

# Nyack Community Garden

August, 2013

## WELCOME TO THE GARDEN and Garden Contest

Welcome to the 2013 Nyack Community Garden newsletter. The season is well underway with gardens looking well tended, vegetables ripening and flowers blooming in great abundance. I think, with a nod to Mother Nature, we should be very proud of ourselves.

We held our 2013 Garden Contest on Thursday, July 25, with results as follows:

### BEST VEGETABLE GARDEN

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	plot #29	Lauren Waldrop
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	plot #19	Duncan Bell
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	plot #16	John Dunnigan

### BEST FLOWER AND VEGETABLE GARDEN

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	plot #2	Luis Febo
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	plot #42	Lynda Grant
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	plot #37	Jill Remaly & Olga Aguayo

### BEST MAINTAINED GARDEN

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	plot #25	Vivi Vivikanadan
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	plot #7	Zsolt Takacs
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	plot #10	Brian Osborne

### BEST OVER-ALL GARDEN

plot #22 Jo Robbins & Barrie Petersen



### Best Over-all Garden

Jo Robbins and Barrie Petersen



### Best Maintained Garden

Vivi Vivikanadan

*Photos by Jennifer Rothschild*

Congratulations to all the winners! Prizes will be awarded at the Pot-luck dinner on Oct. 24 at the Nyack Senior Center.

## **Plant-a-Row for the Hungry**

The Plant-a-Row Committee has a new system. They placed a green bin in the shed for you to donate any produce you wish to pass along to the hungry. It is being collected every Tuesday at 9 AM and taken to People to People.

If you are going away on vacation and want someone else to pick from your garden to donate some produce, place a ribbon (in the shed) on the fence alongside your plot number.

Plot #45 is being maintained by the Garden Club of Nyack and is being used exclusively for Plant-A-Row donations.

So far this season, 70 pounds of produce have been donated by our garden to People to People. Thanks to all who have donated.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**Oct. 24, Pot-luck dinner** 7-9 pm  
Nyack Senior Center, 90 Depew Avenue.  
Bring a dish that will serve 10-15 people

### **Nov. .9 Garden closes**

All plots must be completely cleared and clean; all ground cover, stakes, cages, decorative items, etc. must be removed and plot returned to pre-

planting condition.

## **Message from Zsolt Takaks:**

All around, the garden looks very good. Congratulations from me to all the gardeners. But a few suggestions: Please do not leave bags in front of the shed.- And the tip of the day? Water the plants at the roots – it saves water and it's better for the plants!

## **NEW GARDENER'S EXPERIENCES**

By Judy Gitlin

My father was a gardener. I grew up with an entire half acre of yard devoted to gardening and a bountiful supply of fresh vegetables. One might think I would have learned something about gardening (or perhaps to appreciate vegetables). Instead, I associated gardening with having to snap the ends off of green beans and take peas out of the pod by the bushel-basketful. It was not a fond memory.

Let's fast forward a few decades. I've been living in apartments my entire adult life and kept a grand total of one houseplant. I'm not even all that fond of vegetables. Yet, I still passed by the community garden and found some sort of urge to grow something. I finally decided to take the plunge and take Voltaire literally when he said we must "cultivate our own garden."

Oh, what ignorance I possessed. I grew up looking at a vast garden and

somehow couldn't recognize plants other than corn and lettuce.

My first trip to Schimpf Farm was embarrassing, as I told them what I was doing and begged for help and still tried to buy about ten broccoli plants (which I couldn't even recognize as broccoli). To their credit, they stopped me. I bought the broccoli plants (four, not ten) and some lettuce plants and set them on a window sill that gets very little sun (the best I could do in my apartment) and told myself they'd stay alive for a few days until I could get them planted. It sure didn't look to me like they were staying alive, although one of the many things I've learned about gardening this year is that just because the plant looks dead doesn't mean it is.

I browsed a couple books, watched a couple of YouTube gardening clips, but decided there was no way to learn how to garden except to actually do it. Unfortunately, my father is no longer around to dispense his wisdom. So I grabbed a shovel and dug and quickly learned how Rockland County got its name. I planted my paltry looking plants and waited and waited while they remained tiny. Thankfully, I was given the space next to Brian, who was to patiently explain that, no, the plants weren't dead (but my broccoli was "stressed", which did make me wonder what broccoli could possibly have to be stressed about). He also showed me the difference between weeds and things I planted (this distinction is not clear to me to this day), explained proper spacing, and

gave me lettuce and cabbage. Thank you, Brian.

My weekends became filled with trips to Schimpf Farms and shopping expeditions for things I never thought I'd be buying, like that smelly fish fertilizer Brian recommended, manure (I admit I didn't know one could buy manure; my father got his at a local stable) and tomato cages. I concluded that one doesn't garden to save money. Sometimes, I discovered gardening is relaxing in a way that causes one to lose all track of time (and sometimes perspective). Other times, it's simply a chore.

It seemed that tiny plants grew big overnight. There were ups and downs. I got a lot of green beans and didn't mind snapping the ends off of them. But lettuce can get really gross and slimy. Eventually, I reaped some broccoli. The tomatoes aren't looking so great. I'm in disbelief over the amount of weeds (note to self; learn to use mulch more effectively). I still don't know when my carrots or onions are ready. I guess the cucumber and cantaloupe seeds I planted were a bust.

There are many frustrations in gardening, but some of the rewards are truly unexpected. My bean plants have a spectacular purple flower which I discovered only blooms briefly in the morning. One of my "uninvited" plants was a gladiola which is almost as tall as I am (which Brian had to identify for me). I think I want to do this again.



Photo by Michelle Solomon

## I GOT A PUPPY—AND OTHER EXCUSES

by Jennifer Rothschild

When I received notice that I would have a garden plot at the Nyack Community Garden, I was thrilled! This was going to be wonderful – finally, I could grow vegetables without the threat of deer eating them before they had matured. What a magnificent community space – a way to meet people – *good people* – and to do something “wholesome.”

I was a little nervous when I found out that my half-plot was right next door to Dr. Duncan Bell’s. He is a master gardener who uses a complex system of irrigation and elevated pots to grow his flowers and edibles. But I got in there, raked the plot, and planted seeds! My father had taught me some basics of gardening when I was a teenager. We had a plot in a neighborhood garden where we lived, in Indianapolis. He and I grew green beans, zucchini, melons, tomatoes,

peppers and peas. Of course, this was before anyone was talking about “organic” gardening, so we loaded those tomatoes with some undoubtedly carcinogenic and bio-hazardous dust that magically kept the pests away, used weed killers and deterrents that were highly toxic, and fertilized with sparkly white compounds that looked nothing like the earth.

Now we all know better. So I didn’t use “Preen” to avert the onslaught of weeds or “Roundup” to annihilate them, chemical fertilizer or dust to keep away the bugs. I planted green beans, broccoli rabe, and beets from seed, and placed eggplant, lettuce, tomato, and pepper plants in the ground. I dragged heavy flagstones from my home to make a path down the middle. I positioned my rusted, vintage metal chair near the fence and draped my Tibetan prayer flags across the plot. I was so excited! But I knew that more physical observation and labor would be necessary to make this garden grow, since I was using no chemicals or garden fabric.

*And then I got a puppy.*

I had never had a puppy before, but I imagined that it would be tough. I was right! I couldn’t leave the house without hearing his pitiful howling. It made me feel guilty and tied my stomach up in knots. The pup considered my rugs to be giant “wee-wee pads,” and he required constant observation to avert “mistakes” in the house. There was no one else to help me, since my son was still away at



college. So I simply devoted my time to this little giant (“Red” is a Bernese mountain dog, and he already weighed close to 40 pounds when I got him at 2 ½ months of age).

Well, my garden plot didn’t just suffer—it nearly expired. The arugula began to flower. The broccoli rabe that I was so anxiously awaiting transitioned from small shoots to tall, flowering plants in what seemed like the blink of an eye. I had to rip all of the salad greens and broccoli rabe out of the garden – they were no longer palatable. But the WEEDS that took over were my true challenge! Heat seems to be what they love the most. At this point, the weeds are doing better than my plants; in fact, they now dwarf most of them.

**DON’T EVEN GET ME STARTED ABOUT THE HEAT!!!**

Who can work in this insufferable sauna/steam room that we call “the outdoors?” Certainly not I! There is no time during the daylight hours - “daylight” means “after 9 a.m.” in my world - when the garden isn’t completely flooded with sunshine. In June, it was constant rain. In July, it’s been relentless sun and relentless heat.

So, my list of excuses has expanded – got a puppy, can’t stand the heat, can’t expose my skin to solar radiation, bad knees, not as hardy as I used to be, not a morning person, etc., etc.

Poor little garden plot. You deserved better . . . .



Photo by Michelle Solomon

## THE GARDNER

By Dot Durkin

Perhaps we know a little.

Perhaps we know a lot.

But either way we plant the seeds

In each and every plot.

Tomatoes, kale, and lettuce too,

Onions, herbs and flowers,

Digging, watering, watching, hoping,

For many, many hours.

But then one day we start to see

Something yellow or red or green.

We're starting to smile and feel the joy

Of that yellow or red we've seen.

For this is what we've waited for

Through sweat and tears, hope too,

To see our beautiful garden.

## EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW VEGGIES

I always want to try growing something new every year. So this year I got some kohlrabi seeds, just to give them a try. Planted early, they seemed to thrive. And they turned out to be one of the most beautiful vegetables I've ever grown. I had gotten the purple kind (more commonly you see the green) and the contrast between the purple and the green leaves is stunningly beautiful.

Kohlrabi is in the cabbage family, although it looks more like a turnip whose bulb grows above ground. They can be eaten raw or cooked and, although they don't have a terribly distinctive flavor, they are high in nutrients – especially Vitamin C – a one cup serving contains 140% of the daily value we need. And they are surprisingly high in protein, especially if you prepare them with a few nuts or seeds (maybe sesame seeds sprinkled on top of any dish) for added amino acids.

And, if you grow them, don't forget to eat the greens as well – they are edible and provide even more great nutrients like Vitamin A and Vitamin K.

Kathy Schwarz

Here is a recipe:

### KOHLRABI & APPLE SLAW with CREAMY COLESLAW DRESSING

Hands-on time: 25 minutes

Time to table: 25 minutes

Makes 4 cups, easily adapted for less

#### DRESSING

1/4 cup Greek yogurt

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1/2 tablespoon good mustard

1/2 teaspoon sugar

Salt & pepper to taste - go easy here

Fresh mint, chopped

1 pound fresh kohlrabi, trimmed, peeled, grated or cut into batons  
2 apples, peeled, grated or cut into batons (try to keep equivalent volumes of kohlrabi:apple)

Whisk cream into light pillows - this takes a minute or so, no need to get out a mixer. Stir in remaining dressing ingredients, the kohlrabi and apple. Serve immediately.



Photo by Carol Baretz



## SEED SAVING

Anyone interested in doing some seed saving and seed sharing? Last fall I started saving some of my seeds from various foods I was eating – some from my garden, some from the farmer's market, some from the supermarket. I did it very haphazardly, mixing them all together, not labeling them, so by planting time I had forgotten what I even had. Then I designated a small patch in the back of my plot for my “orphan” seeds and planted them all – just to see what would happen. It was so exciting to see my little orphans coming up. By now, that patch is quite overgrown with winter squash, melon, plus some other vegetables that I can't yet identify. So it still remains to be seen what I can actually harvest. Next year I plan to do it in a more organized fashion. If anyone would want to do this together with me, let's go for it!

Kathy Schwarz



Happy Gardeners Robin Brown and Kieran Quinn

Photo by Jennifer Rothschild



Photos of garden by Michelle Solomon

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