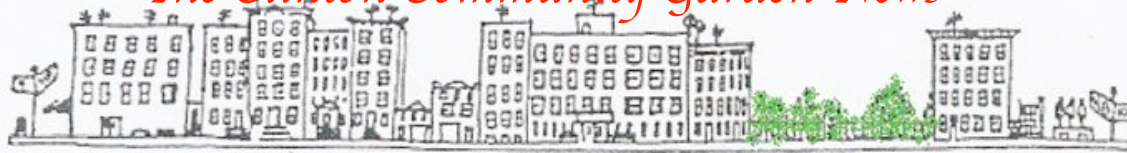


The Clinton Community Garden News



February 2009

P.O. Box 214, New York City, NY 10108-0214

Our Annual Membership Meeting is March 3, 2009 at 7:30 pm in the Fountain House basement. This is the one time each year that the entire membership comes together and your participation is very important! We will be holding elections for Steering Committee positions. Please consider running! It's a great experience. We meet every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm.

We will be presenting the John Carney Volunteer of the Year Award to one heck of a fine volunteer. We will also be accepting plot renewal forms. New back garden keys can be purchased (\$10) for those who missed our earlier distributions. Refreshments will be served. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Sweeping the Sidewalk

After dropping my son off at school in the morning, I often stop at the garden to sweep the sidewalk. It bothers me to see kids on their way to school trying to avoid dog poop and litter. It's also something that we gardeners are required to do to keep our license with GreenThumb unblemished. And I kind of like it. Sweeping, like weeding, can be meditative, and when you're finished, you have an immediate sense of accomplishment. I've met some great people this way: supers at neighboring buildings who stop to chat, sanitation workers, cops, and park workers from the Hell's Kitchen Park. Everyone has an opinion about what to do about people who don't clean up after their dogs. Most can't be published here, so irresponsible dog owners, hear this: *You are on really, really thin ice!*

But back to sweeping. This simple activity is one of many care-taking tasks that tie us as gardeners into our community. We not only have the privilege and sheer joy of creating something beautiful to be shared with the community through our gardening, we have the obligation to keep more mundane things like garbage under control for the sake of our neighbors and ourselves.

This brings me to our volunteer requirement. When co-chair Jane Greenlaw and I went to this year's GreenThumb community garden registration, we were reminded that most other gardens are much more demanding of their gardeners. Many require membership fees and a volunteer commitment. Our garden offers a plot of land, tools, soil, events, and activities at no cost. We have one hundred plus gardeners. With all that personpower potential there should never be a time when litter accumulates on the front sidewalk, garbage overflows, compost doesn't get chopped properly, paths don't get weeded... or that we have to struggle to get people out to our annual meeting and to run for the steering committee. A handful of gardeners should not have to feel the stress of footing the bill for so many.

So in this year of change and celebration of community organizing, we are asking for this very positive change in our community: for all plot-holders to commit to a volunteer task on a regular schedule, allowing all of us to share equally in keeping the garden green and inspiring. If, like me, you're passionate about gardening and being outdoors, fulfilling your volunteer requirement can be nothing less than a pleasure.

—Anne Haas

CCG Steering Committee co-chair & Newsletter editor

Be Kind to the Garden: Take Your Trash With You

At state parks and other natural places, it's common to see the phrase "Carry in, Carry out" on signs. We would like to see all gardeners, keyholders, and other visitors take this low-impact approach to heart and avoid leaving anything behind even in our trash bins. Why? We have limited garbage pick up. It makes less work for our volunteers. Food waste attracts rats and mice. Being aware of waste helps reduce waste and that helps protect our environment.

Garden Happenings in 2008

- *Ninth Avenue Festival & sales of new T-shirt, design by Diane D'Angelo
- *Completion of the new brick path in the back garden (Thanks Stephen Pier & many others!)
- *Compost workshop
- *Bird Walk (Thanks Steve & Nancy!)
- *Repair to Mallory's east side "inch-worm" mural (Thanks, Stan!)
- *May Pole Celebration (Thanks, Cindi!)
- *Summer Solstice Celebration (Thanks, Gary!)
- *Harvest Potluck Picnic
- *The first substantial honey harvest since our bees died two years ago (Thanks Lisa, Patty, & Sid!)
- *Educational garden tours, including a tour by the Columbus library's youth group
- *Monthly volunteer days from May to October
- *Butterfly raising at the children's garden

*Lawn renovation begun (Thanks, Tom!)

*Growing relationships with Project Renewal, the Ryan Chelsea Clinic's literacy program, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center

Wish list:

- *Green House
- *Rainwater harvesting
- *More storage space
- *Office space
- *Child-size outdoor table for the Children's Garden

Concerns:

- *Rats (Thanks to Tony, Linda, Joseph, Jenny Markovich, and Dru for working on this one!)
- *Signage about littering and dog clean up

Looking forward to:

- *Seed swap
- *Children's composting workshop
- *Gardeners' ideas

Want to organize a public event at the garden, such as the 4th of July Picnic? Contact the Steering Committee at ccgsc@clintoncommunitygarden.org.

Life With Bees

The 2008 beekeeping season was inspiring, rewarding, and prosperous in many ways. The hive grew steadily throughout the season and the bees produced more than eighty pounds of honey ranging in color from light gold to deep amber. A spring workshop at Wave Hill (www.wavehill.org) included presentations by Chris Harp (www.honeybeelives.org) and Roger Repohl (Genesis Park Community Garden). In late spring we were fortunate to welcome the addition of Patty Rader to our beekeeping stewardship. Patty has studied beekeeping and biodynamic agriculture at the Pfeiffer Center (www.pfeiffercenter.org) and brings a delightfully gentle and perceptive spirit to the work that we do. We are also grateful that Sid Glaser has continued to share his vast knowledge and mentor our efforts. The project was further encouraged by funding from the Greenacre Foundation with which essential equipment and books were purchased. Our neighbors at Project Renewal also provide ongoing critical support by housing a large storage cabinet, where the beekeeping equipment is safe and accessible, and hosting our annual honey extraction. Without the generous support of all these people and organizations, we would be challenged to carry on. Winter allowed a bit of quiet time to reflect on our experiences and consider plans for the coming season when the colony begins its third year. Many people in the community have expressed interest in learning more about this work, and we are percolating ideas for educational outreach to answer that call. Awareness gives birth to more awareness, and so it benefits all to continue to learn and grow and honor the natural processes that sustain life. — Lisa Cicchetti

Coming Up This Spring at the Garden and Beyond

GreenThumb's 25th Annual GrowTogether, March 21, from 9 am to 4 pm. Our garden will be represented on the Manhattan compost panel. For more information, visit or call GreenThumb: www.greenthumbnyc.org; (212) 788-8070.

Children's Worm Bin Composting Workshop @ Our Garden, May 16, noon - 1 pm

Children's workshop will cover the process of decomposition, worm anatomy, and caring for the worms. Each participant will have the chance to make and bring home his or her own mini worm-bin. For ages 5 and over. Registration required, by calling the Lower East Side Ecology Center at (212) 477-4022 or e-mailing info@lesecologycenter.org.

Ninth Avenue Festival, May 16-17. We'll be selling our 2008 T-shirt and this year's hot item, an eco-conscious grocery/tote bag. Volunteers needed to set up, staff, and take down the booth.

Recipes for Spring

Keep thinking spring and it will come. The two recipes below should help by reminding you of the taste of spring. Their main ingredients—basil, radishes, arugula, and garlic—all grow abundantly in our garden. Thanks to Jane Greenlaw for pulling these out of her recipe files.

John Boyagy's Rice Salad With Basil and Pine Nuts

1 cup short-grain brown rice
1/2 cup pine nuts
8 radishes and their greens
8 scallions, roughly chopped
1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves
4 TB olive oil
2 TB water
2 TB light soy sauce
3 TB lemon juice
1 small clove garlic, minced

Combine the rice with 2 cups of water and a teaspoon of sea salt in a heavy casserole or saucepan. Bring to a boil, turn down to a simmer, and cook covered for 40 minutes, or until the water is absorbed. Allow to rest for 15 minutes after turning off the heat, then remove the rice to a large pan, and spread it out to cool it off. Turn it over frequently to let the steam escape.

While the rice is cooking, toast the pine-nuts in a pre-heated 300-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes, until they take on a nutty aroma and their color has deepened.

Trim the radishes and slice them thinly. Wash the radish greens carefully and chop them very roughly, leaving the pieces at least one-inch around.

Make the dressing by pureeing the basil leaves, olive oil, water, soy sauce, lemon juice, and garlic in a blender or food-processor.

Mix the rice, radishes, scallions, pine-nuts, and dressing ingredients together in a bowl. If desired, refrigerate the salad for an hour or so.

Serves 4 as a side dish.



Spring Vegetable Pasta, Adapted From Williams Sonoma

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 yellow onion, cut into 1/4 -inch slices
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/3 cup drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, thinly sliced
2 zucchinis, thinly sliced lengthwise with a vegetable peeler
2 cups baby arugula
4 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
crushed red pepper flakes, to taste (optional)
salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
8 oz. fettuccine

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat.

Meanwhile, in a large frying pan over medium-high heat, warm 2 TB of the olive oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring often, for 1 minute. Add the garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to caramelize, 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Add the sun-dried tomatoes, zucchini, arugula, the remaining 2 TB oil, three-fourths of the goat cheese and the red pepper flakes to the bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

Salt the boiling water, add the pasta and cook until al dente, tender but firm to the bite, following package instructions. Drain well, add to the bowl with the vegetables and toss gently to combine.

Transfer to pasta bowls and sprinkle with the remaining goat cheese. Serve immediately. Serves 2.



WEEDS IN THE GARDEN – A Work in Progress

In the past, gardener Jane Greenlaw conducted a Weed Walk through our garden. Below are a few highlights from her larger and ongoing weed guide, which we plan to put up on the CCG Web site this year. Stay tuned for another Weed Walk later on this spring.

What's a weed? One definition of a weed is a wild plant that pops up in your garden that you did not plant, especially if it eventually crowds out your other plants. Here are some common weedy wild plants to watch for in the lawn, brick paths, and in your plot. Some of these weeds are very invasive. If you find them growing at any stage of their life cycle in your plot, please do **not** put them in the compost pile, but promptly dispose of them in the garbage.

Weeds start small, as leafy shoots, or basal rosettes, but unrestrained, can grow into big, mature, spreading seed reproducers. Others can reproduce by sending out networks of underground roots that will perpetuate their species in your garden, and likely make them difficult for you to get rid of. Some appear in early spring, others in later spring or summer.

Some gardeners actually choose to grow certain wild plants, or weeds (are they then still weeds?) and instead call them "herbs" and use them for healthful qualities they possess. Many wild plants that are sometimes called weeds have sterling, health-enhancing qualities. It is important to know all you can about each plant in your garden plot, so you can make informed decisions on which plants to weed out and which to keep.

Let's get a couple of baddies out of the way first. (Please don't compost the first two!):



Goutweed, Bishop's Weed, or Ground Elder, *Aegopodium podagraria* (parsley family)

Introduced perhaps inadvertently years ago by a gardener, this perennial plant makes its first appearance of the year in early spring with plain green lobed leaves. It develops white flowers in late spring/summer, which

later form seed capsules. Any part of this plant, especially the white roots/rootlets below ground which remain in the soil after you try to weed it out, can start up a whole new crop. You must painstakingly dig out the whole plant, both aerial and underground parts, in order to eliminate it. This may require numerous concentrated attempts. (Note: a variegated green and white form of goutweed found in some garden plots is less invasive.)

Yellow Nutsedge, *Cyperus esculentus* (sedge family)

Appears late spring or early summer. Looking like a thick grass or sedge, it spreads vegetatively by tubers/nutlets underground and also by seed that develops late from yellowish flowers. Weed it out early. You'll find it growing rampant in at

least two areas of the lawn and in some garden plots, starting around June.

Burdock, *Arctium minus*

Burdock is a biennial plant with healing properties. In its first year it forms a basal rosette. In the second



year, the plant is much larger and produces flowers that mature to become prickly seed pods containing countless seeds. The seed pod that forms toward the end of the second year will attach itself to any surface it contacts, for example the pant leg of your jeans, and hitch a ride so as to spread its seeds more broadly. This clinging, prickly seed pod was a model for Velcro. The root of common, wild burdock is a traditional healing herb. An edible version is the cultivated variety known in Japan as *gobo*.

Epazote is a strong, pungently flavored leaf vegetable and herb used in cooking, which also has healing properties. Traditionally used to flavor black beans and in Mexican food preparations. It spreads far and wide by seeds and is frequently seen in our area in the summer and fall.



Horsetail

This plant was introduced by a gardener years ago and it's an understatement to say it can spread. It's invasive in our garden, though interesting in appearance. Used as an herb in traditional Chinese medicine. If you choose

to grow it, be considerate of your garden neighbors and keep it under control. If allowed, it will readily find its way into your neighbors' plots.

