

DIGGING IN

At Troy Community Gardens
Madison, WI

Fun at CAC Garden Days

By Jill Schneider

The inaugural CAC Garden Days took place September 29 on a bright, sunny fall day. Troy Community Gardens was one of 10 community gardens to host events. We had apple pressing with an antique apple press, Hmong and African cooking demos, Asian egg-roll making, bird watching, Kids' Garden tours, including "meet the chickens," wreath making and trellis building workshops, an "Ask the Gardening Expert" table, music by Guinea Obobofo, the Gardening for Good program reunion and many wonderful door prizes.



Photo by Anne Pryor

Thanks to all who volunteered to make this event a success. The door prizes were donated by several local businesses, and we'd like to thank them for their support of Troy Community Gardens.

Join CAC at their annual Fall Harvest Potluck on Monday, October 29 from 6-8 pm at the Catholic Multicultural Center. They will be sharing photos and stories from CAC Garden Days and offering time for you to meet and learn from other community and food pantry gardeners. For details see Page 4.



WORK DAY

**SATURDAY
October 27
9 AM - 12 NOON**

If it is raining on Oct. 27, the work day will be changed to Oct. 28, 9 a.m.

Hnub ua haujlwm pab dawb yog 10/27/12, 9 a.m. txog 12 teev tavs, yog los nag muab pauv rau 10/28/12 9 a.m.

Día de Trabajo

El Sábado 27 de octubre 9 a.m. -12 medio día
Si llegara a llover el 27 de octubre el día de trabajo será cambiado para el día 28 de octubre 9 a.m.

CAC Garden Days Door Prize Contributors

Ace Hardware Center
1398 Williamson Street
608-257-1630

Jung Garden Center
1313 Northport Drive
608-249-8120
www.jungseed.com

Meikle's Northside True Value
2865 North Sherman Avenue
608-241-1541

Fiskars
Fiskars.com

Jim's Meat Market
1436 Northport Drive
608-244-8600
www.jimsofmadison.com

Mermaid Café
1929 Winnebago St
608-249-9719



End-of-Season Reminders

Last Work Day/Closing Day is 10/27/12

If you were gardening in plots H61-H120 this year, you must have any fencing and non-organic material removed from your plot by 9 a.m. on 10/27. You must also chop up large stalks (into 6 inch pieces) and spread out compost piles to help plant material decompose over the winter and make plowing easier in the spring. The Plot Monitoring Subcommittee will survey these plots prior to 9 a.m. and note any gardeners who did not comply. **Those gardeners risk being moved to the bottom of the plot assignment list for 2013.**

2012 Volunteer Time

You must complete your hours by 11/30/12 or pay for them (\$10/hour) before we accept your application in 2013. If you are currently a Timebank member (as of 10/1/12) and do not complete your volunteer hours for 2012, you may pay for missed hours with Timebank Hours. The last organized work day is 10/27, but we are under no obligation to find enough volunteer jobs that day. After 10/27/12, you can contact Martha Worcester at the Community GroundWorks office (608-

240-0409 or martha@troygardens.org) for available volunteer jobs, if any.

Spring Registration Date for 2013

March 2, 2013, is the tentative date for Spring Registration. Please watch for plot applications to be available on the website in mid-February 2013. You will be notified via post card (and email if applicable) regarding the event.

All Organic Plots in 2013

The same plots that are plowed each spring (H61-H120) will continue to be plowed, but for 2013 they will be considered organic plots just like the rest of the plots. That means organic gardening methods must be used in those plots. The use of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides made from synthetic materials as well as use of chemical fertilizers will be strictly forbidden. There has been an increase in requests for organic plots over the years. Being an all-organic community gardens makes sense for the environment and reduces potential harm to beneficial insects, birds, other wildlife and especially our gardeners.

Gardeners with and without disabilities share stories, get their hands dirty together

By Susan Endres (This story originally appeared on MadisonCommons.org on August 29, 2012)



Participants, volunteers, and other guests mingled in the clearing at Troy Gardens. Some sat at picnic tables covered with vibrant blue tablecloths while others served themselves at the abundant food table. They were meeting for the Harvest Party, the final gathering of the Gardening for Good program.

It started as an idea in Rebecca Starke's mind to combine two of her passions: gardening and working with people with developmental disabilities. She spent 20 years helping people with disabilities in a vocational setting and keeps a plot at Troy Community Gardens. Over the summer she served as the program director of Gardening for Good.

The program helps people with disabilities learn about gardening and related topics with volunteers at the Troy Community Gardens, where Starke introduced her idea. Each participant received the support of at least one volunteer.

"It really is giving people with disabilities a voice about something they care about and a way for them to really develop these new skills," Starke said, adding that it allowed

them to go beyond their "typical routine." She encouraged participants to pursue their individual interests and skills.

Aside from just gardening, participants gained a full community experience with the program, socializing with each other and other Troy gardeners. Many were able to see their own stories – told around a circle at several of the meetings – published on the blog Starke created.

"It's been an awesome project," said Carol Christopher, a Gardening for Good volunteer. "I learned a lot about gardening, and it's really just a fun place to come meet people."

At the party, appearances often weren't enough to tell the volunteers and participants apart; most chatted, danced, and drummed as if attending a reunion of friends.

"It's not like this is a group of gardening for people with disabilities; it's a group of gardening for gardeners," Starke said. She noted that one day only around nine of the 40 attendees were individuals with disabilities.

"It's not like it's insignificant that it's for people with disabilities, but it's more natural [than that]," she said, "people coming together, just enjoying each other's company."

Gardening for Good met once a week for an hour and a half from May 31 to August 16. Starke organized a mini-workshop each week to accompany time in the garden. Participants

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learned about a range of topics from bird-watching and flower-arranging to citizenship.

For three sessions sprinkled throughout the twelve weeks, Marge Pitts, a volunteer, led the “garden stories” workshop. Participants and volunteers shared their personal experiences with the group. She compiled their stories and pictures into a book that she plans to copy and distribute.

Both Pitts and Starke spoke fondly of the second story session. One man who chose not to participate during the previous “Garden Stories Salon” brought a guitar and played “Kumbaya” while the others sang along.

“It was perfect,” Starke said. “It was his expression of how he was feeling that night. So it doesn’t matter what people bring to it. All of it is really a fabulous contribution.”

Starke said sharing thoughts and feelings seemed to be “a different opportunity” for the project’s participants.

That was the moment most of them started to open up, Pitts said. “It’s not really a writing class,” she said. “It’s telling your story, and you do that however you communicate, whatever your gift is, that’s how you share.”

Starke also created a blog for Gardening for Good, where she posted entries after each week’s gathering. Some of them featured the stories given to her by the participants.

Harvest Party attendee Julie Horner said she’s been following the blog and enjoying their stories. She heard about the project from Starke and came to one of the gatherings early in the summer.

“For a community garden to have something like this for people with disabilities is just so fantastic,” Horner said. “What I’ve noticed is that the participants are really getting into gardening...I’d like to see all community gardens involving people with disabilities like this.”

Several others echoed this sentiment. Hoping to spread the idea elsewhere, Starke plans to talk with the Community Action Coalition, the group that oversees all area community gardens.

This summer, she had 12 consistent participants with disabilities but the number changed from week to week. They averaged around 10 volunteers per night. Some people – friends and fellow Troy gardeners – also came to “hang out”

with them even if they didn’t want to garden, which Starke encouraged. She liked that the project allowed people to meet their neighbors.

While the project at Troy was focused on people living on Madison’s north side, it drew people from all over.

Starke received funding for Gardening for Good from the Dane County Human Services in a one-time grant. She and Pitts plan to pursue more funding opportunities over the winter to continue the program next year.

“It’s been a huge success and Rebecca did an awesome job organizing it, and it’s just wonderful, and I hope we do it again,” Pitts said, “until I die.”

Most of the participants and volunteers enthusiastically support the project’s continuation. Rick Lewis, a participant with Down syndrome, said he would love to do it again next year.

“The project is great work...and we worked really hard,” he said. “I like everything about it.”

Despite the praise most attendees gave to Starke, she insisted that the program worked because of the participants and volunteers.

“I could do all the footwork that I could and it was the people coming together that just... clicked,” Starke said. “And people just came so open and engaged.”

She started to tear up as she talked about it. “I just came away from there just...deeply touched,” she said. “Why can’t it be like this everywhere is what it really felt like to me. Why can’t we all kind of come together in ways where we really accept each other right where we’re at?”

To read more about Gardening for Good, visit the blog at <http://gardeningforgoodmadison.com/>.

Gambian Spinach Stew ‘Plasas’ or ‘Palasas’

*Recipe from gardener Heather Harris-Fatty who made this
Gambian dish to share at CAC Garden Days*

- 2 packages frozen chopped spinach
- 1 pound beef stewing meat
- 1/2 pound smoked fish, flaked
- 2 hot chili peppers
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup groundnut paste (peanut butter)
- 3 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups palm oil



1. Cut meat into bite-size portions.
2. Put meat in saucepan with two cups of water, salt, chopped onions and peppers.
3. Bring to boil and add palm oil.
4. Continue cooking partly covered. Cook for 1 1/2 hours over medium heat.
5. Add spinach (previously thawed and drained), flaked fish and groundnut paste mixed with water.
6. Stir, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

The recipe is served with steamed rice. Enjoy!



Upcoming Events

Community Gardens Work Day/Closing Day*

Sat., Oct. 27, 9 am - 12 noon

All gardeners located in plots H61 through H120 must have non-plant material removed from their gardens, woody plant material chopped up, and compost piles spread out by 9 a.m. on 10/27.

CAC Fall Harvest Potluck

Mon., Oct. 29, 6-8 pm (see details on Pg. 4)

*For more info about these events, please call the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409.

CAC Community & Food Pantry Gardens Fall Harvest Potluck

Date: Monday, Oct. 29, 2012
Time: 6-8pm
Location: Catholic Multicultural Center, 1862 Beld St., Madison
(CMC is just east of Park Street near Bram Street)



Please RSVP to Michelle at mshively@cacscw.org or Telephone: 246-4730 x 208

- All community and food pantry gardeners are welcome!
- View photos from CAC Garden Days and garden events in 2012
- A great opportunity to find out what's going on at other gardens and learn from one another. Come share your garden's accomplishments this year!

Please bring a dish to pass!

(Hmong) CAC Community & Food Pantry Gardens Fall Harvest Potluck

Hnub: Monday, Oct. 29, 2012
Sij Hawm: 6-8 tsaus ntuj
Chaw nyob: Catholic Multicultural Center, 1862 Beld St., Madison
(CMC is just east of Park Street near Bram Street)

Thov RSVP rau Michelle xov tooj yog 246-4730 x 208 email mshively@cacscw.org

- Peb thov caw kom tag cov neeg ua teb tauj kom tau!
- Yog ib lub caij nyoog zoo los sib ntsib thiab sib tham txog koj daim teb.

**Peb noj Potluck,
nco ntsoov ua ib taig zaub mov nqa tuaj rau sawv daws noj!**

Cena de Cosecha de Otoño para los Huertos Comunitarios

Fecha: lunes, el 29 de octubre 2012
Hora: 6-8 de la tarde
Localidad: Centro Multicultural Católico, 1862 Beld St., Madison
(CMC está al este de la calle de Park, cerca de la calle de Bram)

Por favor responde a Micah en micahk@cacscw.org o 246-4730 x 236

- ¡Todos los jardineros de los huertos comunitarios son bienvenidos!
- Una oportunidad buena para enterarse de que esta pasando en los otros huertos y aprender unos de otros. Vengan y compartan de los nuevos de su huero de este año!
- Traducción estará disponible bajo petición.

¡Por favor, traiga un platillo de comida para compartir!



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