

Looking Ahead

By Bob Gragson, Executive Director

While we may not run out of oil any time soon, the era of easy oil is over. We are entering a period of significant change. One of the world's leading energy investment bankers, Matt Simmons, speaks often of the importance of locally produced foods to our future. "Grow food locally. Grow food in your backyard," he said recently in an interview with *Fortune* magazine.

We agree with Matt that we all need not only to learn to grow our own food, but help others learn to grow their food too. Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens is dedicated to that end.

According to the Census of Agriculture, the number of U.S. farms fell off sharply after peaking at 6.8 million in 1935. In 2002, there were only about 2.1 million farms in our country. The average farm size in 1935 was 155 acres. The average size of U.S. farms today has grown to 441 acres. However, few farms nowadays are "average" in size. While 98% of U.S. farms are indeed family farms, nonetheless large-scale family farms account for 59% of all production. Most, if not all, of this food is shipped hundreds of miles on diesel trucks burning massive amounts of depleting fossil fuels in order to reach market. That's the problem, and that's why Matt urges growing food locally as he speaks to groups nationwide.

Our pledge to you is to continue to provide an alternative agriculture that is not reliant on fossil fuels by growing food sustainably right here, and more importantly, by teaching others how to do it where they live.

To reflect our renewed focus on education, this summer we changed our name from Friends of Troy Gardens to Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens. The name was selected by our board of directors to reflect the essential nature of laying the groundwork for grow-

ing food locally, and sharing expertise in gardening and conservation in our communities through our educational programs.

We are still responsible for the development, management, and stewardship of the 26 acres known as Troy Gardens on the Northside of Madison, Wisconsin. That includes Troy Community Gardens—one of the largest community gardens in Madison and the only one protected by a conservation easement so it will never be lost to development. We manage the organic Troy Community Farm and CSA with 115 household members, and the Troy Natural Areas Restoration with its tall-grass prairie, maple woodlands, and public walking trails

through an edible landscape. Much of our education takes place on this land where we are able first to inspire people with its beauty and functionality, and then to demonstrate to others the methods we use to nurture it.

We already do this through our existing gardening and farming education programs—Troy Kids' Garden for elementary school children, our Farm & Field teen education program, and college internships.

Additionally, our Natural Areas programs involve volunteer stewards of all ages, as well as service learning for adjudicated youth.

New on the horizon for 2009 are more education programs in development—a Youth Grow Local Campaign; Growing School Gardens program; a teen naturalists program; a green mentors program; a kitchen gardens program; and an educational workshop series focused on food production and preservation, natural building techniques, sustainable living systems, and alternative energy. These programs will be followed in detail in this newsletter as they take shape here at Troy Gardens.

In a world starved for solutions, not to mention healthful locally grown food, we are committed to providing both every day!



Celebrating Local Abundance at Troy Gardens

Our fourth annual Savor the Summer Festival took place August 2. In splendid weather, visitors strolled through community gardens bursting with individuality and vegetables, walked through the blooming prairie, and admired the straight, productive rows of Troy Farm.



Organizers put on a “green” event this year, without using generators, electricity or gasoline for any part of the festival. “Landscape” music was the featured entertainment—instruments designed to be heard outdoors without artificial amplification: African drums, bagpipes and accordians. Les Foté African drummers led by Shawn Barry performed first, followed by Rory Ward and Alex Murkve on bagpipes. In a flash of synergy (which those of us connected with Troy Gardens are getting used to by now) the drummers sat in behind the bagpipes and the musical jam that resulted was absolutely amazing.

Accordianists Jenny Marquess and Rita Benesh were scheduled to perform next. Due to the intense curiosity of kids and adults, the players brought their show down to the Kids’ Garden tent and engaged in a most delightful combination performance/learning session.



The Northside Planning Council and Dane County Timebank, two of our important local partners, shared space with Community GroundWorks under the main tent. Free ice cream and samples of ratatouille, a chilled vegetable stew that has become the signature treat of Savor the Summer, ensured plenty of foot traffic and merry interactions. Kids and adults enjoyed meeting and greeting

Toby and Tag, the friendly horses, as well as our beloved Kids’ Garden chickens.



As usual, the Savor the Summer Cookbook accompanied the festival (see page 7). Cookbook sponsors, including key sponsor St. Mary’s Hospital, enabled us to put on the festival and make a few dollars for our programs as well.

Many Thanks For a Great Savor the Summer!

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Festival Organizers

Terrie Anderson
Steve Lendved
Marge Pitts
Kurt Schnieder
Maury Smith
Martha Worcester
... and many more volunteers on
Savor the Summer Day!



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



TROY GARDENS DELEGATES TO ATTEND TERRA MADRE INTERNATIONAL MEETING

By Claire Strader, Troy
Community Farm Manager

It was late last winter when Nathan Larson, our Education Director, asked our staff and board of directors who might be interested going to Italy in the fall. Nathan explained that he had been talking with Sue Boldt, leader of the Madison chapter of Slow Food International, about submitting an application for Troy Gardens to send delegates to Slow Food's international conference—called Terra Madre, or Mother Earth—which takes place every other year in Turin, Italy. The conference brings together food producers, chefs and educators. The focus this year is education.

At Troy Gardens, we do a great deal of food education through our internships, Farm and Field youth training program, and Kids' Garden Program, with more to come in the future, so it seemed like we might be a good fit. Of course, several of us were interested in going. Who wouldn't want to go? I must admit that I for one thought that it was a little too good to be true that we might actually be selected from thousands of US applicants to represent our little Troy Gardens food community at the world's largest conference of "slow foodies."

As it says on their website, "Slow Food is a non-profit, eco-gastronomic member-supported organization that was founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world. Today, we have over 85,000 members in 132 countries."

Though I've been sitting with the news for weeks now, it's still hard to believe we were actually selected! Nathan Larson, Jake Hoeksema (Troy Farm Assistant), Marge Pitts (founding board member, Troy gardener and producer of this newsletter) and I will all travel to Turin for Terra Madre in late October. We are all very excited for this opportunity.



Terra Madre Plenary Assembly, 2006, www.terramadre2008.org

According to the Terra Madre website, "Terra Madre, which integrates new members every day, is made up of all those who wish to act to preserve, encourage, and support sustainable food production methods. These methods are based on attention to territory and those distinctive qualities that have permitted the land to retain its fertility over centuries of use. This vision is in direct opposition to pursuing a globalized marketplace, with the ongoing, systematic goal of increasing profit and productivity. Such methods have substantial externalities for which we, the guardians and inhabitants of this planet, pay the price.

"Day after day, the Terra Madre family grows, strengthens, organizes, and defends local cultures and products, and makes real the Slow Food concept of Good, Clean, and Fair quality. Good refers to the quality of food products and of their taste; Clean, to a production process that respects the natural environment; and Fair, in which there is dignity and appropriate economic return for the people who produce, including respect from those who consume.

"The third edition of the biennial international meeting of the Terra Madre Network will bring together food communities, cooks, academics and youth delegates for four days to work towards increasing small-scale, traditional, and sustainable food production. . . Together they share and compare the diverse and complex issues that underlie what "high-quality food" means to them: issues of environmental resources and planetary equilibrium, and aspects of taste, worker dignity, and consumer safety."



VOICES OF TROY GARDENS:

Community GroundWorks' Farm & Field Youth Training Program in Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Areas Restoration wrapped up its 6th season in August. The program involves youth ages 14-17, who participate 3 days per week during the summer. The teens split their time among Troy CSA Farm, Natural Areas Restoration, and Kids' Garden Program. Farm & Field teens earn income doing healthy work outdoors at Troy Gardens, and in the process develop basic job skills and learn about larger issues of ecological and agricultural sustainability.

This year the Farm & Field students were asked to keep a journal of their experiences and observations at Troy Gardens. What follows is a taste of their impressions.

Rachel Wimble:

6/25/08, 11:15 a.m. Troy Gardens prairie grotto. Cloudy, humid, hot. TODAY:

- Chipmunk running next to me
- Mosquitoes biting and swarming
- Wind blowing cloud
- Kids screaming far off
- Skin burning from the sun
- Pull weeds with broken glove
- Ground hard and muddy at once
- Green everywhere in sight
- Holes of groundhogs trip people
- Hands tired and bruised
- Tree takes up all the sky
- Pushing wheelbarrow with all I have
- Eyes squinting to focus

7/9/08: Today was nice, being able to walk the grounds in a relaxed environment and be able to spread out and look for birds. I think that now I am able to identify a few different birds. The sun made me feel a little faint for awhile. It was nice to just watch the trees, and feel the wind. We saw a giant dragonfly near us.



I don't really have much to write, because I think birding can come off really repetitive. But it's supposed to be. Being you're supposed to watch the

same things again and again looking for those small differences. My eyes sting still from looking into the sun too much and not blinking enough. I like



birding, since I've always been such an animal lover, but bird watching frustrates me a little because I'm not so good at seeing little differences, or hearing them. But all the same, it's a nice activity, because you're outdoors and you're thinking about things that may not had ever crossed your mind before.

7/16/08 * hot * 11:00 am * woods

Today we worked in the prairie, we used all the strength we had, under the warm sun, to shovel out more invasives. I sat in the dirt, looking at the purple berries on the ground. I had to smack at the bugs that had a thirst for me, it was useless because now, with my nails, I scratch. . .

A bird's chirp is quiet and loud at once. I keep pace with others all day even though I'm tired. A woman goes by on a bike with wind through her hair. Now it's time to talk about our strange thoughts. Then we will go, but first I should get the mulch out of my socks.

7/23/08: All in all, today was good. I will definitely take this experience with me. I have learned a lot about negative feelings affecting us and all those around us. Positive thoughts can really change the world, and life is an energy that we feel. Whenever I feel down I will try and remember all of this and use it to impact my daily life. I think that no matter what you believe, believing is what matters.

Matt Witt:

6/25, 11:13, Troy Gardens Prairie circle. 80 degrees, mostly cloudy.

- Mosquitoes sucking away at flesh.
- Birds swooping and diving in & out
- Plants slowly disappearing from hungry animals
- Bugs flying from every way
- 3 goldfinches
- 1 old oriole nest
- 1 brave chipmunk

FARM & FIELD TEENS

- Grapevine massacre
- Eating grapevines, rhubarb, and mulberries
- Smelled mint
- Bees buzzing by the ears
- Crickets already?

7/30, 11:08, sunny, hot. 13-lined ground squirrel running around the ground looking for seeds or possibly berries. When he saw me he darted from the side of the path and hid in the grass and long stalks. I guess he was scared of me but I guess I would be too if I saw a giant walking plant thing from my size being no taller than a pair of binoculars. I wonder what would happen if I was that size and I was trapped in a world where everything is taller than me . . .

Chris Coleman:

6/25/08, 11:20. I like having a lot of nature around me it sounds really beautiful. . . So if you would excuse me I got some insect and animal watching to do . . .

July 2, 2008: I heard kids singing "Dirt Made My Lunch" today. I picked and clipped grapevine today. Me and Matt also got scratched by the branches that we were climbing and had mosquitoes biting me like crazy. We had huge grapevines that we pulled and picked & also clipped. Me and Matt liked to work in the trees, we also saw a lot of prickly plants and also saw kids at the Kids' Garden picking up chickens. Also the kids were filling up water containers also a little girl was cleaning her shoes.

July 9, 08, sunny, no clouds, 8:39 prairie. There were a lot of mosquitoes. Very pleasant, a lot of birds, a lot of relaxed work, a lot of mulberries from mulberry trees. I really did like this experience today. I love being nosy but sometimes nosy can get you into trouble but actually sometimes you can get rewards for being nosy. I also saw a dog, and found some kind of bird's nest. I also found a beehive in an old tree in the family resting area.

Wed, July 23, 2008: Kathy (Gonzales, guest instructor) actually taught us how to use our energetic field. And how to touch each other's energy field and feel how they feel at times. I could really feel a lot of gaps in Sarah's field. I could feel a lot of bumps and a lot of flat surfaces also. I felt a warm sensation when I was touching Sarah's



energy bubble. I really like having to be in touch with other people and also other things. Kathy also taught us how to look at a tree's aura.

Jacob saw a vole today in the prairie garden. Jacob's group had problems. Rachel, Samantha & my group had no problems except for complaining, that's about it, and I liked my group a lot cause I knew most of the people in my group. I also was munching on a lot of Sarah's shelled walnuts!

I saw an inchworm today he was light lime green, he was crawling all over my hands and arms he was very cute. He also tickled my hairs on my hands and arms. He was tensy. He was about an inch long.

Dylan Conway-Greene:

6/25, 11:20, prairie circle, mostly cloudy. 5 or 6 goldfinches flying as if they were on a rollercoaster. Black & yellow birds that only look yellow during flight. 4 were perched on top of the bush in that tall bushy area filled with weeds, tall grass, and other plants next to the herb garden.

7/2, 10:53 am, brown tent, raining. I took a leaky bike pump and surprisingly filled the other wheelbarrow's tire with air.

7/16: With our handy dandy shovels and barely useful lightweight garbage bags, we were assigned by Christie (Ralston, Natural Areas Coordinator) to search and destroy all yellow and white sweet clover plants. If we got sick of shoveling, then we started hand pulling. We cleared those nasty plants that were in the prairie and only stopped a few times for food and water.

Anthony Rineer:

Calm day, very warm. Going to be hot. Today we split into groups. Half got trap construction [the students set various traps in the landscape to monitor amphibian, mammal and insect life],

half supposed to pick white & yellow clover. Everyone wants to build these traps; I decide to pick clover and I go on my way to get shovels. Sun already beating down pretty hard. Pulling clover is a little rough as they're pretty tough plants but it gets easier for some reason. Maybe I wasn't awake when I started. Lost in the luscious maze known as Troy Gardens.

NATION'S MAYORS VISIT TROY GARDENS

This summer some 20 mayors from across the country visited Troy Gardens as part of the Mayors' Innovation Project Summer Meeting. The Mayors' Innovation Project (MIP) is a learning network among American mayors committed to "high road" economic development—a competitive market economy of shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and capable democratic government.

MIP participants believe high road urban development is both good for cities and a key way to move the country forward. MIP was founded in 2005 by Madison mayor Dave Cieslewicz and Joel Rogers, a UW-Madison professor and director of the Center On Wisconsin Strategy (COWS).

COWS, based at the UW-Madison, puts into practice the "Wisconsin Idea": the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom, particularly within the cities in which universities are located. Since its founding 15 years ago, COWS has often been called "the Wisconsin Idea in action."

The UW-Madison's multi-faceted connection with Troy Gardens, a relationship that began more than 10 years ago and supports our success to this day, is another example of the Wisconsin Idea in action. In fact, this is the second time mayors participating in the MIP have visited Troy Gardens, the first having been in 2005 when MIP was initially formed.

This year the mayors discussed local food systems as a topic of their Summer Meeting. The mayors spent a Friday afternoon listening to speakers discuss urban food production, which can take many forms—from rooftop gardens to community garden plots, from urban farms to re-greened vacant lots, from microenterprises to farmers' markets. The following morning they visited the Dane County Farmers' Market on the Capitol Square, and then boarded a bus for Troy Gardens.

There they were met by Bob Gragson, Executive Director of Community GroundWorks, Jill and Kurt Schneider, Troy Community Gardens organizers, Marge Pitts, longtime Troy Gardens volunteer, and Wink, Troy Gardens goodwill ambassador dog. After

several minutes discussing the organization, history and modus operandi of Troy Gardens, everyone set off for a guided tour of our land and the programs we have in place.

The mayors seemed genuinely impressed with the history and success of Troy Gardens. Several mayors expressed hope that their visions can become realities now that they have learned how our grassroots vision became a reality right here on the Northside of Madison.

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SAVOR THE SUMMER ALL YEAR WITH RECIPES & STORIES

By Marge Pitts, Cookbook Editor

For the fourth year now, I have compiled a small cookbook to accompany our annual Savor the Summer festival. The recipes come from people who have a personal connection with Troy Gardens and the Northside of Madison. I ask (cajole, remind, beg, hound) contributors to include a little story with each recipe, like where they got it, what they like about it, what they like about growing the ingredients, or anything about their grandparents (I just like stories about grandparents). This year the cookbook turned out exceptionally well, if I do say so. So from time to time when space permits in the Troy Gardens Gazette, we're going to treat our readers to a good recipe from the Savor the Summer Cookbook. This one is my very favorite of 2008.



Catherine Tripalin Murray's Italian Plum Bread

Catherine Tripalin Murray has resided in Brentwood Village on Madison's Northside for 43 years.

Catherine writes the *Cook's Exchange* column for the Wisconsin State Journal, and is the author of several books. One of her books, *A Taste of Memories from "Columbus Park", Volume III*, includes recipes and history from the Cookbook Editor's Italian family in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Catherine's style of cookbooks that include personal histories and pictures has been the grand inspiration for the humble *Savor the Summer Cookbook*.

The Cookbook Editor met Catherine in her Brentwood home this summer over a delicious plate of Green Pepper Frittata (another recipe and story in the cookbook). They discovered they share many similarities, some of them Southern Italian idiosyncracies, some of them having to do with eating ice cream before bedtime.

Catherine writes: "Mother's Hungarian-German background was evident with the desserts she made for supper every night. An evening meal was never complete without a slice of pie or piece of cake. And there was always something ready to nibble on when my sister, Elaine, and I returned home from school. Because her banana bread was simply wonderful warm from

the oven, those memories have carried me through life trying to replicate for my family what she had established. When I discovered Italian plums, it seemed that I baked incessantly, trying and loving everything made with these little purple plums. This recipe produces a delicious finely-textured bread that became one of my favorites."

- 2 cups diced purple prune plums, 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 cup plain yogurt
- 1 tsp. grated lemon peel
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Cream butter, sugar and vanilla until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, and beat after each addition. Sift dry ingredients. Blend yogurt and lemon peel and add to the sugar mixture alternately with dry ingredients. Add plums and nuts. Grease and flour two 9 x 5-inch loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes, or until tested done.

Cookbook Editor's note: I tried this recipe substituting 2 cups of diced rhubarb for the plums and grated lime peel instead of lemon, omitting the nuts. I served each slice with a ladle of fresh sugared strawberries. Wow! I think this bread would be fabulous made with any fresh or frozen berries or fruit.



Dane County Timebank

Timebank members—donate Timedollars to Troy Gardens and we will use them to pay volunteers for helping out at on the land and in our office. It's easy to do online. Choose the Deduct time box under the My Hours tab when you open the My Account page, and designate Friends of Troy Gardens as the Service Provider. It's a win-win!



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Help Us Keep Troy Community Gardens Healthy!

Did you know?

- In 2008 Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens provided 329 plots for 190 gardening families.*
- Gardeners pay plot fees based on household size and income. More than half of Troy Gardeners are from low-income households.*
- Community gardeners use shared land to grow their own food, enhancing their food security and family nutrition. Community gardens provide outdoor recreation for gardeners as well as visitors who enjoy a peaceful, interesting place to walk.*
- Troy Community Gardens is a fun and friendly environment for people of all ages, incomes, and cultures to share the land and their gardening knowledge and ideas.*
- TROY COMMUNITY GARDENS OPERATES THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS! We need your help to continue to offer plots to families at every economic level.*



Make a contribution this year to support Troy Community Gardens.

Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.friendsoftroygardens.org.

A donation to Troy Gardens rewards hard work and puts food on the table for local families!