

Nyack Community Garden 2024 Fall Newsletter

The “Feast” Issue

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.

In this fall newsletter, we are focusing on “feast” as a theme, thinking about the summer and fall harvests, food preparation and storage, and all the ways we celebrate the garden as a community. This issue includes articles about preparing your garden for winter, recipes for seasonal foods, and highlights from our community feasts, celebrations, and gatherings. We hope you enjoy this issue, and best wishes for everyone’s fall gardens!

Liz Cherry, Newsletter Committee Chair



Preparing Your Garden for a Restful Winter

Crissie Bertone

As the days become shorter and temperatures drop, we must start planning to winterize our garden plots.

We had another hot summer. Temperatures above 77 degrees Fahrenheit increase microbial activity in the soil, which tends to deplete it of organic matter. While many believe organic matter should be added in the spring, adding it in the fall will also support a more robust soil system for our plants in the spring.

Our flowers and vegetables require high nitrogen levels to support their growth throughout the season. Organic matter acts as the food source for soil microbes, so adding back what has been depleted during the hotter weather supports a more extensive and diverse soil microbial population. And the diverse microbial population has the effect of suppressing soil invaders that cause plant diseases and maintaining plant health.

The first step before adding organic matter to the soil is to remove all weeds and sick plants from the garden. This is critical to preventing bacteria, pests, and diseases from overwintering.

If you have any disease-free legumes in your garden, you are lucky because they can be excellent green manure. Residue crops can be turned into the soil, providing a rich source of organic matter to decompose into the soil.

Consider sowing a cover crop. Some growers prefer a mix of winter-hardy and winter-killed seeds. I favor the winter-killed cover crop to reduce the work to be done in our limited space in the spring. Some winter-killed cover crops are oats, field peas, oilseed radish, and mustard.

Soon, we will be closing our garden. Now is the time to start planning how you choose (or not) to take advantage of these final months to either turn those legumes into the soil or plant a cover crop.

Happy Wintering...

Garden Recipe Corner

Alicyn Mindel

Ali's Favorite Fall Red Lentil Soup

Now is the time to gather your harvest vegetables and turn them into a delicious warming pot of soup to celebrate the change of season. Perhaps you have some garlic stored from early summer's curing, fresh onions, carrots, recently picked squash, still-going-strong chard and newly thinned beet green tops to add to this easily prepared Autumn dinner. Just pick up a few extra ingredients and you are ready to go! Rustic bread with butter is a highly recommended accompaniment.

Ingredients:

- olive oil, enough for sauté
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 - 2 inches of ginger, minced
- 4 - 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 small squash, peeled and chopped
- 1 ½ cups red lentils
- 1 quart chicken or veggie stock
- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 Tbsp favorite curry powder
- 1 Tbsp turmeric powder (can sub w combo cumin/coriander)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Chopped chard and beet greens (can sub with spinach or kale)



Directions:

Sauté onion, ginger, garlic, carrot, celery and squash in olive oil for 10 minutes or until soft. Add lentils, stock and coconut milk, salt and pepper, and spices. Bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes or until lentils are soft and soup is thickened. Stir often to prevent lentils from sticking to the bottom of pot. When done, add chopped greens and simmer for 5 minutes. Enjoy with buttered bread and savor your delicious fall harvest moment.



Real Pickled Jalapenos

The joy of pickling is found in preserving the goodness of the garden to enjoy long after the growing season has ended. One of my favorite books for recipes using the salt brine fermentation technique is [Fermented Vegetables](#) by Kirsten & Christopher Shockey. Salt brining vegetables is an ancient preserving method producing nutrient-dense live foods through lacto-fermentation. Unlike quick pickling with vinegar, lacto-fermentation produces pickled vegetables in a live culture full of beneficial microorganisms and nutrients available for our body to absorb. All you need is veg, salt & water! Plus a little bit of time to watch and wait while the exciting fermentation process takes place. For this recipe, I have chosen a very simple jalapeno pickle. You can sub with any small, spicy pepper you like.



Ingredients:

1 Tbsp fine sea salt (can use non-iodized pickling salt)
1 Pint clean water
10-12 jalapenos, sliced

Directions:

Dissolve salt in water

Place sliced jalapenos in a glass pint jar

Fill with salt water until an inch from the top

Add a glass “follower” and lightly screw on lid (wipe down jar as some water will be displaced in the process)

Leave in a discreet place on counter for a week, occasionally skimming off top of liquid for seeds and foam

OR

Place sandwich-sized ziploc filled with water to weigh down veg

Leave for a week



Tips:

* place jar on a plate to catch stray drips

* tiny bubbles appearing throughout the week are a sign of fermentation taking place!

Enjoy pickled jalapenos as a topping to morning eggs, dinner tacos or anything you love adding a delightful kick to! Adventures in the recommended book will give greater insight and practice to your real pickling pursuits! Happy pickling!

Halloween Pumpkins and Food Waste

Kathy Schwarz

Did you know we waste 30-40% of our food in the U.S.? Consider the Halloween Pumpkin: EAT IT, DON'T DUMP IT! Choose a smaller pumpkin (it's tastier than the large ones), don't carve it, rather draw a face on it, and then cook or bake it after

Halloween is over. Compost the skin, stem, and seeds – or save a few of the seeds and plant them next year!

Pumpkin Soup

Makes 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

One smallish pumpkin

1 onion sliced

2 cloves garlic

3 c vegetable or chicken stock

1 c water

Salt and pepper

½-¾ c cream or half and half milk (or milk substitute)



Directions:

- Cut the pumpkin into 2.25" slices. Cut the skin off and scrape seeds out. Cut into 1.5" chunks
- Place the pumpkin, onion, garlic, broth and water in a pot. Bring to a boil, uncovered, then reduce heat and let simmer until pumpkin is tender, about 10 minutes
- Remove from heat and use a masher or a blender to blend until smoother
- Season to taste with salt and pepper
- Stir in cream or milk or milk substitute

Pumpkin Bread Muffins

Makes 1 loaf or 12 muffins

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour

½ cup cane sugar

1 t baking powder

1 t baking soda

1 t cinnamon

1 t ginger

½ t nutmeg

Pinch of clove powder

Pinch of salt

2 t vanilla extract

⅓ c unsweetened milk or milk substitute

⅓ c olive oil

⅓ c applesauce

1 ½ c fresh pumpkin puree

Directions:

To cook pumpkin:

- Cut pumpkin in half and bake in 400° oven until a fork punctures the skin easily
- Once the pumpkin has cooled, remove seeds, and scoop the flesh out of the skin
- Mash this well with a masher or in a blender

Putting it together:

- Turn oven temperature down to 350°
- Lightly grease loaf pan or muffin tin
- In medium-sized bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, spices, and salt
- In a 2-cup measuring cup, combine olive oil, apple sauce, sugar, milk, and vanilla extract
- Add the wet mixture to the dry mixture along with the pumpkin puree and mix well. Adjust flavor for sweetness to your liking
- Pour batter into prepared loaf pan or muffin tin, place in oven, on the center rack, and bake 55-60 minutes (muffins will need a little less time)
- Once done, remove from oven and let cool for 5-10 minutes. Remove from the pan or muffin tin and cool longer before serving

It's Not a Weed, It's Medicine!

Experiments in Growing Medicinal Plants from Plot 34A

Marianne Hunkin

In July I received an email offering weeding assistance for my garden. I respectfully declined explaining that some of the plants in my plot may look like weeds to others. The way I garden can seem chaotic to people who like neat rows. I do my best to not disturb the soil unless absolutely necessary. I invite plants that some may consider weeds. I plant things that may not be readily recognizable, including many plants revered for their medicine. Below is a list of some of the medicinal plants that were in my wild garden this year.

Ashwagandha

This was my first time growing ashwagandha. My dear friend started the seeds and gave the starts to me. Ashwagandha is a heat lover so I waited until late June to plant them. They have fared pretty well despite potato beetles munching the leaves. Ashwagandha root is used in herbal remedies to treat anxiety, insomnia, and stress. After the first frost, I'll dig up and dry the roots. This winter I'll enjoy the root in herbal teas.



Fenugreek

My fenugreek experiment failed this season. Fenugreek loves heat and I planted it too early. I'll try again next year. The seeds and leaves are edible. The seed is most often ground up and used as a seasoning. It is used frequently in Indian and North African cuisines. Medicinally it is known for supporting digestion. Some small studies show that fenugreek lowers blood glucose levels in people with diabetes.



Purslane

Purslane volunteered itself as a ground cover between my tomato plants. On a whim, I decided not to pull it out. I found that purslane is excellent for retaining moisture in the soil and suppressing other plants from taking over. Indeed, I watered this section of the garden less than others.

I learned that purslane is classified as a bioaccumulator. It stores mineral nutrients such as calcium, iron, zinc. When used as a green manure, it tills these nutrients back into the soil. It's also good to eat! An excellent addition to any salad, it is high in vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids. It's a staple in Palestinian, Syrian, Mexican, and Portuguese dishes.



Beans

I grew pole beans (scarlet runner, marfax, dolloff) and soybeans. Instead of eating them at the height of summer, I let them dry on the vine or bush and then harvested. I collected two quarts of dry beans. I saved seeds for next year's garden. I'll enjoy the rest in soups and stews over the winter. Eating produce that I have canned and preserved is a reminder that summer will return again. While you may not think of beans as being medicinal, they are nutrient dense and good for us. Beans are, of course, high in fiber and protein. They also stabilize blood sugar levels and lower cholesterol. Most importantly, I know where these beans come from! They haven't been sprayed and don't have any preservatives.



Sweet wormwood (*Artemisia annua*)

This plant volunteered itself in the garden. It is towering over my tomato plants. I've since learned that it is native to Eurasia where it has been used in Chinese medicine for centuries. The Chinese scientist Tu Youyou was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2015 for discovering its antimalarial properties. Traditionally it has been used to reduce fevers and swelling. I will dry some leaves and flowers to add to tea this winter.



Garden Contest Winners

Alicyn Mindel

The annual Nyack Community Garden Contest was held on July 25. Thank you to Marie Dilluvio for organizing this, and to our judges, Joy Macy from Bluefields Farm, Blauvelt, and Zoie Freidberg from Little Gem Farm, Orange County.

Best Vegetables:

1st place - Karissa Sullivan - 27B

2nd place - Laura Pakaln - 32

3rd place - Vivienne von

Wiederhold /Alicyn Mindel - 8B

Best Veg/Flowers:

1st place - Nikki Strippoli - 7

2nd place - Olive

Crone/Alexandra/Janet Hamlin - 6

3rd Place - Donna Hudson - 18

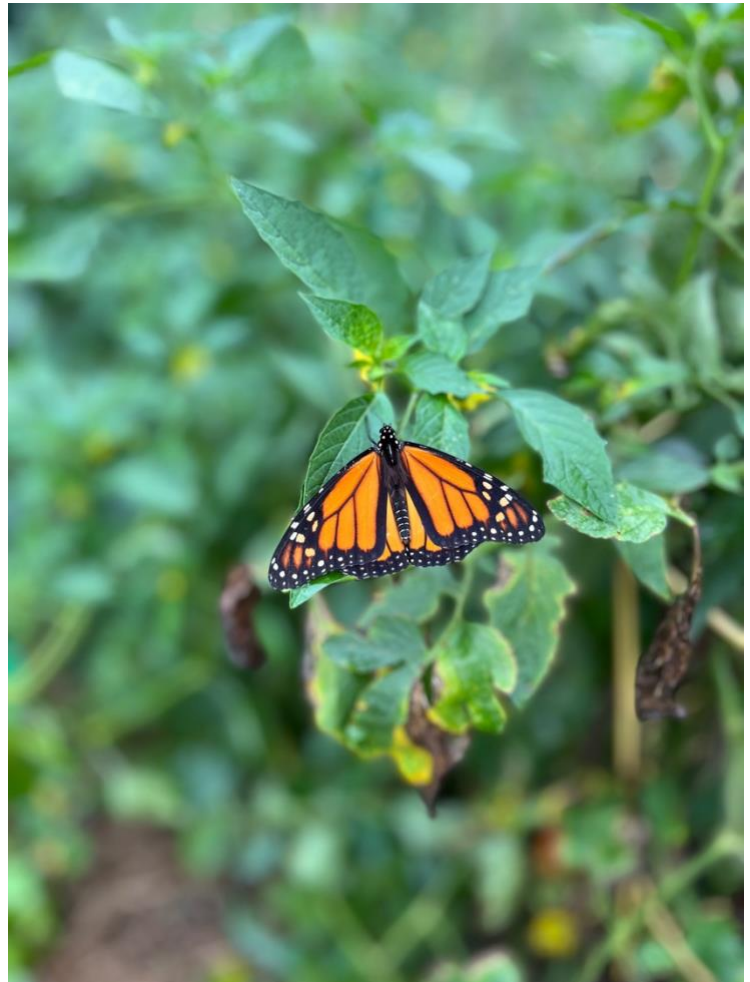
Most Creative:

1st place - Nicole & Donna Faustini
- 48

2nd place - Jayne Stuecklen/David
Kiremidjian - 36

3rd place - Jill Remaly/Tony
Berman - 35

Best in Show! - Nicole & Donna
Faustini - 48



Congratulations to all the winners, and to the very large number of great gardeners and beautiful gardens this year.



Oh, What a Feast It Was!

Kathy Schwarz

The annual potluck dinner for the garden took place on September 26th and oh, what a feast it was! From salads of all kinds to pizzas to eggplant parmesan. And, of course a bunch of yummy desserts. Thanks to all for coming and contributing!

The food was great, of course, but so was the conversation – the sharing of garden stories and beyond. There was lots of enthusiasm and lots of laughter, too.

The setting looked beautiful – with the cheery tablecloths and the gorgeous fresh flowers (from the garden) on all of the tables, courtesy of Michelle Morales. And thanks to the committee for the organizing, the setting up, and the cleaning up!

The usual awards were given out to the winners of the contests. And there was a raffle with lovely prizes for the winners. Plus, there were some announcements. John Dunnigan offered the suggestion that we schedule a meeting to discuss the effects of the changing climate on the garden and on our gardening (just an idea, nothing scheduled yet). And Brian Osborne announced that next year will be the 50th Anniversary of the garden! So we should start thinking of planning something special for that landmark date! The other announcement was a reminder about the fall clean-up, scheduled for October 19th.

To sum it all up, I will offer a quote from an attendee, that the gardening itself and the preparing of food for fellow gardeners are both “labors of love.”

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Plant-a-Row Update

Crissie Bertone

So far we have collected over 500 lbs of produce to share with the Community. This represents good movement towards our goal of donating 800 lbs of food.

Thank you to all of you who have contributed. Let's keep up the good work so we can soon achieve our goal.

Coolers continue to be out from Sunday morning until Monday 10AM when a group of volunteers gathers the bounty for distribution. If Mondays fall on a holiday, pick up will happen on Tuesday.

Thanks again for all the dedicated gardeners harvesting, sharing, and driving. Collectively, we can make a difference.

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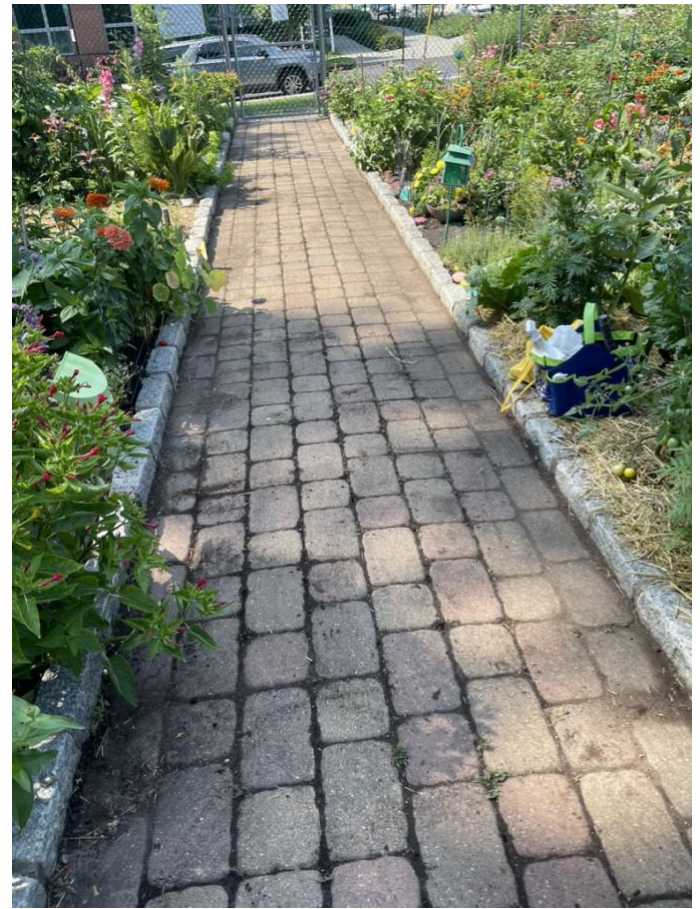
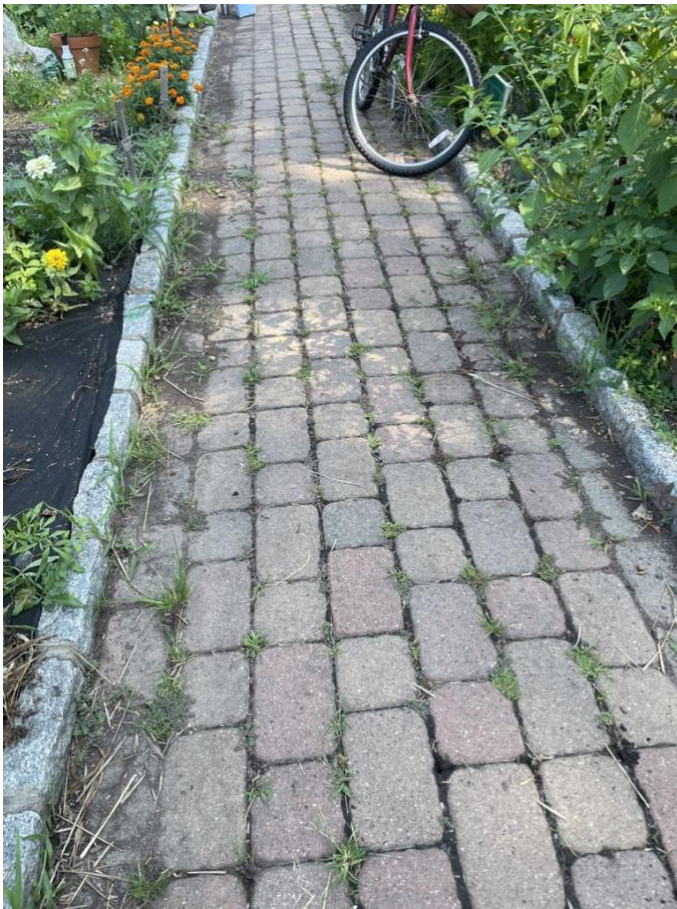
Garden Clean-Up: Saturday October 19

Liz Cherry

In recent years, the garden's executive board has begun a new tradition of community-wide garden clean-up days. These days provide excellent opportunities to meet fellow gardeners and collectively contribute to the improvement of our shared garden spaces. In July, for the summer clean-up, the focus was on clearing out overgrown irises outside of the fence, weeding around the fence, and weeding and cleaning the pathway. The before and after photos below show the wonderful work that happens when we come together for these tasks.

For this fall cleanup, we will focus again on weeding and cleaning the fence and path areas, and encouraging gardeners to begin their winter plot clean-up.

The fall cleanup is this Saturday, October 19, at 9am. (Rain date Sunday, October 20.) Please come out and help!



Notes from the Board

Please notify the Executive Board at 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

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Email: membership@nyackcommunitygarden.info

Website: nyackcommunitygarden.info

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

2024 Dates to Remember

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

Saturday, October 19 – Fall Clean-up (rain date Sunday, Oct 20)

Sunday, November 10 – Garden closes, gardeners must fully clear plots

Saturday, November 16 – 9:00am: Winter prep and clean-up [Please take note of the new date!]

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.

Newsletter photos courtesy of members our newsletter committee, Dana Harkrider, and Pixabay.

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