

THE ITHACA COMMUNITY GARDENER

The Newsletter of the Ithaca Community Gardens

August 2014

FRIENDSHIP DONATION NETWORK RESCUES FOOD, REDUCES HUNGER

by Casey Romanick

The Friendship Donation Network (FDN) began in 1988 with the mission of gathering fresh nutritious food from stores and farms and redistributing it to people in need. This task is accomplished by “an extensive network of volunteers who pick up donations of mostly perishable excess and day-old food and deliver them to pantries and programs that serve in excess of 2,100 people weekly.” (friendshipdonations.org) In the process of connecting people with food, FDN diverts over 500,000 pounds of food from the landfill each year. Good food that is considered unsellable for cosmetic reasons and would be discarded by stores, supermarkets and farms, is instead rescued by FDN and taken to where it is needed most.

Something that makes FDN unique from other programs of its kind is that it provides a system in which backyard gardeners (not just larger farms and stores) can donate extra homegrown produce to members of their community instead of adding it to their compost piles. This is done through Neighborhood Food Hubs located throughout Tompkins County. Community members donate their porches as drop-off sites (or Hubs) for gardeners to bring their extra bounty. FDN volunteers collect the food from the Hubs to redistribute throughout the community. The

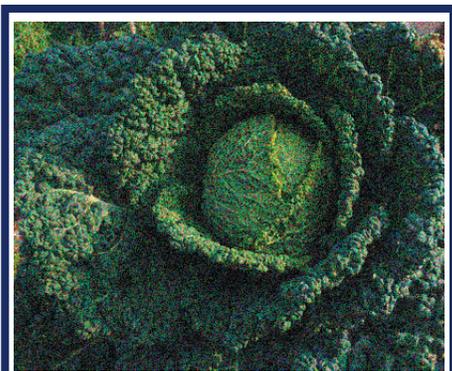
Neighborhood Food Hubs began as a pilot program in 2013 and in just 11 weeks over 700 pounds of surplus vegetables, fruits and eggs were collected at four sites in Ithaca. This year the program has expanded to Danby, Groton, Dryden, Newfield and has added additional sites in Ithaca.

FDN is in need of more volunteers. Contact them if you are interested in helping to rescue food in your community!
E-mail: info@friendshipdonations.org or phone: (607) 216-9522

**CALLING ALL GARDENERS:
ITHACA COMMUNITY GARDENS BECOMES FDN FOOD HUB!**

Got more beans, greens or beets than you can eat?
Wednesdays and Sundays from 8 AM to 7 PM

donate your extra produce to the Friendship Donation Network. Place veggies in the coolers stationed at the tool sheds on either side of the garden. Bags provided. Thanks to the ICG Food Hub volunteers Elizabeth Burns, Paul Leskinen and Judith Barker!!



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KNOW YOUR FELLOW GARDENER

by Glen Robertson and Casey Romanick

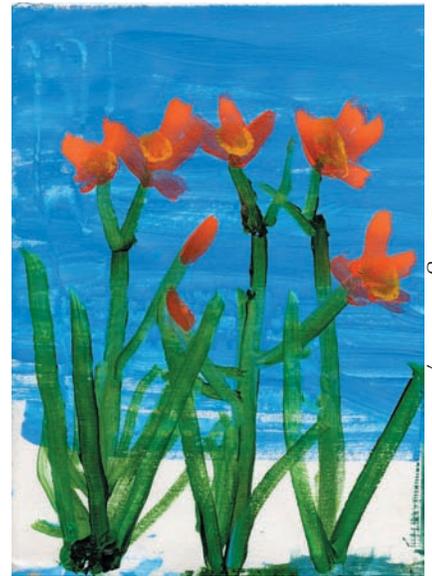
Challenge Workforce Solutions is a nonprofit, vocational services organization that offers opportunities and support services to individuals who face barriers to employment. Challenge's mission is about helping the people they support to reach their full potential and achieve the highest possible level of personal success.

Glen Robertson, Employment Specialist, and a committed group of clients from Challenge Workforce Solutions have been working plot #118 for the past 8 years. Having a plot at the Ithaca Community Garden has been a cost-effective way for Challenge to provide training in both work and healthy living skills to clients. Robertson explained, "We have created bouquets to donate to local nursing homes and decorate our lobby. We have grown organic vegetables to supplement healthy cooking classes. This year, we are growing flowers once again and selling cards featuring the paintings of one of our clients as a fundraiser to give something back to the Garden." As of this printing, the group has raised \$100 for the Gardens.

Adam DelliBovi, the artist, was inspired by the flowers he helped grow at the garden and began painting them. He has been one of the gardeners since day one. "I can't imagine gardening without his help," said Robertson. Adam has gone on to win awards for his paintings as well as selling at the recent Ithaca Artist's Market.

"Gardening has been such a popular activity for Challenge clients that we would like to continue offering work-based training activities for our younger clients as well as health and wellness education for our older clients," explains Robertson. Plans for next year include starting a small business growing floral bouquets to sell to local businesses or donate to non-profits, starting a seed library, and eventually creating a wheelchair accessible gardening site in Ithaca. "I'm very excited about the seed library, as a way to share seeds of locally adapted veggies and flowers," adds Robertson. "I also think it would be a great way for our clients to connect more to the local gardening and farming community."

"My clients and I are very thankful to the Ithaca Community Gardens for the chance to nurture a plot of land over the years," concludes Robertson. Anyone interested in Adam's greeting cards, the seed library, or accessible gardening spaces can contact Glen Robertson at glenr@aboutchallenge.org.



"Orange Iris" by Adam DelliBovi



Gardener Chris Tadder with a bouquet he created

UPDATE FROM THE COMPOST CREW

By Samantha Sasnow and Kevin Possman

The main focus in the compost area this growing season has been maintaining the current compost bins, which have become quite full with garden waste. Each workday we've had a team of workers focus on turning the piles. This improves air circulation and is an important step in breaking down the yard waste. Right now there are no signs indicating in which bin to dump waste, but we will be posting signs soon to designate which bins have room. It would be ideal to have one open pile accepting waste, two piles that are 'cooking', in which waste should not be dumped, and a finished pile that may be used on garden plots. It's important to keep in mind that the finished compost may contain a lot of weed seeds, as most of the

decomposed plant material is weed from garden plots. We are working on optimizing the composting process to destroy these seeds, but a simple DIY method is to put the finished compost in black plastic bas and let them bake in the sun for a few hot days.

Future plans: You may have noticed the bins overflowing with garden waste recently. To solve this problem, we're hoping to break the compost bins into smaller stations and relocate them throughout the garden. This way the bins can be turned more easily, will be accessible via tractor if need be, and easily accessible to gardeners. Eventually, we will be soliciting feedback from gardeners on optimum placement of new bins.

Please contact us with any compost questions! ssasnow348@yahoo.com

GARDENING IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

by Oona Beall

“And if what I fear indeed happens? If the next twenty years sees us pump ever more gas into the sky, and if it sees us take irrevocable steps into the genetically engineered future, what solace then?”

Whenever the topic of climate change comes up, I feel increasingly that it is discussed as if we are heading towards a precipice, looking out into the unknown and knowing that sooner or later, the fall is coming. Our actions generally reflect that we feel we have the time to stop and turn around. And yet we are already experiencing the very changes we've been told will occur (changes in the strength of storms, changes in rainfall patterns, extreme drought, etc.). Our society's collective inaction suggests that we generally think we've got time while the quote above reflects the feeling by some that we don't.

But that quote is not from some recent article; it's from *The End of Nature* by Bill McKibben and it was originally published in 1989. I realized something quite intense in reading it 25 years after its initial publication - we've really been wasting our time. I was just 10-years-old in 1989 and was too young to remember that at that time even conservative President George H.W. Bush showed signs of concern and initial action in response to global warming. By the time I was in my twenties and becoming politically engaged, 'global warming' and the increasing environmental crises were things that had been relegated to the fringe and had all but left the mainstream political stage in the United States. The people who talked about such things and took action to defend a dying planet - those were the crazies, the radicals, the ones out on the edge.



Hurricane Sandy heading for shore

So here we are now, the very fact of climate change having scratched and clawed its way back into our consciousness with the help of so many but the active resistance of so many in power. In all this time, some of us have made little shifts here and there. We drive more fuel-efficient cars or hybrids, we buy organic maybe even local, we tend a garden. But in the decades since the warnings began, have these small shifts been enough to save our dying planet?

From *The End of Nature*:

Over the last century a human life has become a machine for burning petroleum. At least in the West, the system that produces excess carbon dioxide is not only huge and growing but also psychologically all-encompassing. It makes no sense to talk about cars and power plants and so on as if they were something apart from our lives - they are our lives. George Orwell, writing before World War II, when this addiction was still in its early stages said, “The coal miner is a sort of grimy caryatid upon whose shoulders everything that is not grimy is supported...In the metabolism of the western world, the coal miner is second in importance only to the man who ploughs the soil.” Now that agriculture depends so heavily on fossil fuels, even that rank is reversed.

As organic gardeners, we know the importance of keeping fossil fuels out of our own small agricultural projects. We know how important it is for the health of the soil as well as the health of our friends and families as they eat what we grow and, whether we think about it or not, we are making a choice to care for the earth as it cares for us.

As gardeners, we also know that climate change is



affecting us. The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County has held several workshops on this matter. They talk about how the seasons are changing, the rainfall patterns are changing, insects and pathogens are changing. As McKibben touches on several times in the book, agriculture (on whatever size scale) depends on predictable patterns; on climate and weather being consistent over time. But in the workshops that I've participated in, the focus has been on how gardeners can cope with the changing climate much more than how we can be an active part of the solution.

While I think that this is all very useful information, I urge us all to be more active in the movement against climate change and for a future world rooted in equality, cooperation and a healthy relationship with our planet. We must all work together to maintain access for *all* to local, organic, responsibly grown food. I know that many of us have begun this work already and some have been doing it for years but we must all be participants.

Maybe that does mean stepping up our individual actions: figuring out how to not drive at all, insisting on a solely local and organic diet, sharing more with our neighbors. But it also must be actively supporting a movement towards a different way of life. We, as gardeners, already know the importance of the food piece of this puzzle but how can we expand into a more holistic approach for ourselves and our region? Can we join forces with gardeners throughout the area and then together reach out to others and share our skills so that we can expand the numbers of people growing their own food? Can we challenge ourselves to actively participate in making sure every person in our community has access to healthy local food?

Consider this: In the nineteenth-century, Paris, France fed itself year-round from about 6% of the land in the city.* According to Wikipedia, the population of Paris reached 660,000 by 1815 and consisted of a land area of 13.3 square miles. Comparably, Ithaca as of the last census had a population of about 30,000 and 5.5 square miles of land (city proper) and Tompkins County, population 101,000 and 460 square miles. That's far fewer people with much more potential land to work with even if we left a significant amount of land untouched and uncultivated for ecologic sustainability and biodiversity.

Without access to the cheap fossil fuels required to ship food over thousands of miles, the gardeners of Paris used creative techniques and local resources to extend the season and feed their communities

throughout the year. The result was something that 150 years later, we consider radical. But history shows us that we can, indeed, live locally - in fact, humans have been for the majority of our existence. The question is: can we give up some of our comforts from far-flung places in exchange for the fulfillment of a truly healthy, local food system that would be good for our environment, our bodies and our local economy? Setting ourselves a goal of creating a system here in Ithaca like the Parisian model could be a huge step in the fight against climate change; one we as gardeners could begin right now.

In the words of Vandana Shiva, the most concrete things we can do are to save seeds and grow a garden.** As community gardeners, let's continue to do that and let's use the time we still have to organize more and fight harder against climate change and in pursuit of a just and equitable world.

~

*From *The Winter Harvest Handbook*, by Eliot Coleman

** From a interview with Vandana Shiva in the June/July 2014 *Mother Earth News Magazine*



Event will be held RAIN OR SHINE. Ithaca Community Gardens is located on Carpenter Circle off 3rd St near the Ithaca Farmers' Market. For more info: www.ithacacommunitygardens.org

WHAT'S BLOOMING IN THE ELSIE SHELDRAKE FLOWER GARDEN



by Susan Nassar

Elsie Sheldrake was a great supporter of the Community Gardens, donating wonderful plants from her nursery, Early Bird Gardens. Though she always saved us vegetables and herbs she also wanted us to have flowers. She liked to imagine the bees and the butterflies visiting the bright blooms, pollinating the vegetables. The perennial garden is named in her honor, and is meant to be a living symbol of community support for the Community Gardens.

It's taken some time to tend the soil but now the perennials are taking off. The trees in bloom are Rose of Sharon. The rudbeckia are called Autumn Sunset and were donated by Siri Jones of The Magic Garden. Other perennials from Siri may not bloom until next year. That's why there's also some annuals filling in the gaps: snapdragons and petunias.

On the other side of the water tank you'll find some native plants: echinacea, lavender, bee balm (monarda) and cup plant (the leaves form a cup around the stem). Sadly the buds of the phlox got eaten by some creature (deer?) but hopefully will be back next summer.

The Elsie Sheldrake Flower Garden is located on the Route 13 side of the Gardens. Walk in the main entrance and watch those bees and butterflies on the echinacea and bee balm.

Look for a sign soon!

Garden Recipe Share

Submitted by Jo Todd, plot 212

Gujerati-style Green Beans

from Madhur Jaffrey's Indian Cooking

I've also made this recipe with broccoli.
Delicious hot or cold!

Ingredients:

1 lb. fresh green beans
4 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon whole black mustard seeds
4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1/2-1 hot, dried red chilli pepper, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Trim and cut the beans into 1 inch lengths.
Steam until just tender.
Heat the oil in a large pan over medium heat.
When hot, put in mustard seeds.
As soon as the mustard seeds begin to pop, add the garlic. Stir until light brown.
Add the crushed red chili pepper and stir a few seconds.
Add the green beans and salt. Stir to mix. Turn down heat and cook 5 minutes to absorb flavors.
Add black pepper to taste. Mix and serve.



COMMUNITY EVENTS (FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

**Compost with Confidence -
"Is it Done? & Compost Uses"**
Saturday, August 30 11am-12pm

**Compost with Confidence -
"Indoor Composting"**
Saturday, Sept 27 11am-12pm
How to maintain an indoor bin using a double bin ("stealth") system.

To sign up in advance for either compost workshop, email Mila Fournier: ymf5@cornell.edu or call 607-272-2292.

Location for both:
Compost Demo Site at
Community Gardens (RR side)

Boiling Water Bath Canning
Wednesday, September 3 1-4pm
This class covers safely using a boiling water bath canner to preserve tomatoes, fruits or pickles. Participants will receive the most updated information on canning procedures and hands-on practice.

Register by calling 607-272-2292, online at <http://preservation.peaksmaker.com/champions/>, or in person at CCE-Tompkins. Full \$15 payment is required at time of registration.

For more information, contact Carole Fisher at crf11@cornell.edu.

Location: Cornell Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Avenue

**Open Garden Day at
Ithaca Community Gardens**
Sunday, September 7 1-4pm
Join us for ICG's first Open Garden Day! Tour the gardens, see what vegetables and flowers are growing, ask gardening questions and learn more about community gardening! Face painting and other fun activities for kids. Rain or Shine!
Location: Ithaca Community Gardens

**Wood's Earth
Back to School Dinner Fundraiser**
Saturday, September 20 7pm

<http://woodsearth.com/back-to-school-fundraiser-tickets/>



Join your fellow gardeners in welcoming the community into our wonderful space! **Sunday, September 7th from 1pm-4pm, the Ithaca Community Gardens will host its first Open Garden Day and we need your help!**

We're looking for volunteers. If you'd like to help us get set up, do outreach for the event or do some clean up at the end, contact Kris Torgeson at kris.torgeson@gmail.com or Kelly at ksuzannefrank@gmail.com. Don't miss out on this fun event for all ages!

We hope you all enjoy this edition of The Ithaca Community Gardener. If you have recipes, photos or gardening tips to share, write them up and we will do our best to print what fits. We encourage submissions from all gardeners. You can reach us at: newsletter@ithacacommunitygardens.org.

Thanks from your newsletter editors!

**Ithaca Community Gardens
September Board Meeting**
Tuesday, Sept 2 @ 7:30pm
309 Washington Street
All Gardeners Welcome!

ICG Board Members 2013-2014

Judith Barker, President
Marishya Weiss, Secretary
Doug Dylla, Vice-President
Will Parker, Board Member
Ronda Porras, Board Member
Sheryl Swink, Treasurer

Honorary Board Members

Daniel Hoffman
Carolyn Peterson

Board Contact:
PO Box 606, Ithaca, NY 14851
607-216-8770
ithacagardensboard@gmail.com

