Nyack Community

Before we put the garden to rest…

IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday, October 23rd 6:30 PM. Potluck Dinner

Nyack Senior Center, 90 Depew Avenue.

Bring your potluck dish and share a harvest dinner with fellow gardeners!

Sunday, November 2. Garden Closes

All plots must be cleared and clean and all vines must be removed from the plot's fence by the end of the day.
If you haven't cleared your plot, then you won't be given a plot next year.

Seed Exchange

The evening of the potluck dinner, Hausler organizes a seed swap – a fun, sustainable gardening practice.

Bring whatever collected or extra seeds you might have, especially from heir-loom varieties that have given you good yields this year.

Please bring your seeds already divided and sealed in labeled envelopes. You can also bring your own plastic bags or envelopes. (Paper envelopes are better for seed storage, since plastic can sometimes trap moisture and cause mold.)

If anyone has seeds to share and can't make the dinner, just let Jennifer know by e-mailing her at jhausler@optonline.net. She is happy to bring yours to the meeting and also put some aside for you.
She offered us this site for lots of good tips for saving seeds:
http://www.seedsavers.org/Education/Seed-Saving-Instructions/

FACEBOOK

Thanks to Michelle Solomon for For adding more photos to our Facebook page.

https://www.facebook.com/nyackcommunitygarden

Garden Contest 2014

Congratulations to all the 2014 winners !

Most Creative

1. Plot 44, Robert Mauriello
2. Plot 22, Jo Robbins/Barrie Peterson
3. Plot 15, Marie/Tony Dilluvio

Best Flower and/or Vegetable

1. Plot 9A, Jayne Stuecklen
2. Plot 42, Lynda Grant
3. Plot 34A, Mari Natal

Best Maintained

1. Plot 2, Luis Febo
2. Plot 25, K. N. Vivekanandan (Vivi)
3. Plot 29, Richard Matic

Best Overall

1. Plot 38, Shane Grady/Colleen O'Connell

Best Cluster

1. Cluster 5 - Plots 34-40

Photos: Tania Savayan/The Journal News

Saving Soil

In addition to saving seeds, we could think about another sustainable practice for next year: saving soil.
As you may know or may have noticed, we brought in all new topsoil to the garden before the beginning of this planting season. And we do that every two to three years, because we deplete the soil of nutrients and

microorganisms every time we plant, grow, harvest and then let the soil lie bare all winter long. Maybe we could think of making some changes and maintain our rich soil longer.

Here are what some of the experts have written:

"We have been conditioned to believe that a perfect seedbed is completely clean and bare, with no offending pieces of 'trash.' While I will admit there is a certain aesthetic appeal to neat rows of green shoots emerging from dark brown soil, plants do not necessarily grow any better in these conditions. Indeed, a bare surface may lead to problems with crusting or erosion. It is far better to get used to the idea that crop residue can be a very effective mulch to retain moisture, protect the soil from raindrop impact and increase water infiltration. Try leaving the stalks of your sweet corn after harvest and planting the tomatoes through them. Or plant the corn crop through the vines left over from last year's peas or beans... It won't work for every crop (small seeded crops like lettuce need unobstructed contact with the soil, for example), but it is effective far more often than its current use would suggest.

If you leave the remains of harvested plants on the surface of the soil, they perform the same protective role as living plant material. Plant residue does two things: It absorbs the impact of raindrops (as do living plants), and it creates little dams that slow water as it runs over the surface, allowing it time to either infiltrate the soil or drop any sediment it is carrying."

From: *Improving Your Soil: A Practical Guide to Soil Management for the Serious Home Gardner* by Keith Reid, 2014

Then from Rodale Institute's 2014 report, *Regenerative Agriculture and Climate Change: A Down-to-Earth Solution to Global Warming*:

"Cover crops also play a significant role in soil sequestration when their plant and root residues are retained rather than removed or burned. These residues are the forerunners to soil organic matter. Residue removal, whether of the main crop or a cover crop, has become common for the production of bio-energy. This practice depletes soil organic matter.

Conversely, retention of crop residue, which is common in no-till systems, is a significant driver of soil carbon accumulation."

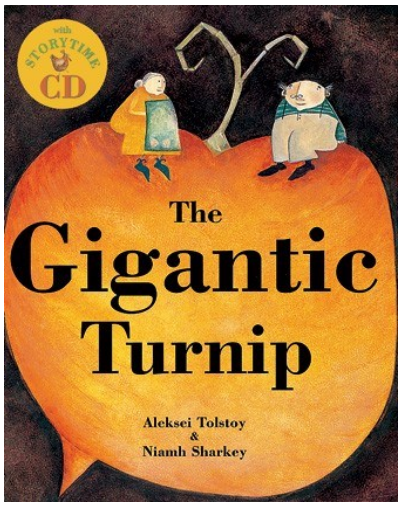
Michael Pollan further explained it in his introduction to Courtney White's book *Grass, Soil, Hope*: "Consider what happens when the sun shines on a grass plant rooted in the earth. Using that light as a catalyst, the plant takes atmospheric CO2, splits off and releases the oxygen, and synthesizes liquid carbon-sugars, basically. Some of these sugars go to feed and build the aerial portions of the plant we can see, but a large percentage of this liquid carbon-somewhere between 20 and 40 percent-travels underground, leaking out of the roots and into the soil. The roots are feeding these sugars to the soil microbes - the bacteria and fungi that inhabit the rhizosphere - in exchange for which those microbes provide various services to the plant: defense, trace minerals, access to nutrients the roots can't reach on their own. That liquid carbon has now entered the microbial ecosystem, becoming the bodies of bacteria and fungi that will in turn be eaten by other microbes in the soil food web.

Now, what had been atmospheric carbon (a problem) has become soil carbon, a solution - and not just to a single problem, but to a great many problems."

So, for those of you who have gardens at home, you can think about either planting a cover crop to protect your soil during the winter months or, at least, keeping some of the residue from the crops you planted in the soil to disintegrate naturally and replenish the soil. At our community garden, we are supposed to pull everything out of the soil by Sunday, November 2nd. But maybe in the future, we could reconsider this practice. If we were to let our crop residues overwinter in the soil, or even plant a cover crop, it would protect and nourish that soil and sequester some carbon in the soil too, doing our small part to help protect all of us from climate change.

Milk & Cookies Bedtime Stories

Our younger gardeners enjoyed their homemade treats while listening to The Enormous Turnip by: Aleksei Tolstoy & Illustrated By: Niamh Sharkey on July 31st.



RECIPES

Quinoa with Roasted Butternut Squash and Spinach

1 cup quinoa
2 cups vegetable broth
1 small to medium butternut squash, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
2 Tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon fresh or ground thyme leaves
3 cloves, garlic, minced
1 medium onion, diced
2 cups spinach, stemmed and cut into bite-size pieces (I substituted beet greens)
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:
Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a small saucepan, bring the vegetable broth to a boil, add quinoa, and reduce heat to simmer, cover and let cook about 15-20 minutes, until broth is absorbed and quinoa breaks apart. When done, turn off heat, fluff with fork and leave covered. Meanwhile, toss the squash with 1 Tablespoon olive oil and the thyme. Place on a baking sheet with sides and place in preheated oven. Roast until fork tender, about 20 minutes or so, stirring once or twice.

While squash and quinoa are cooking, heat remaining olive oil in a large skillet. When hot but not smoking, add onion and cook until translucent, then add garlic. Cook for 2 or 3 minutes (you don't want the garlic to brown.) Add spinach. Cover and turn off the heat.
When the squash is done, add it to the skillet along with the cooked quinoa. Toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper.
Serves 8

Chocolate-Zucchini Muffins
1 ¼ cup whole wheat pastry flour
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
1 ¼ teaspoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 ripe banana, mashed
½ cup unsweetened applesauce
½ cup raw sugar
¼ cup milk or non-dairy milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup shredded zucchini
¼ cup chocolate chips (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease or spray a muffin tin or paper liners, if using.
In a medium bowl, whisk flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon together.
In a large bowl, cream mashed banana with applesauce and sugar then add milk, vanilla, zucchini and chocolate chips, if using, stirring to combine.
Add the dry mixture into the wet mixture in 3-4 batches, stirring until just combined.
Spoon into muffin cups ¾ full.
Bake for 18-25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
Transfer to a wire cooking rack.

Makes 12 muffins