Gardening for Good
The Supported Gardening Project at Troy Gardens

“Gardening for Good: the supported gardening project” is a pilot program being introduced on Madison’s northside this summer. Supported gardening assists people with developmental disabilities to explore gardening in a community setting, where the level of participation is individually tailored to meet the person’s skills and interest.

A select group of individuals with developmental disabilities, each with an accompanying support person, along with the project facilitator, will garden for the season at Troy Community Gardens. The 1½ hour weekly sessions will begin with time to plant and tend a shared garden plot. Following that, the supported gardeners will participate in weekly “mini-workshops,” which will be ½ hour lessons from wise community members. Topics will be related to gardening as well as other topics, including singing, citizenship, nature, crafts, story writing, flower bouquet arranging, and more. And finally, the group will end with a yummy snack and time to socialize with other gardeners.

In addition to the supported gardeners, other individuals with disabilities (accompanied by support people) that live on the northside will be invited to come to Troy Gardens on gardening night. There will be tables for picnics, playing games, and more. All interested folks will be invited to attend the mini-workshops and stay for a snack.

Gardening is a very experiential endeavor, and with support, the desired outcome is that supported gardeners discover that gardening is an activity that enriches their lives. In addition, the dream is that supported gardeners will develop lasting friendships and find their place in being part of the community at Troy Gardens.

The project facilitator is Rebecca Starke, a northsider and gardener at Troy Gardens. Rebecca has worked with people with disabilities for more than 20 years, assisting folks to find paid employment in the Madison community. She is also a long-time lover of gardening and is excited to share this passion with individuals with disabilities.

Northside residents with developmental disabilities are still being recruited. If you or someone you know is interested, contact the individual’s Dane County broker/casemanager for more information. The gardening sessions will begin May 31 and go through August 16. A special event is being planned for Aug. 12, the day of Savor the Summer at Troy Gardens, which also happens to be the day for Northside Ride the Drive. If you’re interested in volunteering with the Gardening for Good pilot program, there are several ways you can help:

• Weed and prepare the garden plot
• Build trellises and raised bed structures
• Host one of the weekly 30 minute “mini-workshops”
• Invite a supported gardener to help out in your garden on Thursday evenings
• Make yummy snacks to share at the end of the evening
• Technical assistance (website development)

If you’d like to help volunteer, please contact Rebecca at wearegardeningforgood@yahoo.com. Volunteer hours can be counted towards your Troy Community Gardens volunteer hours.
2012 Opening Day

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make Opening Day 2012 a success. We were all thankful it wasn’t snowing this year, so we could be out in the sunshine and actually see the faces of the gardeners rather than hats, scarves, mittens and parkas.

New gardeners were welcomed by experienced gardeners and given an overview about how things work at Troy. They were able to answer questions and show gardeners to their plots. Those attending were encouraged to pick up their hay and place it in their plots. If you still need to pick up your hay but forgot how many bales you ordered, check the plot map that is hanging in the display case of the garden kiosk near the red tool shed. The number of bales will be written next to your name on the map. If you ordered row cover but didn’t pick it up at Opening Day, it was delivered to your plot.

Opening Day is traditionally the first volunteer work day of the year, and we had about 60 gardener volunteers tackling tasks such as bringing out the hoses, mowing and weed whipping the grass around the property, pulling garlic mustard in the woodlands, and tackling many other tasks to get things in shape for the start of the season.

Don’t forget - gardeners can bring friends and family to help volunteer with them at the work days. Be sure to record your start time and end time in the sign-in log book, including the number of people volunteering on your behalf. You will get credit for their hours too.

If you go on vacation, ask a garden neighbor to take care of your plot while you are gone or contact us if you need someone to do some minimal watering and picking of produce. We can try to find someone to help out. Also, if you can’t take care of your plot for a period of time or have to give up your plot due to unforeseen circumstances, please let us know. We can work to find you help or reassign your plot to someone on the waiting list.

And, lastly, if you move or change your phone number or email, please notify us so we know how to contact you if needed. You can send an email to info@troygardens.org or call Martha at Community GroundWorks with your name, plot number and new information.

Enjoy the start of the gardening season, and dream of those vine-ripened tomatoes you’ll be enjoying in about 90 days, if not sooner.

A whole lot of rolling going on at Opening Day • (L-R) Michael Venner, Paosoua Xiong and Michael Jackson • Photos by Carolyn Drake

If you are interested in participating in the management of your community gardens, consider joining the Steering/Leadership Committee. The first meeting of the Committee is May 16. We meet one evening a month, usually during the third or fourth week of the month. Feel free to attend our meeting in May to see what it’s all about and decide whether you’d like to join us on a regular basis. We will meet at the picnic tables near the tool sheds or under the Kids’ Garden shelter if it’s raining.
Do You Like Grapes?

More specifically, do you like to grow grapes? We are looking for someone with an interest and skills in tending the table grape plantings and arbor between Troy Drive and the south edge of the garden plots. The job could involve annual pruning, trellising, planting new varieties of grapes, fertilizing, insect control (grape leaves seem to be a favorite food of Japanese beetles) and possibly even eating some of the grapes, which are grown for the benefit of anyone who would enjoy the ripe fruit.

The root stock of Troy's grapes was planted some 10 years ago by Dan Durica, a former coordinator of the community garden. At least some of the vines bore last year, but a number of those plantings seem unlikely to survive another season. Anyone with knowledge of viticulture—or an interest in acquiring it—could help bring our grape vines back to the their full potential and, like the adjoining beds of red raspberries, give gardeners and site visitors a good taste of what we're about.

If you’d like to put your skills to use and earn volunteer hours at the same time, please contact Patricia Lindquist at patricia@troygardens.org or 240-0409.
Great Information Shared at Urban Gardener Class

A group of 25 Troy Gardeners gathered Wednesday evening, April 25, to listen to Claire Strader and Megan Cain of Madison FarmWorks share a wealth of information about gardening. They discussed garden bed design and layout, planting schedules and succession planting, crop rotation and cover crops, proper planting techniques, mulching techniques, and much more. Attendees were able to pick up a copy of the Vegetable Planting Calendar written by Claire and Megan for just $5. If you missed the class but would like to purchase a copy of the Vegetable Planting Calendar, they will be available at the Troy Community Farm Plant Sale on May 12 (see details below). They can also be ordered from the Community GroundWorks web site (http://troygardens.org/what-we-do/madison-farmworks/supplies-services). There is an additional $2 charge for mailing costs if ordered from web site.

Megan and Claire have another class they will be teaching through Willy Street Coop called The Urban Gardener Part III: Growing Organic Tomatoes Successfully, July 10, 6-8 pm. The class will be held at Troy Community Farm and Megan’s own community garden plot at Troy. They will focus on growing a successful crop of organic tomatoes. Learn how to prune tomatoes correctly by practicing on the farm crop, see their four favorite types of tomato trellising in action and learn about their favorite varieties for Madison. Please meet near the red tool sheds in the center of the community gardening plots. Since this class is through Willy Street Coop, you will need to register by stopping by the Willy East Customer Service desk or by calling them at 251-6776. The cost is $15 for Willy Street Coop members and $25 for all others.

Madison FarmWorks

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Troy Community Farm Plant Sale

Saturday, May 12 • 10am - 2pm
(next to Troy Passive Solar Greenhouse near community garden plots)

Certified Organic Plants Grown in our Passive Solar Greenhouse

To see available varieties, prices and descriptions click here
(or type this address into your browser: http://www.troygardens.org/sites/default/files/troy-community-farm/2012TroyGreenhouseSale.pdf)