



The Green Thumb Print

Green Thumb News and
Topics of Interest to Community Gardeners in New York City

April / May 2002

The bulletin of Green Thumb, a program of City of New York Parks & Recreation

April Showers? Drought Tolerant Flowers

According to an old Chinese proverb, rain in spring is as precious as oil. This past winter has been unseasonably warm and dry. Late March brought a bit of moisture but not enough to raise the reservoir levels in the Catskills and lift the drought warning that was declared for New York City in late January by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). New Yorkers are urged to practice water conservation in the home. Now that the growing season has arrived, we need to take water conservation practices to the garden as well.

Conserving water is not only great for the environment, but it saves money and provides for optimum growing conditions. Among the ways to reduce water for irrigation during drought warnings is to mulch, add water retaining organic water to the soil, or water plants in the early morning before the sun gets too strong to reduce water loss from evaporation.

We are all hopeful that rainwater will be plentiful this summer but if the summer is dry, why not be prepared. One of the best ways a gardener can save water is to choose plants that are native to this climate or plants that are drought tolerant. You are not only limited to cacti, succulents, or narrow-leaved evergreen when deciding on plants adapted to low moisture conditions. There are many beautiful drought tolerant plants that add variety and vibrant color to your garden including ground covers, herbs, annuals and perennials. You can think of them as low-maintenance plants that do not require as much labor. Instead of spending time watering, you can spend time sitting back in your garden and enjoying the fruits of your (less-intensive) labor.

Some suggested drought tolerant plants to add to your garden include:

Nasturtium is a perennial but usually grown as an annual. It makes attractive ground cover along fences or pathways and provides great cut flowers. Nasturtiums can grow up to 18 inches tall. They grow well in full sun or partial shade and flowers all summer long. The flowers and



Nasturtium

leaves are edible too, with a peppery taste. Excellent in salads - with a lemon vinaigrette. One of our summer favorites!

Yarrow is a perennial herb that's easy to grow and beautiful to look at. It's flowers come in delicate little clusters with a flat top affixed to a single stem. It blooms all summer long through to November. The foliage is fragrant when crushed and looks lovely on your dining table as fresh cut flowers or in your bathroom in a potpourri arrangement.



Yarrow

Native to California and the Southwest, the California poppy thrives in arid conditions. The brilliant, orange cup-shaped flowers are 2-4 inches wide and grows up to 18 inches tall. It blooms from April to August. You can have an arts and crafts day in your garden with California poppies as they make excellent pressed flowers!



California Poppy

Lavender is a compact, woody-based plant that grows up to 3 ft tall and wide and grows tight spikes of small, fragrant purple flowers for a month in early summer. It looks great in any garden environment from herb or rose gardens to rock or border gardens. The stalks dry well and are beautiful in arrangements with cotton or eucalyptus. They also make great smelling sachets!



Lavender

These are only a few of the many other varieties of plants that can be added to your drought tolerant garden including crocus, evening primrose, iris, blanket flower, juniper, thyme, sage, etc. With such a beautiful variety of flowers to choose from, you can have a highly diversified and colorful garden composed of drought tolerant plants. The benefits of drought tolerant plants in your garden are far reaching in or out of drought conditions.

To learn more about water conservation tips and the NYC Drought Management Plan go to www.nyc.gov/dep.

SAVE FRESHWATER, USE GREYWATER

Out of sight, out of mind. We often function on a daily basis without much thought to where our water comes from when we turn on the faucet or where the water goes when our clothes are cleaned, our bodies bathed and food cooked. Now that NYC is under drought emergency, we need to be conscious about our water usage and try to conserve water whenever and wherever we can. And above all, reuse it whenever we can. As community gardeners, we can all benefit from this “water consciousness” especially because water sources to maintain our gardens will be limited as long as the drought emergency lasts. Let’s learn more about this recycled water, or greywater.

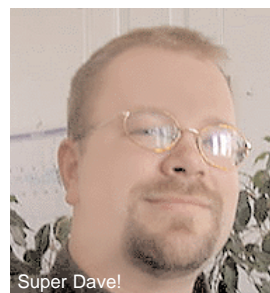
Greywater is water draining from a household (such as laundry, dishwashing, bath or cooking water) EXCEPT toilet water (blackwater) that can be harnessed and reused. For instance, water from the rinse cycle from your washer can be collected and used in the non-food section of your garden. How about the residual water from boiling pasta, potatoes or other starches? That water can be recycled and added to the food section of your garden. Collect water that would otherwise be wasted when you are waiting for the shower to warm up.

Of course, once used, water acquires the qualities it was used for and may contain oil, soap, sodium, bleach or food particles and may not be suitable for reuse. Greywater containing sodium, bleach or borax can damage plants so water from dishwashers should not be used for irrigation. Dishwashing water may contain grease, fats and oils and is not always acceptable for greywater use. Do not use greywater on root crops that will be eaten uncooked. Greywater, which is alkaline, should not be used in plants that thrive in acid soil. Use greywater only on mature plants, not seedlings or young plants. Apply greywater directly to the soil. Disperse greywater over large area and rotate with fresh water to avoid buildup of sodium salts. Greywater should be used the day it is collected as bacteria build up can cause foul smells.

Greywater can reduce the freshwater used and provide a perfectly good water source to your garden. Done just once a week, it can make gallons of difference. It is very easy to be thrifty or water consciousness as long as we have it on our minds. We just need to weave this into our everyday thinking. Greywater use is also good practice in or out of a drought. It’s a good way to reduce, reuse and recycle household water and your plants get a loving bath too.

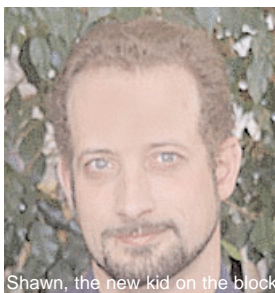
GOODBYES AND HELLOS

After three mum-tossing, top-soil turning, tree trimming years, David Flanigan, the Director of Operations, will be leaving GreenThumb for the National Tree Trust in Washington, D.C. Dave’s infectious energy, dedication and persistence helped



Super Dave!

GreenThumb to be the great organization it is today. His contribution to GreenThumb is invaluable. If you’ve gotten a fence, or attended the GreenThumb GrowTogether, Summer Solstice, or Harvest Fair, Dave is the one to blame for the great fun and excellent turn out! It was such a pleasure and privilege working with Dave. We will definitely miss Dave and wish him all the best in his new job. Thanks Dave for all your great work at GreenThumb and its member community gardens!



Shawn, the new kid on the block

GreenThumb welcomes Shawn Spencer, the new Director of The Land Restoration Project. Shawn has been with the Parks Dept. for nearly 9 years serving as Ranger Sargeant in Queens and Manhattan for 4.5 years and Special Projects Coordinator for the Commissioner in Staten Island for 4.5 years. Shawn and his wife and son are caretakers at a historic house, here in the city. In his spare time, he is a Cubmaster with the Cub Scouts and coaches little league soccer. Shawn is also active with the Appalachian Search and Rescue and is an EMT and Hot Shot forest fire fighter. Shawn holds a double major in Forestry and Wildlife Biology from Virginia Tech, an Associates in Photojournalism from NY Inst. of Photography and is currently working on his Master in Environmental Management. Wow! What a resume.

WE’VE GOT ‘EM!

We’ve got new “NO DUMPING” signs from the Department of Sanitation. Hurry! There are only 30 signs left. If you would like to get a free “NO DUMPING” sign, please call Danny at (212) 788-8068. Signs are available on a first come, first serve basis. You must come to the GreenThumb office to pick them up as they are too big to send through the mail. Signs are limited to one per garden.

WIN AN AWARD

The National Tree Trust, a national leader in programs supporting community tree planting and education efforts, has established an award to honor outstanding achievements in volunteerism and community forestry. Applications are now being accepted for the Planting America's Future Awards, which will be presented to three individuals or organizations that have demonstrated success in mobilizing local citizens, business, government and others in projects to improve their community through the use of volunteers and trees. There are three award categories:

Youth Environmental Stewardship Award

The Youth Environmental Stewardship Award category honors an individual under the age of 21. The winning individual will be the driving force behind a tree-related community project that involved use of volunteers and public land.

Success in Environmental Education Award

The Success in Environmental Education Award honors a "hands-on" education program that best helps students, K-12, improve their knowledge of trees and their role in our environment.

The Trammell Crow Community Partnership Award

The Community Partnership Award will honor an individual community's efforts to improve itself through tree-planting and maintenance. The winning project will best demonstrate the cooperation and partnership of volunteers, consisting of local citizens, local businesses and local government.

Applications must be postmarked by May 31, 2002 and can be obtained at www.nationaltreetrust.org or by calling 1-800-846-TREE ext. 21. Planting America's Future Award winners will be notified by mail, and will be honored at a ceremony in Salt Lake City, UT on September 22, 2002 at the 3rd Grassroots Summit. A cash prize of \$1000 will be awarded to the winners to be used for operating expenses of the featured program. Winners will also receive an honorary tree plaque. Transportation and accommodations will be provided for one representative to attend the Salt Lake City ceremony (except for the Youth Initiative category where two representatives will be accommodated if the recipient is a minor).

The National Tree Trust is a non-profit organization established in 1990 with programs to facilitate tree planting and maintenance through volunteer action, and to educate Americans about the importance and value of trees.

TREES, TREES, TREES!

The **National Tree Trust** is now also accepting applications for its 2003 Community Tree Planting grants (CTP). Organizations receiving a CTP grant must agree to plant their seedlings on public land and along roadsides with the aid of volunteers. The grants consist of one-year old, regionally appropriate tree seedlings. Three-gallon plastic containers and a soil subsidy are also provided if an organization wishes to containerize the seedlings. Applications are available now and must be returned to National Tree Trust by May 31, 2002. To receive an application, visit www.nationaltreetrust.org, or call 800-846-TREE.

Don't forget! **National Arbor Day** is the Friday, April 26, 2002 in New York, but many states observe different dates according to their best tree-planting times. Let's celebrate! Plant a tree, talk to a tree, have lunch with a tree or hug a tree!



If you can't plant a tree for Arbor Day, you can adopt a street tree. All it needs is lots of love! And some water too, of course. To learn more or to volunteer, please call the New York Tree Trust at 212-360-TREE.

TREE RESCUE: NEW YORK TREE TRUST

In July of 2000, the New York Tree Trust launched the Tree Rescue program to save trees that are threatened by constricting tree guards, grates and sidewalks. Rescue activities also include widening tree pits, removing debris and adding soil mulch. For more information, please call the New York Tree Trust at 212-360-TREE.

GreenThumb Gardeners Grow Together

Approximately 1,000 community gardeners convened at Hostos Community College Saturday, March 16, 2002 for the 18th Annual GreenThumb GrowTogether. Gardening professionals and experts from other greening institutions and scores of volunteers completed the mosaic of people that helped make the GrowTogether a resounding success.

Commissioner Adrian Benepe addressed the auditorium of community gardeners at the opening ceremony and stressed the importance of keeping open hours in support of public open space. He also presented Director of Operations, Dave Flanigan, a farewell gift or “talismán against all the evil politicians” in Washington DC, where Dave will be, starting April to head a program at the National Tree Trust. The Taqwa Singers once again dazzled the audience in their second consecutive year performing at the GrowTogether. Keynote Speakers included Reverend Thomas Henderson, all the way from South Carolina, who works with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church on a nationwide sustainable agriculture initiative. Reverend Henderson’s goal is to ensure that fresh, healthy food be available everywhere and that the nation’s farmers stay in business. The opening ceremony ended with a presentation by Franceska Santiago and participants of

Open Road, an organization that includes youth in the designing and building of community gardens. Then it was time to let the workshops begin!

Gardeners ready to get their hands dirty were patiently waiting their turn for the limited spaces in the perennial favorites - birdhouse and bulletin making. While other gardeners donned on their thinking caps for stimulating discussion about food security led by GreenThumb’s Alice Brooke Wilson and ACGA Board Member Tom Kerr. The workshop was enhanced by the welcome appearance of Keynote Speaker Reverend Henderson who stirred up discussions with his expertise. The day was chock full of fun for adults and kids alike. Over 80 workshops delighted, engaged, and expanded the minds of gardeners while a huge open gym allowed kids to partake in gardening workshops or eagerly transform themselves into a flower or butterfly. This year, there were more kids activities than ever for kids of all ages. We hope you had as much fun attending the GrowTogether as we did organizing it. GreenThumb extends utmost thanks and appreciation to all the volunteers and attendees who helped make the 18th Annual GrowTogether such a wonderful event.

“What a huge turnout. Give yourselves a hand.”

- Commissioner Adrian Benepe



Saturday, March 16, brought hundreds of gardeners from all over NYC to Hostos Community College for a day of workshops and fun.



Keynote Speaker, Reverend Thomas Henderson, shares his expertise on food security with community gardeners.

18th Annual GreenThumb GrowTogether



Community gardeners are all ears at the opening ceremony of the 18th Annual GreenThumb GrowTogether.



Kids are busy as bees making flowers in a workshop led by Gerard Lordahl of the Council on the Environment of NYC.



What a beautiful butterfly!



A bulletin built in one hour. Wow!



Look at the flower I'm making!



GT's very own Andrea Popovich surrounded by butterflies and cats disguised as kids, or kids disguised as cats and butterflies?



How do you like my butterfly?

HERE'S THE DIRT

Attention gardeners! Spring is here and it's time to till and fertilize your soil. Now is the perfect time to get up to 30 gallons of FREE compost, provided by the New York Botanical Garden Compost Project to enrich your garden. Compost is available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. Compost will not be distributed to commercial landscapers or other businesses. Please bring your own shovel, bags or containers and be prepared to carry compost to your car. Compost bins (retail \$70) will be sold at the discounted price of \$20. One of two models will be available, depending on location. Bins are made of recycled plastic, and fit into any automobile for easy transportation. Proof of New York City residency is required for discounted bin sales. For more information, or to buy a bin at another time, contact the Botanical Garden nearest you. The Botanical Gardens Compost Projects are community education programs that are funded by the City of New York, Department of Sanitation.

Brooklyn

Sunday, May 19, 11 am-4 pm (while supplies last)
Dyker Beach Golf Course Parking Lot, Dyker Heights (86th St. and 11th Ave.)

Bronx

Saturday, May 4, 11 am-3 pm (while supplies last)
Lehman College North Parking Lot (at the corner of Bedford Park Blvd. and Goulden Ave.)

Manhattan

Sunday, May 5, 11 am-3 pm (while supplies last)
Marcus Garvey Park, Harlem (Northeast Lawn, Madison Ave. at 123rd St.; enter at 124th St. and 5th Ave.)

Queens

Saturday, May 19, 11 am-3 pm (while supplies last)
Shea Stadium, South Parking Lot (just south of the stadium, across the street on Roosevelt Ave.)

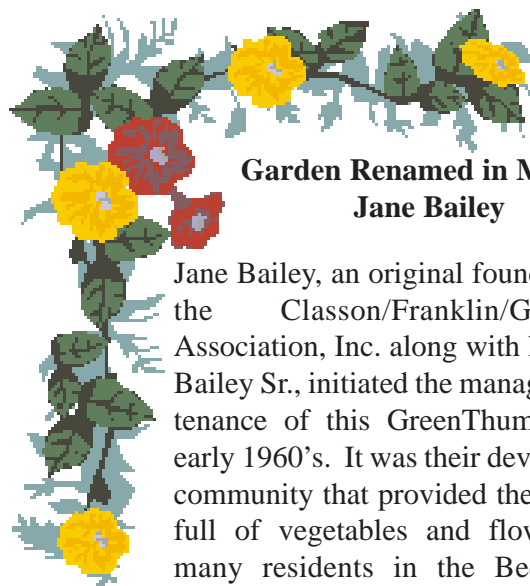
Staten Island

Sunday, May 5, 10 am-4 pm (while supplies last)
Michael J. Petrides Complex (715 Ocean Terrace-former grounds of the College of Staten Island)

Take advantage of the compost giveaway while it's still around. Why? The Mayor's budget proposal may eliminate the Compost Projects city-wide in the near future. This means no more leaf or christmas tree collection, therefore sadly, NO MORE FREE COMPOST. Get your free compost while it lasts! For more information, or to learn how to save the Compost Project, call John Mitchell, Bronx Compost Project Manager at (718)-817-8021.

EVENTS GALORE

Spring is here and summer is not too far behind. With the return of warm weather so returns the GreenThumb Events Calendar. Each month, GreenThumb sends out a calendar of events that are held in community gardens. If you are having an event and would like to post it in the calendar or on the GreenThumb website, simply fill out an events form and send it back to GreenThumb, 49 Chambers Street, Room 1020, New York, NY 10007. The forms must be received by the 17th of the month before the event to be included in the Events Calendar. If you do not have an events form, please contact Meilan Chiu at 212-788-8073 or mei@greenthumbnyc.org.



Garden Renamed in Memory of Jane Bailey

Jane Bailey, an original founding member of the Classon/Franklin/Greene Block Association, Inc. along with her husband, Roy Bailey Sr., initiated the management and maintenance of this GreenThumb garden in the early 1960's. It was their devoted efforts in the community that provided the beautiful garden full of vegetables and flowers enjoyed by many residents in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Neighborhood. Her devotion and humanity is clearly reflected in the Bailey's family structure. Their eldest son, Roy Bailey, Jr. was chosen Chaplain to the NAACP Young Adult Council of Bedford-Stuyvesant before his untimely death and their other son, Gregory Bailey, is an attorney. The other children are also prominent members of the community and church. Ms. Jane, as she was fondly called, shared several spaces in the garden with neighboring residents. Upon her failing health, she encouraged the member community gardeners to maintain the garden with hopes that each would continue to be a nurturing presence to the neighborhood. We respectfully remember the efforts of Ms. Jane by dedicating this garden as The Jane Bailey Memorial Garden.

-Katherine Chavis, Secretary
Jane Bailey Memorial Garden

A tree-lined street. Red roses in a window box. A community garden. Living Memorials.

Natural resources have been used to revitalize much more than our city streets and towns. Nature has been known to help heal the spirit and to reconnect ourselves to life. In the aftermath of September 11th, how many of us sought solace in nature? Walking thru a neighborhood park, sitting in a garden or watching birds fly in the open sky or along the water's edge. Some of us held candlelight vigils for lives lost and brought flowers to the doorways of homes, firehouses and rescue stations. All of us continue to change and grow as the seasons shift? and many of us have ideas for natural resource projects to inspire hope, strength and peace in your communities.

As community gardeners, we know how important gardens can be to restoring our neighborhoods and human spirit. Erika Svendsen, the former director of GreenThumb, is heading an exciting project funded by the USDA Forest Service called the Living Memorials Project. We are asking gardeners to send a photograph of your garden event or memorial to help create a national collage of living memorials and will later appear on the Living Memorials Project website at www.livingmemorialsproject.net. Please note that your photographs will not be returned.

Please take the time to share your idea, story or project with others and fill out the inventory form posted below. By doing so, your work will become part of a growing network of living memorials throughout the country.

- * Did your garden hold a memorial event in response to September 11th? If so, what did you do?

- * Did you garden plant a "living memorial"?

- * If so, what did you plant and why?

- * If your garden has not held a special event or small program, are you planning to do something in honor of September 11th?

- * What is your garden planning to do?

- * Did you notice an overall increase in new visitors to your garden after September 11th?

Thank you!

For more information about the Living Memorial Project and how your garden can be part of the national website, please contact Erika Svendsen at esvendsen@fs.fed.us. Or visit the website at www.livingmemorialsproject.net.