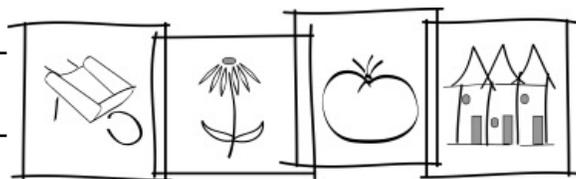


Troy Gardens Gazette

Troy Gardens News



Vol. 6 No. 1 Spring 2008

A Season Of Change

By Marge Pitts

Like an immense cloud bank overtaking the horizon, change is coming.

Suddenly expensive gasoline forces us to reconsider what to do with our free time—there's no place like home when it costs too much to go away. The exploding cost of food around the globe sparks riots in poorer countries and hoarding among the affluent—to the point that some large retailers like Sam's Club are limiting the amount of rice an individual can buy. Climate change is causing unpredictable, record-breaking weather. The comfortable, manufactured "growth" on which our economy is based seems less and less certain for the future.

Makes a person not want to look at the horizon.

At the same time, more and more people seem to be finding agreement on one thing—the need for change. Some kind of awakening is stirring on the opposite horizon. People are taking note of the omens in the distance, then looking downward to the soil under their feet, and asking the revolutionary question, "Why not?"



Why not grow more food in our own backyards, so we don't have to depend so much on food that's been shipped in from thousands of miles away? Why not build and support community gardens and small

organic farms, and make them as commonplace as soccer fields and big box retailers in our towns and cities? Why not regenerate natural areas in our urban environment, and invite the spirit of nature back into our hearts and home places?



Why not face the life-and-death changes implicit in a mortal, conscious existence with the wisdom of gardeners, farmers and nature-lovers, who embrace the comforting revolution of the seasons with equanimity and faith?

Why not adopt a model of participatory democracy, letting every voice be heard and asking everybody to help? And if some people can do that

in their neighborhood, why not teach others to do it in theirs?

Here at the Friends of Troy Gardens, we've been asking ourselves "Why not?" for the last several months, as we engaged in a planning process to take our organization to the next level. What we've accomplished at Troy Gardens in ten years is truly amazing—as anyone can see who is lucky enough to visit, or even better, to share this land. Why not also share what we've learned how to do?

The changes we are crafting for our organization are on the horizon at the moment, and will be shared with our supporters and members in the coming months. For now, we continue in our small way to do what we do. Read on, for spring is the season of change, and there is so much to show you at Troy Gardens this year!



Pulling for Pesto! Saturday, May 17

Garlic mustard thrives in the shady woodlands of Troy Gardens. This invasive species threatens to overwhelm native spring flowers planted by volunteers in 2003.



Pulling the plants by hand before they go to seed is an effective way to suppress garlic mustard without resorting to herbicides. Fortunately, the plants are shallow-rooted and come out of the ground easily. Unfortunately, garlic mustard is almost impossible to eradicate permanently, and must be pulled every year to keep it from taking over the areas it has invaded.

Troy Gardens' Natural Areas annual Garlic Mustard Pull is an important tool for woodland maintenance and management. This year's effort will be Saturday, May 17, from 9am until noon.

We would welcome the help of anyone who can join us when we go "Pulling for Pesto!" Steve Lendved will lead a workshop on garlic mustard and other invasive species. Christie Ralston will provide garlic mustard pesto for volunteers to taste.



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Marge Pitts
Troy Learning Community
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Troy Community Gardens

SUNDAY, MAY 25 (MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND)

Troy Community Gardens Plant Sale

In front of Pierce's Market during the Northside Farmers' Market, 8:30am-12:30pm, NorthTowne Center (Sherman Ave. & Northport Dr.) on Sunday, May 25.

Heirloom vegetables, flowers and unique landscape plants—varieties you won't find elsewhere.

All proceeds benefit Troy Community Gardens.

Plant the best of Troy Community Gardens!



GOT RECIPES?

Savor The Summer Cookbook

We need your recipes for our annual Savor the Summer Cookbook!



Any recipes are welcome—they don't have to be vegetarian and can even include chocolate!

What we *do* want with your recipe is a few words about the recipe, like where it came from, why you like to make it, why you love Troy Gardens, or whatever information you would like to share. If you have a picture of yourself to include, please do so.

Email recipes and pictures to Marge Pitts at the address below, or send them to 3617 Harper Rd. Madison, WI 53704.

Troy Gardens is located on the 500 block of Troy Drive on Madison's Northside.



CHANGES AHEAD FOR FRIENDS OF TROY GARDENS

By Bob Gragson, Executive Director

For the last few months the Board of Directors of Friends of Troy Gardens has engaged in a strategic planning process to map out the future of our organization. While we can't yet share all of our plans because they are still under development, we can share our new vision and mission for our organization.

OUR VISION:

We envision a world in which more people cultivate sustainable abundance in their communities.

OUR MISSION:

- To nurture a meaningful relationship between people and the land,
- To grow wholesome and organic food for local tables,
- To regenerate urban natural areas,
- To cultivate a diverse learning community,
- To teach what we practice, and
- To foster healthy communities and personal well-being.

Make a donation to Friends of Troy Gardens every time you browse or buy products online!

Instead of Google, use the search engine GoodSearch. If you do, every time you search the Internet, the non-profit, school or charity of your choice earns a penny. This innovative method of fundraising costs us nothing. Go to GoodSearch.com to change your engine—and specify Friends of Troy Gardens as your recipient!

And now you can also use GoodShop.com, a new online shopping mall which donates a percentage of each purchase to your favorite cause. Although we don't recommend shopping as therapy or entertainment (nature is better), we all need things from time to time, and often online shopping is more ecological than a trip to the store. So the next time you need something online, look for it first through the GoodShop.com mall.

More than 100 stores offer travel, clothing, electronics and more through GoodShop. Every time you place an order, you'll be supporting us.

These are exciting times at Friends of Troy Gardens. Troy Community Farm starts its season with more CSA members than ever before, and Troy Community Gardens opened on April 19 with more gardeners than ever before. Another promising growing season is upon us. And our natural areas restoration project and children's gardening programs will soon be in full swing once again.

As we have been since our organization's beginning, we are fully committed to the programs and projects we have established at Troy Gardens. At the same time, we are reviewing opportunities not only to enhance our current operations, but also to develop some new and exciting programs.

When we are completely ready to announce all of our plans, we will issue a Special Edition of this newsletter to outline them in detail.

Until then, your generous support is always appreciated. Without your commitment we could not do what we do. Send your contribution today to Friends of Troy Gardens, 3601 Memorial Dr., Bldg. 14, Rm. 171, Madison, WI 53704. Thanks for your support.

WE SALUTE OUR SUPPORTERS

Alliant Energy Foundation
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 The Capital Times Kids' Fund
 The Natural Resources Foundation's C.D. Besadny
 Conservation Grant Program
 Williamson Street Grocery Cooperative
 WI Dept. of Natural Resources - Urban Forestry
 Evjue Foundation
 Wisconsin Environmental Education Board
 Wisconsin State Journal Youth Services

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL AREAS RESTORATION

By *Christie Ralston, Troy Natural Areas Coordinator*

At Troy Gardens, we observe a landscape that fellow community members have cultivated into a beautiful and vibrant place.

As Aldo Leopold wrote, “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” Troy Gardens, then, is right.

In 2007, the Troy Natural Areas Program was awarded the Virginia M. Kline Award for excellence in community-based ecological restoration. As part of the sixth annual Leopold Restoration Awards, this prestigious award was sponsored by Friends of the Arboretum, Inc. and the Aldo Leopold Foundation, Inc. and administered by Friends of the Arboretum. The decision of the judges was based on the fact that “the Friends of Troy Gardens have created and sustained a long-standing community-based project that has engaged community members both in restoration and community gardens in a diverse array of opportunities to learn and volunteer.”

We call our natural areas volunteers “stewards” because they take care of the amazing land resource we call the Troy Natural Areas on an ongoing basis. Our stewards are a diverse group. Some are university students who want hands-on practice in land management. Some are neighbors who want to learn more about the natural world, and perhaps use what they learn in their own backyard landscapes. Some are experts who seek to share their knowledge. All are committed to sharing responsibility for managing this important community resource.

The Troy Natural Areas consist of a prairie, maple woodlands, several educational gardens, and a 1-



In partnership with the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW), we have installed 5 new nest boxes at Troy Gardens.

If you are interested in helping monitor the nest boxes, please contact Christie Ralston (see page 2).

Check out www.braw.org for more information on attracting Eastern Bluebirds and starting a bluebird trail project of your own!

mile interpretive trail that winds around the site. Here we engage hundreds of community members each year through free workshops and scheduled workdays. Stewards learn about restoration and land care, and our organization accomplishes its management goals—through fun events like pulling garlic mustard in our woods or pruning the orchard together!

Our program has grown significantly over the past year to include valuable new partnerships. We work with adjudicated teens in the Dane County Focus Program, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections SPRITE Program, Dane County Youth Court, and Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin’s Youth Restitution Program. We partner with classes and clubs from the University of Wisconsin and Edgewood College, and also work with youth from area community centers and schools. Each year we host United Way’s Days of Caring, where adult volunteers from companies around Madison come to Troy to volunteer for a day.

The next time you’re out enjoying our natural areas, check out the educational kiosk at the western end

of the prairie for information on the plants and animals you can see on the land. Add an entry to the notebook where visitors record their observations of prairie life through the seasons, as well as their reflections about what this resource means to them. (*See next page.*)

If you’d like to learn more about our stewardship program, see page 2 for contact information. We’d love to hear from you!

Funding for the Troy Natural Areas Program comes from a Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry grant, a Project Learning Tree GreenWorks! grant, and the Natural Resources Foundation’s C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board.

VOICES OF TROY GARDENS

The following selections were written in the Prairie Observation Book, which is kept in the large kiosk at the entry of the trail that leads to the middle of Troy Prairie. Anyone may write in the book—perhaps to note a plant in bloom, a special songbird, or to write a poem inspired by the beauty of the prairie. The book chronicles the passage of seasons through the eyes and ears of the people who walk here.

7/13/07

Full bloom of different prairie grasses—I noted ... red and white clover, purple cone flower and other wild oxeye sunflower and hoary vervain—I could go on and on—I discovered this prairie only today as I took a walk around the neighborhood. It is so beautiful, peace reminds me of my days in the country in Jackson Co. Wisconsin.

7/23/07

80° sunny

My 3 boys love the black eyed susan. The photo/ID book is great!

We're not afraid of wild parsnip now that we read the book.

The onion harvest 2 weeks back was fascinating. My boys had never seen that many onions in one place!

We love this place.

8/19/07 (Various postings)

What a beautiful and peaceful place! I saw lots of cup plants and compass plants. —Kelly.

A nice place to see on my 21st birthday. —Gemma

I spied a hawk, a grasshopper, an ant.

It rained today, so the prairie looks a little grey from the sky's

reflection. It looks a little sad in August—a bit brown, but you can see the compass plants towering above everything else.

Aahhh! Squiters eaten me alive! (*sic*)
But it's worth it!

9/1/07

We got married in the prairie circle on a gorgeous afternoon. The blue stem was afire in the light!

10/6/07, 10 pm

Beautiful night, 75°, light and no mosquitos (well, ok, a few). Cricket concert is beautiful too

10/10/07

Ahhh . . . cool at last! Happy doggies! —M
PS. A hawk nearly took my head off!
Low flyer!

10/11/07

Saw a half eaten rabbit on the path northeast of the farm along the edge of the property. A fox's lunch? I think there may be a den there—a few sitings (*sic*) of a fox in the last few years.

10/21/07

First time this far back. Beautiful warm, sunny day. May be the last shorts wearing day. Leaves are gorgeous. Grass very green. How blessed we are!

10/23/07

The sun through the maples in the early am—oh my! New maple trail very cool!

10/28/07

We think we saw fox poop.
We found milk weed & the seed are very soft.

11/11/07

Heard either frog or cricket chirp-

ing in the night. What the heck?!

12/24/07

Ice storm aftermath. Ice blooms dance on stems. Crystalline flowers shine like diamonds in winter.

12/28/07

Snowfall, ski trails & dog is snow happy

1/13/08—aft. b/4 sunset

(drawing of a turtle)

Hawk flew over
Scarfs wound tight
Wind whistling
Through layers
Sun peekin' thru
Ever so slightly
Sprouting seeds
In glass jars
Under lights
In windows
Dreaming of black dirt.

Lucky M.S.

3/9/08—Sunday afternoon

4 sandhill cranes flew overhead.
Spring is coming!

3/16/08—Sunday morning

Robin sighting! 1st one (for me) of the year.

3/17/08—Tuesday

Melting snow exposes vole galleries in the grassy lawn near bur oak.
Cranes heard.

3/26/08

Cardinals singing, snow still pretty deep on the south edge of farm.
Ugly destruction of brush on trail next to farm under power lines.
Where are you, spring?

Snow spits. Buds confused. Happy dogs!

4/6/08

Pair of bluebirds.

TROY FARM SPROUTS NOW WIDELY AVAILABLE

One of our goals for Troy Community Farm is to produce fresh vegetables all year long. Our first step in that direction has been accomplished—we are now growing and selling a variety of certified organic sprouts!

We grow them indoors in the basement of the building that houses our offices, where we have set up a complete sprout-growing operation. Recently, we've improved our production capacity thanks to an entrepreneurial grant from Joan Collins Publicity, and have been steadily increasing sprout sales ever since.

We start with organic seeds, which we soak in water to hydrate and wake the seed for germination. After an 8 to 12-hour soak the seeds are drained and rinsed, and set out in dark trays to sprout. Depending on the type of sprout, the seeds are drained and rinsed twice a day for 2 to 7 days. The bean sprouts are ready after a few days when the small white root is about a quarter of an inch long. The leafy sprouts, like alfalfa and clover, are put out under light after growing for 4

days in the dark. After about 3 days in the light, their tiny leaves are full and green and the sprouts are ready to eat.

Sprouts are famous for being “health food,” but in addition to being an excellent source of nutrients, recent research reveals that sprouts also contain compounds that enhance our immune systems and protect us from disease. Plant estrogens that are abundant in sprouts increase human bone density and can help prevent osteoporosis. These estrogens can also ease the uncomfortable symptoms of menopause and inhibit certain breast tumors.

Alfalfa sprouts are an excellent source of saponins, which lower the bad cholesterol and fat but not the good HDL fats. Sprouts also contain highly active antioxidants that prevent DNA destruction, protecting us from the ongoing effects of aging.

Troy Farm Sprouts come in small packages and sell for less than \$3. They're ready to eat just as they are, or you can sprinkle them on lettuce for an instant salad, or add to a stir-fry in the last few minutes for a scrumptious crunch. We have created several delicious sprout mixes:

- Mung beans
- Maggie's Mix (French, crimson, and green lentils; garbanzo beans; and green peas)
- Sarah's Salad Mix (French, crimson, large green, and small green lentils)
- Beulah's Peas (speckled, green, yellow, and marrowfat peas)
- Alfalfa/Clover Mix
- Meg's Spicy Mix (clover, radish, arugula, fenugreek)

When you buy Troy Farm sprouts, you do your body and your busy schedule a favor. They're so nutritious and so easy. And you're helping our little community supported agriculture urban farm to become sustainable all year round!



Troy Farm Sprouts are available at Pierce's Northside Market and the Willy Street Grocery Co-op. You can also find them at the Northside Farmers' Market, Sunday mornings at the NorthTowne Center (Sherman Ave. at Northport Dr.) And of course, we sell them at our farm stand in front of Troy Gardens every Thursday afternoon from June through October, from 4pm-6:30pm.

TROY GARDENS JOURNAL

by Marge Pitts

CHICKEN SISTER

Apparently, five sisters are not enough for me, for the universe has provided four more, only these are *G. gallus domesticus*, not *Homo sapiens*.

The quartet of chickens living at Troy Kids' Garden needed someone to care for them over the winter. In previous years, I transported them to my sister Gina's rural home, where she kept a flock of egg-layers. Our hens joined Gina's sorority, huddling together in her shed at night, foraging through her woods during the day, tolerating the attentions of her precocious grandkids on the weekends. However, last fall some dastardly mammals systematically wiped out my sister's flock, and she didn't feel like going through the considerable motions of tending winter hens for only four of them.

But I did, and for some reason I still do, even though winter is over and I could get out of this responsibility with a polite bow and many thanks all around.

Each and every day, I load a backpack with treats, water, and an empty egg carton. My dog Wink and I march through the maple woodland, past the Forest Classroom and its circle of tree-stump seats, across the cinder lane, and through the community gardens to the red-and-green chicken coop in the middle of the Kids' Garden. My chicken sisters sing a familiar cooing song when they see us coming, much like the baby-talk way my sister Evie and I say "Hewwow!" to each other whenever we meet.

Wink is a herding dog, and I'm Italian; tending a flock and bringing food are hard-wired into us—nature commands it. We're as true as canaries singing like canaries, as right as rain when we follow our nature.

I open the chicken coop door; the hens file out and mingle around my shoes. Wink looks me in the eye and barks, "Treats!" Not that I need to be told what to do, but nature has given herding dogs the gift of bossiness; and I was born willing. The treats Wink demands are buttermilk biscuits left over from the restaurant where I work taking orders from people. I crumble these, one per chicken, onto the ground, and everyone including Wink settles down to eat.

I used to worry that Wink might attack the chickens. My mother had similar reservations when my sister Cathy was born only thirteen months after me. Would

there be enough mother to go around, or would there be disparity and conflict? As long as Wink gets in on the daily crumbs, and I have access to my mom's bottomless kindness when I need it, there is peace among my dog and his chicken sisters, and Cathy and me.

The most experienced hen at Troy is the black-and-white one. She leads the others when they're at liberty in the garden. She decides whether they'll look for new grass blades to gobble, or scratch aside the mulch with their dinosaur feet to uncover bugs, or climb onto a bed of black soil for an ecstatic group dirt bath. She reminds me of my sister Mary Ann, the eldest, who turned 30, then 40, then 50 first and proved it safe for the rest of us to follow. Sisterly squabbles never include Mary Ann. Nor are chicken sisters inclined to revolt against the best leader among them.

Now that this winter's hundred inches of snow have melted away, Wink and I have taken to sitting for a spell in the Kids Garden while our chicken sisters go about their business outside the fenced enclosure, unaware of their beauty and completely serious as their nature commands. I think about my sister Monica, who has suffered an unfathomable agony, the death of her daughter. Monica, who is endowed with more grace and sensitivity than all her sisters, continues to radiate these qualities, as nature would have it.

Watching chickens brings a feeling of immense antiquity. Through what seems like an eternity, despite the most difficult circumstances in the universe, we have been together: *G. gallus domesticus* and *Homo sapiens*, my sisters and me.





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Pierce's Northside Market helps support the Friends of Troy Gardens. In 2005, they donated a large truck to us that is used by our farm, community gardens, and educational programs.

Sign up for a Pierce's Market Club Card, and designate Friends of Troy Gardens (Charity Group Code #1275) today!

You'll save money on in-store specials, and a portion of every purchase you make will be donated to Friends of Troy Gardens.

Sign up in person or online at piercesmarkets.com.



Save the Date! Saturday, August 2



Savor The Summer at Troy Gardens

Celebrate Local Abundance

Free Family Fun!

Saturday, August 2

3pm-8pm

Free samples of garden goodies!

Kids' games & activities

Home-grown music & entertainment on the land

A GREEN FESTIVAL

Bring-your-own picnic to Troy Gardens—

Take-your-own trash with you when you leave

