

DIGGING IN

At Troy Community Gardens
Madison, WI

NEW NAME, NEW HORIZONS

By Bob Gragson, Director, Community GroundWorks

Friends of Troy Gardens has a new name. We are now "Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens." Our Board of Directors decided that this name change would better reflect our role as an organization that is serving an increasingly broader community. As Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens, we will continue to develop our core programs including Troy Community Gardens, Troy Community Farm, Troy Natural Areas, Farm & Field, and our Kids' Gardening Program. In addition, we are currently developing several new community-based programs including Youth Grow Local, Growing School Gardens, Young Stewards, and Kitchen Gardens. Our more educational focus is about helping to change more lives.

The Troy Community Gardens are what most people identify with when asked about our organization. As such, we don't intend to change how the Gardens function within the organization. However, we have decided that a face lift was in order for the Digging In newsletter. We hope you like the new format.

If you have any questions about the changes described above, please feel free to contact me at 240-0409 or director@troygardens.org.

IMPORTANT END-OF-SEASON INFO

PLOT MONITORING DEADLINE (Monday, September 15, 2008)

The last chance to redeem a red flag by weeding sufficiently is September 15 at 5 pm. Questions about plot monitoring procedures may be directed to Christie Ralston at the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409 or info@troygardens.org for forwarding.

La ultima oportunidad a redimir una banderita roja por escardar suficientemente es el 15 de septiembre a las 17. Preguntas sobre las reglas de "Plot Monitoring" se pueden dirigir a Christie en el despacho de Community Groundworks (Troy Gardens) a 240-0409 o info@troygardens.org subject: Plot monitoring question

— *continued on page 2*

WORK DAY

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 20
9 AM -12 NOON**

If it is raining on September 20, the work day will be changed to September 21, at the same time.

Hnub ua haujlwm pab dawb yog 9/20/08, 9 a.m. txog 12 teev tavsus, yog los nag muab pauv rau 9/21/08 tib lub si-jhawm.

Día de Trabajo

El Sábado 20 de septiembre
9 am -12 medio día

Si llegara a llover el 20 de septiembre, el día de trabajo será cambiado para el día 21 de septiembre a la misma

IMPORTANT END-OF-SEASON INFO *continued from page 1*

Hmong Translation for Plot Monitoring Deadline: Hnub kawg rau cov tswv ua teb vaj zaub uas tau tus chij liab rhai rau lawm yuav tau tu nroj du dais tsis pub dhau lub 9 hli tim 15, thaum 5 teev tsaus ntuj. Yog muaj lus nug txog cov cais rau kev saib teb hu ncaj qha rau Christie Ralston uas nyob rau Community GroundWorks lub tsev ua haujlwm xovtooj yog 240-0409 los yog info@troygardens.org.

ALL-GARDENER MEETING (Saturday, October 11, 2008)

Please plan on attending the All-Gardener meeting this fall. This is our opportunity to share important information regarding the Gardens, and it is your opportunity to give input. One of the topics this year will be changing more of the plots over to no-till/organic plots. There is always a higher demand for these types of plots than the tilled/non-organic plots. We need your feedback on this topic. There will be other important topics and reminders discussed, so please plan on attending.

This year's meeting will be split into two different sessions. One session will begin at 10 a.m. and will be for those needing Hmong or Lao translation. The second session will begin at 12 noon for English-speaking gardeners, and we will try to have Spanish translation at this meeting. The same information will be presented at each meeting. A separate post card mailing will be made to announce the details of the meeting.

CLOSING DAY AT THE GARDENS (Saturday, October 25, 2008)

This date is important for a couple reasons. It is the last organized work day, so if you still need volunteer hours please plan on attending the September 20 work day or the October 25 work day. Closing Day is also the day by which you must have your garden cleaned up and ready for plowing next spring if your plot is located in a section that is plowed each year. **You must have your plot cleaned up by 9 AM on October 25.** If you do not clean up your plot by this time, you will be penalized by being moved to the bottom of the plot assignment list for 2009. **What does cleaning up your plot mean?** This means that if you are in a plowed section, all inorganic material such as fencing, wire tomato cages, etc., needs to be removed from your plot. If you'd like to leave your fencing material at the gardens, please bundle it neatly and place it against the T-posts west of the garden plots. If you choose to keep your material at the garden, we cannot guarantee it will be there in the spring. Cleaning out your plot also means that **all material such as corn stalks, sunflower stalks, etc., must be chopped up into 6 inch or smaller pieces if left in the plot.** If you maintained a compost pile throughout the season, you must spread the material out over your plot, so it breaks down over the winter.

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VOLUNTEER HOURS DEADLINE FOR 2008

The last day to satisfy your Volunteer Hours Requirement for 2008 is officially November 30, 2008. Since the last organized volunteer work day is Closing Day on October 25, 2008, from 9 a.m. to noon, it is highly recommended you complete your required volunteer hours prior to or at Closing Day. You can always volunteer on your own. There are suggested tasks in the notebook that is kept in the mailbox of the Gardens kiosk. Be sure to record your time in the notebook. Also volunteer work for other areas of Community GroundWorks counts toward your volunteer time commitment for your garden plot. Just be sure to log those hours in the notebook. If you do not complete your volunteer hours by the last work day on October 25, 2008, we cannot guarantee there will be volunteer opportunities after that date. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact Christie Ralston at the Community GroundWorks office (240-0409 or info@troygardens.org) to find out if there are volunteer opportunities in the office or other areas within Community GroundWorks. Community GroundWorks is under no obligation to find volunteer work for you, so please plan on satisfying your volunteer time commitment prior to or at Closing Day.

GARDEN LEADERS SHARE COMMON ISSUES

Over 30 garden leaders gathered at Troy Community Gardens on Saturday, August 9, 2008, to discuss issues that are common among all the area community gardens. The group found out they had much in common in trying to successfully coordinate their respective gardens. We learned Sheboygan Community Gardens had gardeners who spoke over 13 different languages as their first language. We learned Troy isn't the only Community Gardens experiencing increased theft this year. And, guess what, weeds are a problem at most of the gardens, not just at Troy. Here are some great tips and ideas we learned that day:

GARDEN THEFT

Other gardens have put up signs stating, "We work very hard on our gardens. Please don't take our food! Violators will be prosecuted." Troy decided this might help, so several signs have been placed on the perimeter of the garden plot sections. The following suggestions may seem simple but could be very effective: Hide your vegetables by planting tall flowers or bushier plants near them to hide them a bit. If you have your own fence and gate around your lot, perhaps a simple lock may deter a thief. Talk to those you see in the garden, especially if they don't look familiar or are wandering through plots you know they shouldn't be in. Just a friendly hello may be enough to get them to move on, and it tells them you are aware of who is in the garden. Get to know your garden neighbors. Tell them when you are going to be out of town and whether someone else will be tending your plot.

COMPOSTING WITHIN YOUR PLOT

Since we instituted the policy of composting weeds within your own plot or removing them from the site this year, many of us have had to learn how to incorporate plant material within our own plots. Some have simply pulled weeds and let them lie on the ground to serve as mulch. Others have brought in compost bins. Ben Sommers, an employee of CAC and a gardener at Troy, has even grown squash plants in his plot's compost pile. Reynolds, a small community garden in the isthmus area, has a three-bin compost system that works for them. At Drumlin Gardens, they make their own compost for their 35 plots. A couple gardeners even volunteer to collect material from area restaurants to incorporate into the pile. Whether a community garden is small or large, we learned weeds are a challenge. It seemed the leaders all struggle with the issue, but it was nice to know we were all in the same boat when it came to weeds!

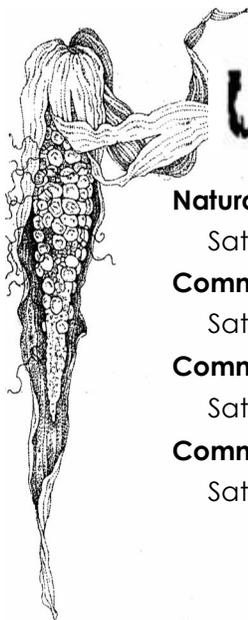
RAPTOR POLES

Perhaps the most interesting idea to come out of the day was raptor poles erected at one of the gardens to attract hawks. Hawks will prey on



small rodents in the gardens which we certainly do not lack at Troy. The poles need only be about 15 feet in height and should have a T-shape at the top for the hawks to perch on. Someone related the story about Mayor Dave visiting the garden with the raptor poles. There was a hawk sitting at the

top of the pole surrounded by the Mayor and other visitors. Right in the middle of the gathering, the hawk flew off the pole, dove toward the ground, scooped up a rodent and made off with the meal. It's one thing to put up the poles but to train the hawks like that -- quite impressive.



Upcoming Events

Natural Areas Stewards Workshop

Sat., September 13, 9 am - 12 noon

Community Gardens Volunteer Work Day

Sat., September 20, 9 am - 12 noon

Community Gardens Harvest Festival

Sat., September 20, 12 noon - 3 pm

Community Gardens All-Gardener Meeting

Sat., October 11 (note two meeting times)
10 am - 12 noon (Hmong/Lao)
12 noon - 2 pm (English/Spanish)
(Lakeview Library)

Community Gardens Work Day / Closing Day

Sat., October 25, 9 am - 12 noon

For details about any of these events, please call the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409.