

NEWSLETTER # 1

ROTARY SUNRISE GARDEN AT ST MARKS



RAIN AT LAST!

Finally last Friday the garden had a good soaking, the first real rain since it was installed.

We are still working on the water system with plans to install some tanks fed from the Church roof, so watering can be done by hand when the main tap is turned off.

There is another benefit too – rainwater is not chlorinated and fluoridated like City water.

WHAT IT TOOK TO BUILD THE GARDEN

Thanks to everyone for all their efforts in getting the garden built.

- After a long search for available land, St Mark's Church offered their land at Governor's and Creighton so we covered our main hurdle of finding land.
- The Rotary Club of Dundas Valley Sunrise underwrote the expenses associated with constructing the garden from their Community fund.
- The City of Hamilton agreed to deliver compost and woodchips.
- On May 12th over thirty volunteers constructed all the beds and compost bins, filled them with compost and soil and installed the water lines
- On May 17th we planted the Food Bank beds
- On May 23rd & 29th we fixed all the deer netting
- Special thanks go to major donors
 - Paul Clifford
 - Carl Fraser
 - David Lowery
 - Roger Stewart
 - Rotary Club of Dundas Valley Sunrise
 - City of Hamilton

RADISHES WERE FIRST TO SHOW IN THE GARDEN

Here we see the first radishes to show from seed, with some lettuce seedlings planted in between. Radishes don't like the hot weather so we will see how they mature.



COMPOST TEA BREWMASTER WANTED

A non chemical way of fertilizing plants is to use a solution called compost tea. We learned how to make this from Ann Lanigan, of Simpler Thyme Organic Farm, who provided us with the recipe.

A volunteer is needed to brew the concentrated tea at home and then bring it to the garden where it will be placed in a rain barrel and diluted for use on the garden.

All you need is a few handfuls of compost; the other ingredients and an aeration pump will be provided.

Instructions and training provided – please let us know.



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GARDENING TIPS BY GREEN THUMB

BEETS Popeye knew a thing or two about spinach. Young beet tops in salads or steamed, packs the same iron punch. When thinning your beets to allow these plants space to expand, think ahead. This is the time to gobble up some tender tops. Beets do not have too many enemies, except for a tiny worm that squeezes between leaf membranes and destroys the leaves. The affected areas look like "age spots" on people.

LETTUCE: One of the best leaf lettuces is BLACK SEEDED SIMPSON. Lettuce also likes cool weather, but can be planted from early May until late August or early September.

ONION BULBS when planted for green onions turn into cooking onions if not all harvested, if well-spaced, and are allowed to mature. Spanish onions, white and red onions, if planted as bulbs will also grow to a fair size if not gobbled up as green onions. ONION bulbs (packages of 100) can be soon be purchased on sale at nurseries and kept in fridge until mid August, when you may plant them in empty garden space about one inch apart. You will then have green onions all fall. Multiplier onions (also packaged bulbs) will produce great crops). Each onion bulb will magically produce about 10 green onions all in one clump.

POTATOES should be "hilled" when plants are 4-6" tall as new spuds emerge close to the surface, and if exposed to light will turn green and become inedible. The potato bug is a voracious, 24-hour per day eater and will decimate the plant in no time flat unless they are picked off and killed.

RADISHES hate hot weather. They rebel by

growing big tops and miserable, small, hot radishes. Plant radishes in early May or late August for great crops.

SPINACH also likes cool weather and so planting from seed in late august will provide delicious crops in the fall.

TOMATO plants benefit by removing suckers (the outgrowth between main stem and a main branch) when these "suckers are small. Plants then have more nourishment for the red fruit.

WATERING

Why don't we leave the water on all the time?
Water is expensive and the Church is billed for all that we use from taps (and billed a similar amount for sewer usage even though it goes on the garden). We do not want to risk taps being turned on by mistake or by mischief - a lot can be wasted overnight.

So, thanks to volunteers who will turn the water on and off morning and night, water should be available most days.

How often should I water? The best advice is not to water too often as it encourages the development of a shallow root system. Water thoroughly and then only twice a week and only if it does not rain.

Should I water other beds apart from mine? You should generally only water those beds for which you have been given specific care. If you do see badly wilting plants though, you could help out an absent neighbour. But be aware of the dangers of too frequent watering.

**ONLY GARDEN YOUR OWN
BED!!!
Don't plant, rake, dig other
beds! There may be
germinating seeds in
them!**



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USING PLANTS INSTEAD OF PESTICIDES

We do not allow the use of pesticides in the Community Garden. There is a natural chemical-free way to remove harmful insects from your garden using plants. And you won't be removing all the beneficial insects from the garden, which is what happens with insecticides. There are a number of techniques that can be used:

Mixed planting: planting several different plants together, as in nature, so that insects are confused by the multitude of scents and have more difficulty finding the plant they prefer to eat and lay their eggs on.

Repellant: Certain plants such as marigolds, mints and garlic are offensive to some insects and will deter them when planted near other plants.

Companions: these are combinations of crops that grow better and are healthy because of their proximity

Trap plants: Lure plants are located near a plant you want to protect. Insects attack the lure plant and can be handpicked and destroyed.

You can also encourage natural enemies such as toads, ladybugs and praying mantis, who will eat harmful **bugs**.

Top deterrent plants

Marigolds – discourages mexican beetles, nematodes and other insects

Mint – deters white cabbage moths, ants, aphids and flea beetles; plant near tomatoes and all brassicas (cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts)

Nasturtium – plant with radish, cabbage, and cucurbits (cucumber, melon, zucchini). It is a trap

for aphids and deters squash bugs, whitefly, striped pimplin beetle and Colorado potato bug.

Dill – Plant with tomatoes to trap the tomato hornworm.

Garlic – Deters japanese beetles

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT HARVEST TIME? Harvest volunteers required.

We will be looking for harvest volunteers. Their job will be to harvest the produce, recommended in the cool of the early morning, wash and bag it and take it to the Dundas Food Bank. This will be an intermittent duty as things ripen.

WATCH OUT FOR OUR NEW GARDEN SIGN

REPORT ANY CONCERNS WITH THE GARDEN IMMEDIATELY!!
If you see something that presents a risk or indicates undesirable events, please call 905-304-3682 and report it.



ARTICLES WANTED

And an editor is wanted too; if you would like to prepare future versions of this newsletter, let us know. And send us feedback too.

