

## Nyack Community Garden 2023 Summer Newsletter

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# Welcome to the 2023 summer newsletter!

Welcome to our new gardeners, and welcome back to our returning gardeners. Each year, the Nyack Community Garden Newsletter Committee puts out a summer and a fall newsletter on a variety of garden-related topics, including reports on our garden happenings, local and national issues, and tips from the Board on maintaining our garden.

This year, we are refreshing the newsletter with a new layout. The logo above is a retro Nyack Community Garden logo from 1986, and you can read an article about the history of the Nyack Community Garden in our Fall 2018 newsletter:

[https://nyackcommunitygarden.info/pdf/Newsletter\\_Oct\\_Nov\\_2018.pdf](https://nyackcommunitygarden.info/pdf/Newsletter_Oct_Nov_2018.pdf)

In this summer newsletter, we have on offer for you: a new section of the newsletter called the "Resource Corner," a book review, information on the 2023 Farm Bill, and overviews of the plant-a-row, garden cleanup, and garden contest. We hope you enjoy this issue, and happy gardening!

Liz Cherry, Newsletter Committee Chair



# Resource Corner

Lindsey Wahlstrom-Edwards

Whether you are a first-year gardener just getting started or a gardener with 30+ seasons in the books, there is always something new to learn. This year, we are debuting a new section of the newsletter called “Resource Corner”, which will feature resources recommended by our members for gardeners of all abilities and experience levels. Special thanks to NCG Co-Chair Laura Pakaln for sharing her book and website recommendations for this installment. Do you have a resource you love that you think may benefit the community? Send it our way (lawahlstrom@gmail.com) for the next installment.

**Website to Peruse:** [The National Gardening Association](#)



The National Gardening Association has worked since 1971 to promote gardening. Their website, which now has more than 1 million members, teaches individuals how to get started with a garden, provides resources to help gardeners continue to refine their skills, and further develop their skills. Our newest members may be interested in the association’s [free Primer](#) on how to get started. Gardeners who are looking for further information on specific topics, can ask questions on [this form](#) or look through the website’s [resource library](#) for multimedia tutorials that go deep on specific topics. This site has something for everyone, whether you are looking for advice or willing to offer your own as part of the [community forums](#).

**Course to Take:** [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#)

The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland County offers in-person courses throughout the year on a variety of topics, including soil, compost, plant selection, and eco-friendly practices, among others. Classes are offered at a free or reduced price and are relevant to our local climate. For information and to get started, it is best to call the team at 845-429-7085 or to stop by the educational center in Stony Point.

If you have a couple of growing seasons under your belt and want a more in-depth training experience, consider joining the Master Gardener Volunteer Program, which is a national program designed to train individuals with an interest in gardening and horticulture. In exchange for the training, participants give back by

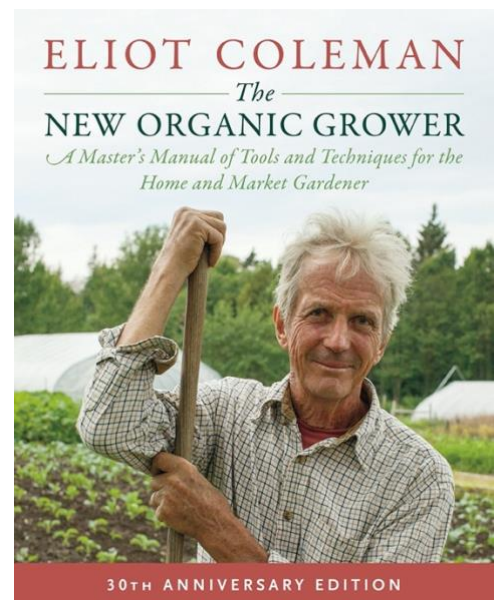
volunteering 100 hours over the first two years, and 30 hours per year each subsequent year. Volunteer activities might include giving workshops, teaching gardening to children, staffing booths at gardening and horticultural fairs, or providing horticultural therapy at health care facilities. You can learn more about the program on the [website](#).

**Social Media Account to Follow:** [How Does Your Garden Grow?](#)

Run by an organic gardener out of Ottawa, How Does Your Garden Grow? has racked up 50,000 loyal followers – with good reason. The author (unnamed online) complements her in-person workshops and training courses with funny and educational content about organic gardening through her social media accounts. Though the growing schedule she provides is not quite right for our New York climate, the creator has good advice on pest control, weed control, and winterizing, all of which translates well to our community’s efforts. This is a great account to follow if you are looking for bite-size advice and relatable anecdotes. (Her relatable rants about the vine borer get me through each tense squash season!)

**Book to Read:** [The New Organic Grower, 3rd Edition: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener, 30th Anniversary Edition](#)

While intended for organic farmers, this 304-page tome by organic garden pioneer Eliot Coleman also offers gardeners a comprehensive “how to” guide for gardening, including how to incorporate flowers into plots and how to utilize small space to “live close to the land and generate profit” (or, in our case, donate to People to People!). The 3rd edition also includes new resources and tools Coleman has incorporated into his practice and a growing schedule for a variety of our members’ favorite crops. The techniques are inspired by European intensive farming, and have been updated with information Coleman has gleaned through decades of experimentation. This book is a resource members can go back to each year to further their techniques and knowledge.



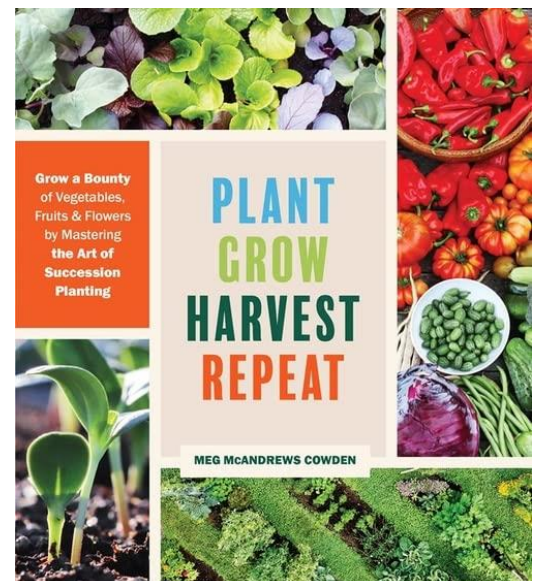
# Book Review: *Plant, Grow, Harvest, Repeat* by Meg McAndrews Cowden

Liz Cherry

This past winter, like most gardeners do, I got itchy for some gardening. It was too early to start seeds, and I had already maxed out my windowsills with houseplants. So, I checked out a few books from the Nyack Library on gardening, figuring I could at least read about gardening and prepare for the season. One of the books I checked out was so phenomenal that I had to buy a copy for myself, and I found myself recommending it to everyone I knew who was getting into gardening. That said, it has something for everyone, and even seasoned gardeners should find something of inspiration and interest.

One of the primary elements I appreciated about this book was its focus on extending the growing season, and not just because it was the middle of winter and I wanted to garden right then and there. Rather, having grown up on a farm in eastern North Carolina and getting into gardening when I lived in Georgia, I grew up with longer growing seasons than we have here. Getting accustomed to these short seasons has been difficult. The first time I grew cherry tomatoes in my too-shady front yard in my first apartment in Nyack, the year before I was lucky enough to get a plot in the Nyack Community Garden, I didn't get to harvest my first cherry tomato until September!

Cowden lives and gardens in Minnesota, which has even shorter growing seasons than we do, and her first chapter explains the practice of succession planting, which many of gardeners in the Nyack Community Garden already practice. Succession planting means planning ahead, planting one crop as soon as another is finished producing, typically aided by starting seeds indoors and then transplanting the seedlings. As she puts it, "Succession gardening will increase your garden's productivity by maximizing the days of your growing season, even if those days are limited, and maximizing your space, even if your garden is small" (p.13).



Her other primary strategy for extending the growing season in terms of productivity is interplanting, which refers to more than just companion planting: “interplanting (...) means growing more than one type of vegetable or flower simultaneously in the same proximity” (p.41). In her explanation, interplanting not only means planting companionable plants together, it also means planning ahead with respect to plant placement. Using the metaphor of a forest, with its tall canopy structure of trees, and the understory of shade-loving species, she translates this into the garden by providing tips and tricks for planting appropriate low-growing “understory” vegetables such as radishes, arugula, or beets alongside the larger “canopy” plants like bushy tomatoes or leafy zucchini. This strategy requires knowing the entire life cycle of your plants, as she advises: “Considering the maturation of plants paired together is part of the equation, as well as ensuring appropriate light levels remain throughout the duration of each plant’s lifecycle” (p.19). We see this strategy in action in the garden when people plant lettuces under cucumber trellises, a trick I learned from observing other people’s plots in the garden. Cowden also encourages gardeners to use the edges of their spaces, like the forest edges, though this is probably not advisable in the shared spaces we have in the community garden, lest we grow into someone else’s plot.

With these two strategies as the foundation for her book, she goes on to have chapters on edible perennials, vegetable and flower gardening, as well as seasonal chapters on topics such as seed starting, garden planning, early spring planting, summer succession planting, and extending the garden season in fall. The chapter “Spring Head: Hastening the Growing Season” is especially useful and chock-full of information the likes of which are only rivaled by the Farmer’s Almanac.

While the book has a very interesting section on root cellaring, those two pages are the only ones truly devoted to preservation. The focus of this book is on producing food and flowers, not on what to do with the food once it’s been harvested. For that topic, though, there are plenty of other great books. All in all, this book is an excellent resource for garden planning and for continual reference throughout the growing season.

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# Politics and the Cost of Food

Kathy Schwarz

The US Department of Agriculture (DOA) put out a report in 2021 titled “Action Plan for Climate Adaptation and Resilience.” This report recognized the threats to our agricultural system caused by the changing climate:

“Climate change threatens growth in agricultural productivity through direct effects such as changes in temperature and precipitation patterns, and secondary effects, such as increased pest and disease pressures, decline in pollinator health, reduced crop and forage quantity and quality, and infrastructure damage. Agricultural productivity is additionally threatened by impacts to water supply and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events...[these threats are] disproportionately high for disadvantaged communities, including Tribal nations, low income, and minority communities.”

So, if you were wondering why the cost of food is going up, it is, in part at least, because we have been ignoring the impact of climate change and water availability on our food supply.

The DOA is funded through legislation in Congress, particularly the Farm Bill. This bill is probably the biggest piece of legislation that impacts every person in the country because it impacts what we eat and whether we have enough to eat. It allocates monies every 5 years (\$867 billion in 2018) and is being renegotiated right now for the 2023 version.

I wrote about the Farm Bill [in this newsletter 5 years ago](#). At that time, I expressed my concern about whether the Bill would address the changing climate and, unfortunately, when it passed, it had barely touched the issue. Will it this time around? Within those 5 years, we’ve seen weather and disease events decrease supply and raise the cost of various foods. It’s time to try again to influence how Congress allocates monies to the DOA.

The cost of food has gone up about 50% since 2010. Therefore, we are seeing longer and longer lines at soup kitchens and food pantries, including right here in

Nyack. Eighty percent of the money allocated to the DOA through the Farm Bill goes to SNAP benefits (food stamps). Through the recent “debt ceiling” negotiations, there will be no rise in SNAP benefits. Indeed, there will be tighter qualifications for enrollment in the program. This is already a travesty, since the cost of food continues to rise.

But it doesn't look like there will be much opportunity to change that chunk of money in the 2023 Farm Bill, as that part seems like a fait accompli. But what hasn't already been influenced by those debt ceiling negotiations, is the other 20% of the Farm Bill, which focuses on the food system – how we grow/raise our food, what we grow or raise, and where. After SNAP, the next biggest chunk of money in the bill goes to subsidies and insurance payments to farmers. And, since most of this money currently goes to the largest and most profitable of the farms that are corporate owned, perhaps some could be reallocated to other programs that could more easily address the challenges of the changing climate.

For instance, one *positive* new program was created in the 2018 Farm Bill: the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. One of the programs within that office is the People's Garden Initiative, which offers grants for community gardens, along with other programs to support locally-grown foods. This program could be expanded to encourage every community to start growing some of their own food, like we in the Nyack Community Garden are so privileged to be able to do. It would be healthier for everyone and for the planet.

More challenging will be to cut out programs that waste our money and support the unsustainability of our current food system which, in turn, contributes to the rising cost of food. For instance, our tax dollars through the Farm Bill go to insurance payments to industrial farms to insure against crop or livestock loss due to natural disasters (like extreme weather events or disease outbreaks). This disincentivizes farmers from making any changes to protect against damage that would be done the next time a storm hits, such as growing a more drought-resistant crop. Another example would be avian flu. Avian flu is spread easily when huge numbers of birds are raised together in “factory farms.” Over 52 million chickens and turkeys had to be euthanized this year and the cost of turkey and eggs skyrocketed. But if those industrial farms are insured against their loss, they have no incentive to raise their birds in a different way to avoid the next outbreak.

This could be corrected through the Farm Bill by supporting the **Industrial Agriculture Accountability Act** (S272/HR805) which would require that, instead of tax-payer-funded crop insurance, the liability for responsible disaster mitigation would be placed on the corporations and industrial operators of those farms, which would incentivize them to make necessary changes in how they grow or raise their livestock.

I encourage you to write to Senator Gillibrand, who sits on the Senate Agriculture Committee, at <https://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/email-me/> to fight for more community gardens and fewer subsidies and insurance for corporate run farms. And Senator Schumer and Representative Lawler will both be voting on the final version of the Farm Bill. So you should let them know your thoughts, too. Their contact information is as follows: Senator Schumer: <https://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck> and Representative Lawler: <https://lawler.house.gov/contact/>

The giant food corporations, that run the biggest of our farms, are a very powerful lobby in Washington. They currently have no incentive to change what they grow or how they grow it to adapt to the changing climate. But the corporations don't eat – we do! We must raise our voices to be heard, too.

And meanwhile, contribute food to the Plant-a-Row bin that helps feed the food insecure through People to People. With the cost of food rising, the need for our donations is greater than ever.

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## **Plant-a-Row**

Lindsey Wahlstrom-Edwards

The individual benefits of gardening are many. This year, we once again invite you to help spread those benefits to the broader Rockland County community by donating excess produce from your plot to People to People. The first donation will be held on July 10 this year.

Through donations from the Nyack Garden Club plot managed by Betsy Turk and individual gardeners, last year we donated 860 pounds of produce during the



season. Most of the donations went to People to People, a Nanuet-based food pantry that currently serves 5,000 food insecure households in Rockland County.

If you would like to donate this year, please select high quality produce from your plot – selecting items you would buy at a grocery store is a good rule of thumb – and clean off the roots and dirt. Then, place your item(s) in the coolers by the shed anytime between Sunday and Monday morning before 10am, when committee members will sort and package the produce prior to donation. There is no minimum volume required to donate. While all produce is welcome, lettuce tends to wilt before it can make it to the shelves.

Committee members will also harvest items for donation from your plot if you are away on vacation. If you need help while you are away, please reach out to Jill Remaly via email at [jillremaly217@gmail.com](mailto:jillremaly217@gmail.com) or with a message in the Facebook group (don't forget to tag her in your post!).

Stay tuned to the next newsletter when we give an update on our progress towards this year's goal of 800 pounds of produce donated!

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## **Garden Clean-up – July 15**

Liz Cherry

Last year, the Nyack Community Garden held a garden clean-up day on October 22. This marked the first time in a while that the garden held a garden-wide cleanup day. It was such a wonderful community-building event that the board decided to hold two more this year. The first one will be on Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup>.

At the last clean-up, the board had a list of tasks and divided them among the crew that showed up. This included things like clearing the trash from around the garden and eradicating bindweed (more on that in the notes from the board). Many hands made light work, and it was nice to see so many gardeners working together.

This summer's work day will be based on the most pressing needs, and some potential tasks include weeding the outside fence perimeter, weeding the outside gardens, cleaning the path, and cleaning up the items left next to the shed. The board will determine what needs doing just before the session and will generate a

list of tasks to be done. They ask that people bring gloves and some hand gardening tools if you have them.

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## **Garden Contest – July 27**

The annual Nyack Community Garden Contest will be held this year on Thursday, July 27. A panel of 3-5 judges from outside the garden will decide the winners in the following categories:

- Best maintained garden
- Best vegetable and flower garden
- Most creative garden
- Best overall garden (top prize)

This contest always brings some fun at the height of the growing season, and it helps provide an added impetus to keep our plots nice and neat. Look out for a recap of the winners in our Fall newsletter.

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## **Notes from the Board**

The big news was the seedling sale fundraiser where garden members donated seedlings that were sold to other garden members. However, turnout was lower than in previous years because of the rain. The proceeds were donated to The Nyack Center this year.

The board is hoping that more people will contribute seedlings to the sale, and they would like more variety (there were mostly tomatoes and peppers). This is a volunteer opportunity, if someone would like to step up to help coordinate these efforts.

A few reminders for keeping our garden clean and green!

- The brown compost bags are only for plant matter, and please shake off the dirt from your weeds before putting them in the bags. The black garbage can is for trash (not plant matter). When they're full, please carry the bag to the

curb and replace it with a bag from the shed. Please bring any recycling home with you.

- Help maintain the hoses by turning off the water and leaving the hoses in the “open” position so they drain. Better yet, leave them to drain in the plot, not on the sidewalk.
- It is bindweed eradication time! Over the last couple of years, bindweed has crept into the garden and it is up to all of us to help remove this highly invasive and aggressive weed. When removing bindweed, try to dig up as much of the root as possible. It spreads via rhizomes like mint, so sometimes you’ll have to “follow that weed” to get the whole plant. This website has some very useful photos for identifying bindweed in its early stages:  
<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=29966>

Please notify the Executive Board at [membership@nyackcommunitygarden.info](mailto:membership@nyackcommunitygarden.info) if our garden information has incorrect information for you, such as wrong name spelling, email, phone number, plot number, committee assignment, or address, OR contact us if you change any of these.

While we do not email revised lists every time an update is made to all members, the up-to-date information is always posted on the bulletin board on the door of the shed.

### **Nyack Community Garden Executive Board**

Jill Remaly (plot 34B)	co-president	<a href="mailto:jillremaly217@gmail.com">jillremaly217@gmail.com</a>
Laura Pakaln (plot 32)	co-president	<a href="mailto:laurapakaln@gmail.com">laurapakaln@gmail.com</a>
Marie Dilluvio (plot 15)	treasurer	<a href="mailto:mvenus1220@aol.com">mvenus1220@aol.com</a>
John Dunnigan (plot 16)	member	<a href="mailto:pickwickbooks@gmail.com">pickwickbooks@gmail.com</a>
Michelle Morales (plot 22)	member	<a href="mailto:mzmichelle@hotmail.com">mzmichelle@hotmail.com</a>
Yodit De La Cruz (plot 35)	member	<a href="mailto:yoditgg@gmail.com">yoditgg@gmail.com</a>
Elvin De La Cruz (plot 35)	member	<a href="mailto:ausfall00@gmail.com">ausfall00@gmail.com</a>
David Spatz (plot 5)	member	<a href="mailto:davidosco@mac.com">davidosco@mac.com</a>

NYACK COMMUNITY GARDEN - East side of South Franklin Street - between Hudson & Depew Avenues / PO Box 864, Nyack, NY 10960

Email: [membership@nyackcommunitygarden.info](mailto:membership@nyackcommunitygarden.info)

Website: [nyackcommunitygarden.info](http://nyackcommunitygarden.info)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nyackgarden>

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## 2023 Dates to Remember

**Mondays by 10am** – Plant-A-Row veggies in cooler will be given to food bank

**Saturday, July 15** – Summer Clean-up (rain date July 16)

**Thursday, July 27** – Garden Contest Judging

**Thursday, September 14** – Pot Luck Dinner with prizes awarded to attending contest winners and free raffle for all attendees

**Saturday, October 14** – Fall Clean-up

**Sunday, November 12** – Garden closes, gardeners must fully clear plots

**Saturday, November 18** – 8:00 AM sharp: Winter prep clean-up

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A message from your newsletter team:

Please send us your garden stories, questions, or tips on what you'd like to hear more about in the newsletter. We'd love to hear from you.

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