

# DIGGING IN

At Troy Community Gardens  
Madison, WI

## Opening Day 2011

You can't say we weren't ready for Opening Day. We had somehow managed to find enough good weather to get the plowing done, the plots marked, the hay delivered and the tent set up. However, our luck ran out. The wind picked up on Friday with a vengeance, and what had been a solidly erected tent came tumbling down. Fortunately, Nathan Larson, our Education Director, was there with others to scoop up the canvas and save it from further damage. Then, on Saturday morning, the temperature was cold, the rain was on and off, and the wind had died down enough to erect the tent with the help of those who showed up early. In the meantime, Opening Day commenced with gardener check-in conducted from the yellow garden shed and new gardener orientation conducted from the tailgate of a car!

Some brave gardeners faced the cold, the rain and eventually the snow to get in some of their volunteer hours by pulling garlic mustard, cutting down rouge saplings, placing hoses at standpipes and completing many other tasks at the first work day of the season. Our next work day is scheduled for May 21 from 9 a.m. - noon and no doubt there will be better weather.

If you were unable to attend Opening Day and you ordered hay, please be sure to pick up your hay from the pile at

the north end of the gardens. If you can't remember whether you ordered hay, a list of orders is hanging in the display case of the garden kiosk near the yellow shed. A plot map is also hanging in the display case in case you need to find out which plot you have been assigned.

If you ordered row cover, we had enough leftover from last year to fill orders for those whose last names start with A-F. Those are in a box in the shed with your name on them. The rest of the orders will be filled once we receive the row cover from our supplier. The orders will be placed in a plastic bag within your plot once they are filled.

If you are a new gardener this year, hopefully you were able to attend the new gardener orientation at Opening Day. If you weren't, be sure to review the General Garden Information, Rules and Expectations (pages 5 and 6 of your plot application) to familiarize yourself with how things work at Troy Community Gardens. One important rule to remember is that you must start to work in and/or plant things in your plot by June 1.

Volunteer work days are held the third Saturday of each month. If you cannot attend, you can always volunteer on your own and record your hours in the notebook located in the left-hand



Opening Day Volunteers  
Suzy Bowditch and Kavita  
Sachdeva  
Photo by Jill Jacklitz

## WORK DAY

**SATURDAY  
May 21  
9 AM - 12 NOON**

If it is raining on May 21, the work day will be changed to May 22, 9 a.m.

Hnub ua haujlwm pab dawb yog 5/21/11, 9 a.m. txog 12 teev tavs, yog los nag muab pauv rau 5/22/11 9 a.m.

### Día de Trabajo

El Sábado 21 de mayo  
9 a.m. - 12 medio día  
Si llegara a llover el 21 de mayo, el día de trabajo será cambiado para el día 22 de mayo 9 a.m.

side mailbox on the garden kiosk near the yellow shed. A list of tasks can be found in the front of the notebook.

There are a couple open plots available, so if you know of someone who would like a plot, please have them contact the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409 or [info@troygardens.org](mailto:info@troygardens.org).

The **Annual Troy Community Gardens Plant Sale is May 22** from 9 am - 1 pm in front of Pierce's Northside Grocery. See Page 4 for details about this event and other upcoming events.

Lastly, thanks to all the Opening Day volunteers who made the event a success despite the ridiculous weather. Next year it will be perfect weather. Right?

# Great Information Shared at Gardening Class

If you weren't able to join us for the free gardening class, "Help Your Vegetable Garden Produce Like a Vegetable Farm," you missed a wealth of information. Megan Cain and Claire Strader of Madison FarmWorks, a Community GroundWorks business, shared their valuable tips and techniques for getting the most out of our 20 x 20 foot garden plots.

They covered a wide range of topics including knowing your space, deciding what to grow, succession planting, crop spacing, when to plant what, mapping your garden space, and crop rotation. If you didn't attend, read on to see just some of the information you missed.

Take a look at your garden space. Are the paths well defined? They should be about 1 1/2 feet wide. What about your planting beds? An optimally sized bed is about 3 1/2 feet wide. Avoid walking on your beds. This compacts the soil and reduces your yield. Roots can't grow and breath and water cannot get to the roots in compacted soil.

When deciding what to grow, consider growing what you are good at growing, what is expensive to buy in the store, or what you can't find in the store or at the market.

Did you know you can plant certain crops multiple times during the season or, in other words, practice succession planting. For example, you can plant radishes six times throughout the season, avoiding the warmest weeks in July and August. Many cool weather crops can be direct seeded at similar times. Even transplants can be put in the ground at different times, so you can reap the benefits throughout the season. For example, why plant basil just once at the beginning of the season. Plant a couple the week of May 16, and a couple more every two weeks through the end of July. You'll have some to enjoy all season and still have enough to make pesto before the first frost.

Crop spacing is an important technique to get the most out of your garden

space. Claire and Megan shared a useful guide that listed many common vegetables and the number of rows you can fit in a 3 1/2 foot wide garden bed and how far apart transplants should be placed. Be sure to tuck a tape measure into your gardening bag. You'd be surprised how inaccurate the "eyeballing it" method is.

Pay attention to those dates on the seed packets too. As a general rule, seeds will remain viable for three years. There are a couple exceptions such as parsley and alliums (onions, leeks, etc.).

Do you keep a yearly map of your garden space and write in the varieties you plant, when you plant them, where you plant them and the number of plants? You don't? Well, you should at least try it for a season. The following year will be a breeze when you don't have to think back through the long and ugly winter trying to visualize where and what you planted. You'll be able to just pick up your garden map and all the info will be right there. You'll be able to order different varieties of tomatoes if you didn't care for the ones you grew last year. You'll know that you planted 30 onions and you need to plant more this year because you ran out in December.

Do you ever wonder why your tomatoes always get the same diseases every year, and when you move them and put your peppers there instead, they don't do well either? The reason is these two vegetables are in the same family, Solanaceae. Vegetables in the same family are susceptible to the same diseases. Ideally, you should wait at least three years before you rotate the same family of vegetables back in the same spot. Another reason to rotate crops is that some vegetables can draw a lot of fertility out of the soil and deplete it. However, with

plots that are only 20 x 20 feet, it is difficult to rotate. Fortunately, you can do other things that will help such as planting a cover crop of oats and peas in the early spring. Pull them out and lay them on the soil right before you plant your warm weather vegetables. This will help build the soil fertility. Also, when you plant your tomatoes, be sure to mulch with hay around them. This will prevent the rain from splashing up off the ground onto the plants inviting diseases. And, while we are on the subject of water, do not water your plants, water the ground. Your garden should not need more than

1 inch of water a week and even less if you mulch heavily. It is better to water less frequently and more deeply than to water often with a little water.

Use row cover to protect new transplants from critters or to help direct-

seeded vegetables germinate faster. Row cover allows water through and keeps the ground warmer. Lay it over your beds, leaving enough slack for plants to grow. You can use dirt or rocks to keep the edges secured. You'll want to be sure to remove it before your vegetables flower to allow pollination.

When transplanting your vegetable starts, fill the hole for the transplant with some compost, water the compost enough to get it wet but not soggy, use your hand to scoop out a hole in the compost for the plant, and cover the wet compost with the dry soil from around the hole. You won't need to water it, and the plant will get nutrients and water from the wet compost.

Many thanks to Megan and Claire for providing this class at no cost to our community gardeners. For more information about Madison FarmWorks, visit <http://www.troygardens.org/what-we-do/madison-farmworks>.



Megan Cain and Claire Strader  
Photo by Jill Schneider

# Friendly Reminders

## No Parking Zone

At the request of our Troy Drive neighbors, we have been asked to not park within 15 feet of their residential mailboxes. The US Post Office will not deliver mail to mailboxes if there is a car parked within 15 feet. Please respect our neighbors, and refrain from parking near their mailboxes Monday through Saturday.



Español: No se estacionen más cerca de 15 pies cerca de las cajas de correo residencial en Troy Drive.

Hmong: Yuav tau nres tsheb nrug deb li 15 kotaw (feet) ntawm sab txoj kev Troy Drive uas muaj cov mailboxes rau cov tsev.

## Keep Green Flags in Plots

Please do not remove the green plot marker flag from your plot. Try to keep it in the center of the plot or near the path but obviously within your plot. The Plot Monitoring Subcommittee will need to reference the flag when monitoring plots.



Español: Por favor, no quite la bandera verde de su parcela. Ésta sirve como punto de referencia para el comité que hace el monitoreo de malas hierbas.

Hmong: Thov txhob rho tus chij ntsuab uas sau nej npe thiab nej tus nabnpawb tawm ntawm nej pav teb. Thaum pab saib xyuas teb (Plot Monitoring Subcommittee) ncig saib cov teb, lawv thiab li paub leejtwg qho yog qho twg thiab nyob qhov chaw twg.

## Weed Policy

We do not allow gardeners to dump weeds or plant debris anywhere on the property. Gardeners must compost their garden waste within their own plot or take it off site themselves.

Español: No se puede dejar malas hierbas o cualquier otro desecho vegetal en el fondo del jardín, como ha sido hecho en años anteriores. Todos los jardineros deben guardar tales desechos dentro de sus parcelas (para hacer abono) o quitarlos del sitio.

Hmong: Yuav tsis pub koj pov tej yam nyuag khaub nroj tsuag lossis me nyuam khaub ntoo, kav quav pobkws rau pem qab thaj teb lawm. Cov tswv ua teb yuav tau muab tej khaub nroj tsuag faus nyob rau nej thajteb lossis nqa mus povtseg tom nej tsev xwb.

## Congress for New Urbanism Attendees to Tour Troy Gardens

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) annual conference is being held in Madison, Wisconsin, from June 1-4. This year's event is called Growing Local, and on June 2 from 2-5 pm conference attendees will have an opportunity to tour Troy Gardens for the "Model Urban Ag Projects Grow Community" session. Jill Jacklitz, Community GroundWorks' Executive Director, and Nathan Larson, Education Director, will lead the tour.

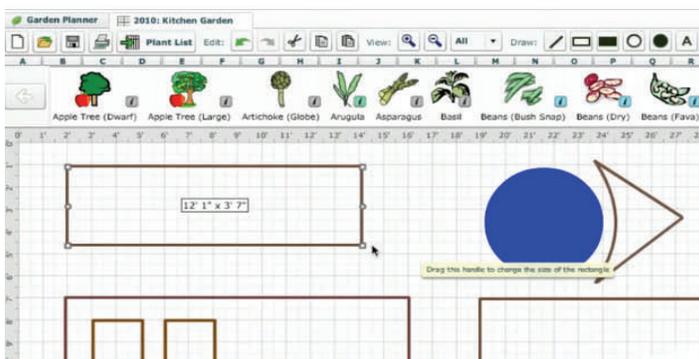
The tour will show how Troy Gardens integrates mixed-income, green-built housing with community gardens, an organic farm, and restored prairie and woodlands. Attendees will learn about Troy Gardens' award-winning children's educational garden, see the 330 family garden plots in the community gardens, and meet with volunteer stewards who restore and maintain the native tall-grass prairie and maple woodlands in the natural areas.

The Congress for the New Urbanism is the leading venue for new urbanist education, collaboration, and networking. CNU members come from around the world to discuss development practices and public policies, learn from recent innovative work, and advance new initiatives to transform our communities. CNU is the leading organization promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, sustainable communities and healthier living conditions.

This is an exciting opportunity to demonstrate to others just how much a project like Troy Gardens can benefit a community. We can all take pride in being part of Troy Gardens. Let's show others how they can make a "Troy" happen in their community. For more information on CNU and the conference visit <http://www.cnu.org/cnu19/>.

## Vegetable Garden Planner Tool from Mother Earth News

Mother Earth News offers an online garden planner tool to help you map out your garden, find first frost dates, plan succession plantings and cover crops, and keep track of varieties. A fully functioning version is available free for 30 days, and costs just \$25 per year (\$40 for two years). You will also receive regular newsletters via email with timely gardening information. To learn more visit the Garden Planner page at [www.motherearthnews.com/garden-planner](http://www.motherearthnews.com/garden-planner). View a YouTube video demonstrating the tool at <http://youtu.be/WzT2TV3AU8>.



## Potable Water Now Available at Troy

A drinking fountain was installed just east of the Kids' Garden area. Please use the drinking fountain if you need a water break while gardening. The pipes used to deliver water for garden plot watering are not certified for drinking water.



## 2011 - Important Dates for Community Gardens

<b>Saturday, May 21</b>	Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
<b>Sunday, May 22</b>	Plant Sale, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Pierce's Northside Market (see notice below)
<b>Saturday, June 18</b>	Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
<b>Saturday, July 16</b>	Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
<b>Saturday, August 20</b>	Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
<b>Saturday, September 17</b>	Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
<b>Saturday, October 8</b>	Community Gardens All-Gardener Meeting, 10:00 a.m. - noon
<b>Saturday, October 22</b>	Community Gardens Closing Day/Volunteer Work Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon (gardeners in plowed section must have all material removed from plots)

### Aluminum Cans Needed!

We will continue to collect aluminum cans to raise money for the gardens. Save your cans and bring them to each Saturday work day (3rd Saturday of the month).

**Español:** Traigan el sábado que son los días de trabajo latas de aluminio bacías en bolsas de plástico para juntar dinero para los Jardines.

**Hmong:** Nqa cov kauspoom aluminum (pesxij) uas haus tag lawm ntim rau ib lub hnab yas tuaj txhua hnub Saturday uas muaj ua haujlwm sib pab, muag rau kev nrhia nyiaj pab lub vaj.

## Troy Community Farm Greenhouse Grand Opening & Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14, 10 am - 2 pm

**Tour the greenhouse and learn about its passive solar design**

**Fill your garden with our certified organic bedding plants, including heirloom tomatoes, lettuces, eggplant, kale, and more!**

*Mark your calendar!*

**Troy Community Gardens Annual  
PLANT SALE**

**Sunday, May 22  
9am - 1pm**

**In front of Pierce's Northside Market**

**Heirloom and hybrid  
tomato & pepper plants,  
flowers, herbs and more!**

**All proceeds benefit  
Troy Gardens**



**Madison FarmWorks**  
URBAN VEGETABLE GARDENS

**We can help you become a better vegetable gardener by teaching you right in your own garden!**

ARTISTIC & PRODUCTIVE GARDEN DESIGNS  
ONE-ON-ONE INSTRUCTION IN YOUR GARDEN  
CUSTOM GARDEN PLANS  
PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATIONS



communitygroundworks.org

