

Brownsville Community Gardens Newsletter

By J.D. Cochran

"COME GROW WITH US" August 2007

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What's "Growing On"

Welcome to all of our new community gardeners. You should all be very pleased with the number of positive comments and compliments we've received about the progress and growth of the gardens. Eleven of the fifteen plots have been leased and planted and are growing rapidly in the summer sun. The late season showers and cloudy humid days have helped avoid transplant shock and aided in germination of seeds. We have been fortunate to have minimal damage from the local deer that have used this area as a trail to the river, their watering hole. Several gardeners have used companion planting with strong smelling herbs and marigolds as a border barrier and three plots were sprayed with an essential oil blend to deter vertebrate damage. Keeping in mind that this has historically been a natural habitat for birds, squirrels, raccoon, deer, gophers and field mice among others. It is interesting and educational to tour the gardens and track the progress of each plot. Without design we have created a mini research lab where a variety of organic practices have been applied. The various use of soil amendments, i.e., alfalfa pellets, grass clippings, compost blends, coffee grounds, mineral and micro organism additives, and a variety of steer washings so far a variety of

We have When we started just seven weeks ago scheduling meetings with the property owners, Eric and Carla Gerber, everyone's was concerned about late season planting. Thanks to the generosity and dedication of many volunteers and advocates of the community garden project the we were able o

"Harvest to Healthy Homemade"

Now what to do with all that gorgeous produce fresh from the garden? We are hoping to create a recipe exchange and helpful hints column with ideas on how to prepare, use and store your fresh produce. If you are interested in submitting your recipes and tried and true practices please contact the Community Garden Manager, at 466-3116. I hope to be e-mail ready by the next monthly issue of our new Community Garden Newsletter. I'll get us started with a delicious and refreshing summer drink that's sure to quench your thirst and re-hydrate you after a hot day in the sun.

Crisp Cucumber-Lime Quencher

1 fresh picked cucumber thinly sliced

1 organic lime thinly sliced

1 gallon of spring water

2 trays of ice cubes

12 fresh picked mint leaves or your favorite herb

(lemon balm, pineapple sage, etc.)

Slightly bruise herb leaves to release flavor and oils, add all of the above to a large glass pitcher and chill for 30 minutes. Remove bruised herbs and replace with fresh leaves for garnish. Serve over ice.

“New Growth” News

What’s coming up at the Community Garden and the Brownsville Co-op? We will keep you informed on the latest developments and upcoming events that might be of interest to your growing concerns. July has been a productive month with regard to bringing education and experience to our community. The Brownsville Co-op has sponsored two local gardeners to attend the 2007 OSU Master Gardener Mini College. This is an excellent opportunity to glean information from experts around the country in various fields of gardening techniques. Course studies include the latest information on pesticides, soil surveys, plant production and protection with sustainable practices, success with clay soils, ergonomic gardening, water wise - eco roofs and rain garden techniques, ecosystem landscaping, vertebrate pest management, and seed saving techniques, along with training in greenhouse and garden management and mentor programs. We will also be touring the OSU Veggie Farm..

The Co-op will then provide information to the community through ‘Salon’ meetings held at the Corner Café’ on Friday evenings at 7 pm. Check the newsletter, newspaper or at the Farmers Market the ..

In August the Saturday Farmers Market will be hosting a mMaster Gardener Booth

Harvest to Healthy Homemade *What to do with all of those beautiful zucchini’s ?*

Nutritious Notes about Zucchini

Zucchini is low in calorie, easily digested and high in vitamin A, potassium and iron. It is an excellent addition to a regular diet and beneficial for those taking medication for high blood pressure as it helps replace lost minerals. Even the blossoms may be eaten during the growing season, excellent in salads.

How to Harvest, Use and Store

Zucchini is best used fresh, as refrigeration reduces flavor. Although zucchini can grow to spectacular sizes the larger the fruit the less flavor. Zucchini skins become thick and tough and the meat spongy and tasteless with large seeds. Unless your end goal is buffet boats or edible veggie bowls it is best to pick them when they are 6 to 10 inches long, softball size for the eight ball variety. The very young fruits are picked with the blossoms still attached as fingerlings and are prized by gourmet gardeners.

Zucchini is one of the most versatile vegetables in the culinary arts. It can be used raw, steamed, grilled, fried, baked, stuffed, sautéed, pickled or preserved. It is easy to prepare, no peeling required, and can be frozen after minimal preparation for winter use.

(The Fruit and Vegetable Stand by Barry B allister, the Overlook Press,, Peter Mayer Publishers, Inc., 2002)

What’s “Growing On”

aged sawdust and horse manure mix. In addition there have been a variety of organic fertilizers used which include fish emolition, aged chicken manure, organic steer manure, nature’s best organic compost, and used coffee grounds which provide 2% nitrogen and are excellent for aeration to the dense clay soils which will add improved tith at the gardens.

Just as a reminder with the rapid growth of trailing plants and weeds please remember that it is our responsibility to manage growth by keeping our plots weeded and directing growth habits. It would also be helpful to weed the front borders of our garden plots as it is difficult to mow beyond the grass playing field. There will be a bundle of stakes and twine at the back corner of plot 1 for use, along with a few helpful tools for weeding and straw for mulching, donated by The Green Heron art gallery. Please return tools to this site as we do not have a storage shed, yet. We also seem to have a shortage of hoses and sprinklers if you have spares at home we can put them to good use and return them at the end of the growing season. In cooperation with the Croquet Court, which plays every Sunday and Wednesday at 6 pm., please avoid overspray on the grass

during these times. Thank you.

“New Growth” News

For upcoming dates and topics.

The Framers Market will be hosting the OSU ext. Master Gardener booth this month on August 25, 10am -12pm. This will be an excellent opportunity to “ask a Master Gardener” questions and pick up helpful information and free literature on a variety of subjects. Also there will be class schedules for Composting Workshops in and around Linn Co..

The Brownsville Community Gardens is seeking interested parties to volunteer and join the Community Gardening Committee which will oversee, plan and help direct the future, growth and needs of the community garden project. We have been working in cooperation with the City of Brownsville, the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Board in hopes of securing a new expansion site for the Community Gardens. There are several sites proposed and we are working diligently in hopes of getting started this fall on site and soil amendments to be ready to plant next spring. Contact the garden manager, J.D. Cochran at 466-3116 if you are interested in this exciting project.

We are also working on providing an interactive resource arrangement to provide fresh local produce to the needy families, and seniors in our community.