance in our gardening community.

At the informational meeting in January, people attending represented gardens, garden clubs and neighborhood associations. Issues discussed ranged from permanency and insurance to leadership evolution, educational outreach and food security. To keep community gardeners and gardens connected, the group decided to hold quarterly

West Metro Meetings where we will come together to mentor, plan events, advocate and put a face to our fellow gardeners.

Toward the end of the meeting, gardener Dan Reddan likened community gardens to a church; it's the gardeners and not the space. I'm honored to be working with so many dedicated community garden advocates. And I'm looking forward to meeting each and every one of you.

Marjorie Ross Hegstrom, East Metro Coordinator

The East Metro is fortunate to have many well-established gardens and several new gardens on the way! I've seen a great diversity of community gardens in Ramsey County including vegetable gardens, youth gardens, traffic triangle and city planter gardens and gardens for new immigrants. The St. Paul Parks and Rec. department is

(Marjorie, continued page 3)

Marjorie (continued from page 2)

very supportive of community gardening and hosts many gardens on Parks lands. GardenWorks is in a unique position to continue to strengthen this crucial relationship and to help facilitate the development of additional gardens on Parks property.

While many community gardeners in St. Paul feel a relative sense of stability I believe, that overall, community gardeners in St. Paul face the same challenges as gardeners in Minneapolis, and nationwide. These include land tenure, insurance, vandalism and theft, public perception and coordinator work load issues. I hope that GardenWorks can address these issues, and work with gardeners to uncover other issues before they become concerns. We would also like to host a series of educational programs for community gardeners-if you have any specific areas of interest or concern, please let me know!



Gardeners at work in the Korean Peace Garden

Community² (continued from page 1)

Loss of Jimmy Lee, Promise in Dunning Garden Cristy Kruse, Community Gardener, St. Paul

We discovered the existence of St. Paul community gardening four years ago at the Living Green Expo. My husband and I promptly acquired a garden plot through Sage (Selby Avenue Garden Enthusiasts) on a small lot in St Paul. The following summer that lot became the site of a relocated house, so our gardening endeavors relocated as well. We have gardened at the Jimmy Lee site since the summer of 2003. Farm in the City worked with Sentence to Serve to bring in compost and woodchips, and the former parking lot was transformed into prolific organic gardens. Our fellow gardeners included dozens of children, families, individuals, groups, and the deaf Hmong gardeners who sold their produce at a summer farmers' market on Selby Avenue. Sadly, we are losing this gardening site as well, with new construction of the Jimmy Lee Rec center and Oxford Pool. The garden will soon become expanded sports fields, but Farm in the City has secured a new garden site just to the west, on the grounds of Concordia University.

Gardenworks will be a wonderful addition to local community gardening, if only to be the united voice of all Twin Cities community gardens. During the Jimmy Lee planning process, I voiced my concern about the loss of a community garden, but was met with little interest and blank stares. No one seemed to value this manner of bringing the community together, and one individual showing up at a few meetings didn't make a great enough impression to change their plans. Gardenworks will be able to advocate on behalf of many community gardens, and will certainly hold more sway when speaking of their importance and value. That Gardenworks was created speaks to the fact that the Twin Cities community gardening movement has reached critical mass, and if we're lucky, we won't continue to lose gardens and have to relocate; our biggest problem will be what to do with all that surplus zucchini!

Nurturing Community Connections

Chuck Repke, Director, District Council 2, St. Paul

District 2 (Greater East Side) has a very large, successful community garden comprised mostly of Hmong immigrants. With 52 spaces already filled, and a growing waiting list, the District Council saw the need for more space. This summer they will be starting a new garden located in Prosperity Park. These gardens provide new immigrants with a place to connect with one another and the community, and an opportunity to grow food for their families. Many immigrants come from agrarian backgrounds and food production is often an important part of their cultural heritage. Through the garden program, the District Council has been able to connect with these residents who might otherwise be difficult to reach. With a new garden on Parks and Rec land, The District Council would like to see GardenWorks facilitate the relationship between Parks and Rec and community gardens and to help advocate for community gardens in the Twin Cities.

Stevens Square Grows Community

Robert Skafte, Garden Coordinator, Minneapolis

The Stevens Square Community Organization supports two Community gardens and an overlook greenway that runs along 17th street from 2nd Ave. to the La Salle Gardens at La Salle Avenue. The La Salle Garden began in 1997, has a north and south garden with 45 individual garden plots and several native beds and an herb wheel. There is a unique water aqueduct that carries water from the hydrant to the water barrels and a half light structure. Emily Peake is a more intimate garden with 13 plots, tucked next to the Third Avenue Market. With the help of Plymouth Church we sponsor The Groveland Food for Youth, which is a program through Street Works for the youth food shelf. We also work with The Restorative Justice Program and have opportunities for volunteers along the Overlook. This season we will begin "Adopt an Overlook" where neighbors can adopt and nourish a section of the overlook.

(Community² continued page 4)

Community² (continued from page 3)

Wednesday evenings in June and July SSCO sponsors "Movies and Music" in Stevens Square Park. This summer they will be promoting community gardens along with GardenWorks.

There is not an immediate threat of development but there is plenty of talk of it and we are not secure. Our hope is to build more appreciation of these green spaces and to work with developers and city planners on retaining these vital green walkways and community spaces for a pedestrian friendly future.

North End/S. Como Community Starting to Bloom Patty Lammers, Safety Coordinator, District 6, St. Paul

The North End/S. Como community represented by St. Paul's District 6 Community Council has not been known for beautiful gardens or parks until recently. The community is emerging as a potential showplace in St. Paul. The city recognized 5 community efforts with its first Golden Bloom awards. The Tri-area block club was recognized with a bronze bloom for its volunteer efforts in maintaining the gateway planters at Rice Street and Sycamore. Tom Blanch (a local architect) and Linder's Greenhouse won the bronze and gold awards for business gardens. McDonough Public Housing won a bronze bloom for its vegetable garden. Finally, Suzanne Nygart won a golden bloom for the best residential garden. Who knew we had so many beautiful gardens?! This is a great start for our community. We are inspired to take on our next project. We hope to redesign a forgotten community park that has been taken over by crime. The park presents a challenge because many of the local residents around the park are disabled and in wheelchairs. The new garden must be designed with raised beds and other features so that the local residents can access and help maintain it. We are looking for ideas and volunteer labor for the park design, and plan to use GardenWorks to help us connect to these important resources. If you would like to help with design or construction please contact Patty at District 6 Planning Council - 651-488-4485.



Recovering from the loss of Urban Lands:

From Kirsten Saylor

Ila Duntemann and I recently met with Sustainable Resource Center's (SRC) deputy director Chris Hale to discuss the status of SRC's former Urban Lands Program, as well as SRC's land-owning subsidiary, City Garden Trust, Inc. As you may know, the SRC ended their Urban Lands Program in 2002 due to a lack of funds.

For decades, Urban Lands provided services including liability insurance and technical assistance to community gardens for a nominal fee. Nonprofits have been hit hard the last several years by a shrinking pool of funds available from traditional funding sources. SRC reorganized itself to focus on home energy assessment and lead abatement, its two most successful programs.

The loss of the Urban Lands Program shook many gardeners. Suddenly no entity was available to assist gardeners in finding garden materials, obtaining insurance, or connecting people interested in joining a garden. In 2003, the Twin Cities Greening Coalition began development of a community garden sustainability plan. We found that Urban Lands was an invaluable resource for gardeners in that it connected gardeners to resources and answered questions for gardeners and the general public.

While 2002 marked the end of the Urban Lands program, that year also marked the purchase of six community gardens by a land trust set up by SRC. SRC continues to protect these community garden sites, even as developers have shown great interest in taking them.

We are delighted that SRC supports the work of GardenWorks to connect community gardens across the Twin Cities. In addition, SRC donated many garden tools and three garden tillers to GardenWorks to be used in community gardens. We honor the decades of support SRC has given to community gardens in the Twin Cities, and proudly work to continue their efforts.

VOLUNTEERS SUSTAIN OUR WORK!

Volunteers shape GardenWorks in so many ways. They can contribute with short-term projects or with long-term planning and strategy. When gardeners volunteer they come to know the program and staff more intimately. When you volunteer for GardenWorks, you help not just your garden community but ALL garden communities. (Is there a better feeling than that?) Our Steering Committee and sub-committees are shaping our long-term strategy for promoting and preserving community gardens. In the short-term, John McDermott (Totem Town CG) and Charlie Bowler (Dowling CG) are helping us get our website and garden map online. GardenWorks has a wishlist on our website - if you're interested in volunteering or know someone who is interested, please check it out. There is something for everyone and the wishlist is updated regularly. 612.278.7123, gardenworks@greeninstitute.org for more info.

“Growing Communities: Community Building and Organizational Development through Community Gardening.”

March 4th & 5th at Dodge Nature Center, \$35

Join the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) and GardenWorks for an in-depth, hands-on workshop based on the ACGA's curriculum for leadership development. Learn proven strategies that community organizers use to develop dynamic leaders and create strong communities through a participatory approach to community building. You will learn the principles and practices of community building, and how to pass these techniques on to others in your community by conducting your own workshops. This two-day workshop will cover these topics: Community Organizing, Leadership Development, Grassroots Fundraising Basics, Communications Planning and Coalition Building. You will receive the “Growing Communities Curriculum,” a 352 page resource workbook, which includes curriculum materials that teach you to conduct training workshops. The Curriculum also addresses Diversity, Asset-Based Community Development, Meeting Facilitation and Group Decision-Making, Developing a Board of Directors, and Grassroots Fundraising - Specific Strategies. **Call Betsy, 1.877.275.2242 to register or download a registration form at www.communitygarden.org/minneapolisflyer.pdf.** Space still available - Call Now!

**Community Garden
Spring Resource Fair**

Saturday, March 18th
10:00am - 2:00pm

Center for Northern Gardeners
1755 N. Prior Avenue, Falcon Heights

Resource Market

Resources for your garden

Garden Workshops:

- ✓ Composting in a Community Space
- ✓ Integrated Pest Management
- ✓ Raised Beds
- ✓ New Vegetable and Flower Varieties

Discussion Forums:

- ✓ GardenWorks: Sow what?
- ✓ Land Tenure and Liability Insurance: What are the options?
- ✓ Herding Cats: Spring is over, where is everyone?
- ✓ Planting the Seed: How do we sustain a supportive community?



Gardeners enjoy live music and good company at the Stevens Square garden picnic.

**Calling All Community Gardens --
Open Your Gates!**

**First Annual “Parade of Gardens”!!
August 19th, 2006**

It's time to think ahead to the lush, green bountiful times of late summer gardens. GardenWorks is coordinating a Parade of Gardens in August 2006 to highlight the beautification, education, community building and food production going on all over the Twin Cities. We are asking gardens to open their gates and welcome community members in.

This is a great chance for community gardens to gain positive public exposure and recruit members. And, our numbers will be evident when we all collaborate to do these events on the same day! We need your help to coordinate this event. Please let your coordinator (Ila or Marjorie) know of any garden events you host and any ideas you have for highlighting your garden.



A family of gardeners hunts for the harvest in their plot at the Soo Line Community Garden

A Plot of One's Own

Andi McDaniel, Community Gardener, Minneapolis

Last year was my first season with Soo Line community garden, and months later it still makes me grin. Oh, how those green beans wowed me-doubling in size after a good rain. And my beloved eggplant! How can a small plant carry such a huge load?

The beauty of growing food from scratch astounded me. And it's not that I hadn't ever seen green bean plants before-or pruned tomatoes or eaten freshly harvested lettuce. Actually, I'd apprenticed on an organic farm before moving to Minneapolis-and there too I'd bonded with vegetables. But it didn't prepare me for the pure glee of doing it solo (my own little patch of earth, imagine that!), or the great satisfaction of working side by side with other gardeners, each creating their own collages of food and flowers.

Community gardening is not just about growing stuff, I discovered, nor is it just about easing the city landscape with "green space" or having a quiet place to take a walk. It's all of those things, for sure. But what makes it so profound, I think, is that it's so simple and pure; it's about what really matters, no more, no less. It's about connecting with nature. It's about engaging with your neighbors. It's about health, and creativity, and kindness towards other living things. Community gardens support strong neighborhoods, clean air, diverse wildlife, and healthy bodies. In other words, what's not to like? That is, besides cabbage loopers.



Enjoying hard work, and a snack at the Soo Line Community Garden.

Why I Community Garden.....

The next issue of Gardening Matters (July) will be devoted to the reasons that we garden in community. We would love to hear from you (all 1,500 - 3,000 of you!!) about what community gardening means to you! Please submit a simple story or statement to gardenworks@greeninstitute.org with "newsletter" in the subject line, or mail it to us. Stories can range from 150-200 words, and may be edited for print. Be sure to include your name, garden's name for the story and your address, phone, email. Feel free to include photos too!

Problem Solved! Thanks to COMGAR!

Monica Cuneo, Eco Education

I will never doubt the strength and vitality of the Gardening Community in the Twin Cities. With the help of the Green Institute, I posted a request for gardener's help and insight as to where raised bed - box gardens are needed in the community by way of youth development and construction. The response was amazing! Not only did I receive a heap of responses that day, I continue to receive emails from the many networks that you all sent it along. After the overwhelmingly positive support I received from the COMGAR listserv participants, I realize how powerful a tool this listserv is to connect the community gardening community and our efforts. Thank you for your help, your gardening and willingness to communicate through this wonderfully practical resource.

Have you joined COMGAR yet??

COMGAR is an email listserv especially for community gardeners. Share ideas, ask questions, announce garden events or clean-up days and more. COMGAR is free to subscribers, and does not have ads or junk mail.

Email ksaylor@greeninstitute.org to join.

Communication is Key

GardenWorks' focus is on the community side of community gardening. There are many gardening experts within our community and we're a savvy group - finding materials and supplies for little or no cost in our metro area. These skills are tremendous assets within the community garden community, but they are underutilized if gardens are not well-connected to each other.

GardenWorks' primary goal is helping gardeners connect with other gardeners across the metro area. The reasons are simple:

- ✓ Community Gardeners make the best experts on community gardening.
- ✓ Community Gardeners typically face the same challenges.

In most cases, any problem faced by a community garden has already been solved by one or more other garden groups. Sharing our experiences, our successes and failures, helps all of us work toward strong, dynamic and sustainable community gardens.



Thanks to SRC, we have
3 ROTOTILLERS
to give away. If you are
interested in having one, please
let us know by April 1st!



Sowing the Seeds: Community Garden Advocacy Tips

***Develop a Plan (or don't wait for crisis).** If your garden is not protected from development, understand exactly who owns the land. Know exactly what you are asking for and who you are asking. Is there a public process or is it "who knows whom"? Meanwhile, keep the garden looking great!

***Develop allies.** *Community gardens*, low income housing organizations, churches, schools, community development organizations all serve the same constituences. Introduce potential allies, *including government officials and business leaders* to the garden. Determine areas of commonality and find ways to have gardeners help your allies. Be sure to ask your allies to take specific actions to help your cause.

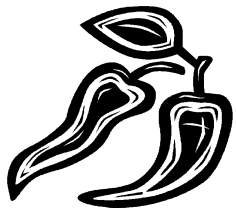
***Join the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) for only \$25!!**

Membership benefits include: subscription to the montly newsletter, The Community Gardener, free participation in teleconference workshops with national experts on imporant community garden topics, a free year's subscription to Organic Gardening magazine and a copy of the 25th Anniversary ACGA Greening Review!!

To join: www.communitygardening.org or call 877-275-2242

Source: "Ten Tips on Local Advocacy", The Community Gardener, December 2005

Gardening Resources:



GardenWorks

www.gardenworksmn.org

University of MN Extension Service

www.extension.umn.edu

Twin Cities Community Gardening Resource Guide

<http://www.greeninstitute.org/greenspace/>

Master Gardeners:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden>

MN Green

www.northerngardener.org/mngreen

Root Vegetable and Bean Cassoulet (Fancy French Hot Dish)

With either white beans or some nice heirloom beans like cranberry beans or those cool appaloosas or the Hidatsa shield beans from the Seed Savers catalog, this would be a tasty dish.

Cook the beans separately till almost tender with some thyme and bay leaf. Drain the beans and save the bean water. (About 2hrs from scratch, 1c beans to 3c water, bring to boil, cover and turn down to a simmer, start checking for tenderness at 1 ½ hrs)

Sauté chopped veggies in 1-2 T of olive oil: squash, parsnip, potato, carrot, rutabaga with onion and garlic. (Any combo your heart desires)

Add the beans to the sauté pan and enough of their liquid to make a nice broth. Sprinkle a little salt and pepper, pour into a casserole dish, and top with bread crumbs with parmesan (or not) and bake until bubbly and brown in a 375° oven. Serve with crusty bread and Greek olives. Yum!!

Recipe courtesy of
Mala Vujnovich

Signs of Frost: Any of these signs mean it's time to protect our seedlings:

- * A calm dry air, no breeze blowing, and a clear sky.
 - * An early evening drop in temperature to around 40°F (4°C)
 - *The last week before a full moon is traditionally a time of frost danger. The moon, which influences ocean tides, also affects tides of air.
- The New Seed-Starters Handbook by Nancy Bubel



SPRING GARDEN CALENDAR

February:

- ✓ Draw up garden plans
- ✓ Order seeds and plants
- ✓ Start long-season indoors
- ✓ Reserve a community garden plot

March/April:

- ✓ Prune late-blooming shrubs
- ✓ Inventory garden supplies, repair or purchase new
- ✓ Prepare beds, spread compost
- ✓ Uncover perennials and roses,
- ✓ Keep materials on hand for late frosts!



May/June: Dig in!

- ✓ Plant hardy annuals and perennials
- ✓ Sow cool weather crops: spinach, lettuce, salad greens, carrots, beans, peas
- ✓ Begin 'hardening' plants for transplant
- ✓ When soil temperatures reach 70-75 degrees, sow cucumber, melon, squash
- ✓ Transplant warm weather crops when danger of frost is past: cucumbers, melons, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant
- ✓ Sow second and third rounds of succession plantings

GardenWorks
The Green Institute
2801 21st Avenue S., Suite 110
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Please call 612.278.7123 to change address
or to have your name removed from our list.



GET GROWING! UPCOMING GARDEN EVENTS

GardenWorks
Community Garden Spring Resource Fair
~March 18th, 2006, 10am - 2pm~
Center for Northern Gardeners
1755 Prior Avenue N., Falcon Heights

Join us for the Official Launch of
GardenWorks; Garden Resource Market;
Garden Workshops; and More!!

More Spring Events:

Growing Communities Workshop, March 4th-5th
Call 612.278.7123 for more information

The Living Green Expo, May 6th-7th
Minnesota State Fairgrounds, www.livinggreen.org

Do you want to.....

- *Connect with other Twin Cities gardeners?
- *Have access to local and national garden resources?
- *Build relationships with your garden neighbors?
- *Start a new community garden?
- *Support greenspace and community gardening in the Twin Cities?

GardenWorks is for you!!

Find out how you can get involved!!

Please call GardenWorks at 612.278.7123 for more information.