

2015



Retrospective

# Nyack Community Garden

## Special points of Interest:

- > **2015 Garden Winners**
- > **Recipes - for your left over swiss chard**
- > **Next Years Garden Applications**
- > **A Berlin community garden**

## 2015 Garden Competition Winners

Five judges presided over the 50 plots to decide the winners of the 2015 garden competition.

Jen White, Nyack, 's Mayor, Jim Politi, Nyack Administrator, Frank Lauzana, of D'Ercole garden center, Amy Lohman, Local Gardener and Aurelio Orlandini, Master Gardener: all shared the task of deciding on the winning gardens .

The winners of the 35th Nyack Garden Competition were

### Most Creative Garden

- 1st place: Plot 24, Marie Natal
- 2nd place: Plot 37/38, Jill Remaly, Colleen O'Connell & Shane Grady

3rd place: Plot 19, Duncan Bell

### Best Overall Garden

Plot # 3, Barbara Berasi-Rosen

### Best Maintained Garden

1st place: Plot # 36, Jayne Stuecklen

2nd place: Plot # 26, Kim Knight

3rd place: Plot # 21, Umberto Fava

### Best Vegetable and/or Flower Garden

1st place: Plot #42, Lynda Grant

2nd place: Plot # 23, T. Robin Brown

3rd place: Plot # 45 Susan Beckwith

### Best Cluster

Cluster # 3

Congratulations to all the 2015 winners. There were some very exciting entries this year .The story was covered by the LouHud News and can be viewed here <http://www.lohud.com/story/life/home-garden/2015/07/23/winners-nyack-community-garden-contest/30581841/>

## Swiss Chard Stems in Lemony Tahini Sauce

### Ingredients

- Stems of 1 Swiss chard bunch
- 4 cups of water
- Tahini
- 1 lemon juiced
- 1/4 tsp of lemon zest
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 small garlic clove crushed
- 1 tsp olive oil
- salt to taste

### Method

- 1-Wash the Swiss chard stems & chop them coarsely. Bring 4C of water to a boil. Add the stems & cook until tender. Drain and cool.
- 2-In a small bowl add 2 TBS of Tahini, 2 TSP of water, lemon juice & zest, salt, and garlic mix until it start to

thicken,. Add another TBS of water & extra lemon juice to your desired taste & mix again, repeat until you reach the consistency of runny yogurt. The trick is to add water and lemon juice a bit at a time. Season. Last, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and stir well.



**A brief history of Nyack Community Garden**

The Nyack Community Garden sits on land that was originally part of the Old Erie Railroad, which opened around 1832 and was designed to connect the city to the north.

The Nyack railroad terminus finally ceased to exist around 1966. The garden

was established in 1976 on land generously donated to by the Robert Martin Company.

In 1983 the plot originally served 30 gardeners now that number has grown to over 60. The Robert Martin Company (with the help of the Community Housing

Management Corporation) provided the land and subsidized the operating expenses.

The garden is enclosed by a protective fence, contains an extremely well-stocked shed brimming with tools, hoses and other garden necessities such as water.

**Gardening may be just one way to achieve your target 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity exercise each week.**

**The surprising benefits of gardening**

Our kitchen pantry and fridges are filled to the brim with the ever-colorful vegetables and greens of the harvest from a year's full of hard work. In a good season, the abundance of this bounty can fill us with peace and satisfaction. Gardening also offers some less visible, but equally sustaining benefits — whether your garden is at home or here in the com-

munity garden. It turns out that deep sense of well-being you get from an afternoon weeding and pruning isn't all in your head — though your head benefits too!

Gardening reduces stress through mental focus and meditation. Through deliberate mental focus and meditating on the actions of gardening, you are taking time to set aside your

problems for a while. We all know it's healthy to take a break from our stressors and gardening provides that outlet for a lot of people. Gardening also reduces stress through personal creativity. When we are creative in gardening, we reap the benefits of the end result. Depending on what you are gardening will determine your reward. For example, a

**The surprising benefits of gardening –con't**

vegetable garden rewards us with vegetables...a flower garden rewards us with flowers...an herb garden rewards us with herbs. Whatever you sow, you will reap. This is an exciting and rewarding stress management activity.

Gardening may be just one way to achieve your target 2.5 hours

of moderate-intensity exercise each week. Regular gardening cuts stroke and heart attack risk by up to 30% for those over 60. Additionally, raised beds can save the joints and extend possible gardening years for seniors, or for anyone wishing to garden more comfortably. Make sure to expose your limbs

(without sunscreen) for just 10 minutes during midday gardening; this will give you enough Vitamin D to reduce risks of heart disease, osteoporosis, and various cancers. Those with the lowest Vitamin D levels may be doubling their risk of heart disease and in most cases, too much time spent indoors is to

# 2016 garden Plot Applications

Contact [nyackcommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:nyackcommunitygarden@gmail.com)  
Applications are due by February 27th 2016.

## The surprising benefits of gardening –con't

blame.

As we age, diminishing hand dexterity and strength can gradually narrow the range of activities that are possible or enjoyable. Gardening keeps those hand muscles vigorous and agile. But don't push your hands too far: gardening can also set the stage for repetitive stress injuries, tendonitis, and carpal tunnel. Practice hand-

healthy gardening by using a few simple warm-ups, positioning your body comfortably and changing tasks frequently before strain becomes evident. Alternate use of your right and left hands to balance your body. Using your non-dominant hand is one of many exercises keep your brain functioning well as you age.

Daily gardening represents the

single biggest risk reduction for dementia, reducing incidence by 36%. Another study estimated the risk reduction at 47%! Why does gardening make such a difference? Alzheimer's is a mysterious disease, and the factors influencing its incidence and progression remain poorly

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## The surprising benefits of gardening –con't

understood. However gardening involves so many of our critical functions, including strength, endurance, dexterity, learning, problem solving, and sensory awareness, that its benefits are likely to represent a synthesis of various aspects.

Not only does the Vitamin D you're soaking in from summer gardening help you fight off

colds and flus, but it turns out even the dirt under your fingernails may be working in your favor! Friendly soil bacteria is common in garden dirt and absorbed by inhalation or ingestion on vegetables. It has been found to alleviate symptoms of psoriasis, allergies and asthma: all of which may stem from an out-of-whack immune system.

Not only is your garden providing you and your family with the proper nutrition but it's nourishing your body in so many ways. Go ahead and get your hands dirty in your garden!

Written by Christine Hernandez



## Retrospective

This summer in particular, one of my Swiss chard and parsley did great; all green with vivid colors. Here I'd love to share with you some of the delicious ways we eat Swiss chard and parsley at home.

Swiss chard and parsley between them two are loaded with vitamins and minerals; Vitamin C, Vitamin K, B-complex, Vitamin A and calcium and iron to name just a few of the nutrients they come packed with. When you saute Swiss chard or use it in soups, you might discard the stems, if that is what you did until now, well consider using the stems to make this delicious appetizer instead:

### Grain Free Traditional Lebanese Tabouli

1 medium onion-finely chopped  
1 tsp All Spice  
1 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp lemon zest  
6 tbsp olive oil  
2 tomatoes, medium -finely chopped  
1 bunch parsley -finely chopped  
1/4 cup of chopped fresh mint -finely chopped  
lemon juice

Combine the onion, salt, All Spice, lemon zest & 3 tbsp of olive oil. Mix well. Add tomatoes, parsley and mint. Add lemon juice, the remaining olive oil and salt to taste. Mix well and eat with romaine lettuce leaves, the traditional way.



A great dish using your swiss chard stems!

### Swiss Chard Stems in Lemony Tahini Sauce

#### Ingredients

Stems of 1 Swiss chard bunch  
4 cups of water  
Tahini  
1 lemon juiced  
1/4 tsp of lemon zest  
1/2 cup of water  
1 small garlic clove crushed  
1 tbsp olive oil  
salt to taste

#### Method

Wash the Swiss chard stems and chop them coarsely. Meanwhile, bring about 4 cups of water to a boil. Add the chopped Swiss chard stems to the

boiling water and let them cook for a few minutes or until tender. Drain the water and let them cool on the side.

to make the lemony Tahini sauce mix well in a small bowl 2 tablespoons of Tahini, 2 tablespoons of water, the juice of one lemon, lemon zest, salt, and a small crushed garlic clove. The Tahini will start to thicken, its color will lighten a bit but will look lumpy. Add another tablespoon of water and extra lemon juice if you like it more lemony and then mix

again, keep repeating, until you reach a smooth consistency similar to a runny yogurt. The trick is to add water and lemon juice a bit at a time. Season to taste with salt. Last, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and stir well.

Mix the Swiss chard stems in the tahini or serve the Swiss chard stems with sauce on top. Enjoy!

## Berlin Community Garden– Templehoff Airport by Ghada Marie

**A far fetched idea you would think but this is exactly where the community garden I am about to talk about is. It is in an airport albeit an abandoned one.**

This summer I was in Berlin to visit family. We stayed in a small apartment on Herrfurth Street not too far from Tempelhof Airport, a huge abandoned space, think really of a very big airport, that was sort of re-purposed by a spontaneous communal effort into a park, a performance space, a picnic area, a music venue, a skating and biking park -imagine skating and riding on runways, a museum and a creative collectively managed community garden in the center of Berlin. It is stunning and huge. It is also a place where you hear languages from around the world spoken on the lush grass that grows on runway sides.

The community garden is the Stadteilgarten Schillerkiez and it is exquisite. When you walk there, you know immediately you entered an interesting space. It is one of those places that are welcoming because they are made and cared for by everyone. I was struck by its rough beauty, all constructed with re-purposed and recycled found items. Pansies growing on shoes that were left behind by a toddler or a hiker, denim pants filled with soil and turned upside down into a pot to grow flowers or plants. It is about green gardening with a commitment to care for the environment, re-using, re-cycling, re-purposing all that mixed with a touch of every day aesthetics, community building, and a strong underground cultural phenomenon. That is what this garden is about.

The garden consists of creative and minimalist raised beds that are done with rescued items. It is made of little clusters of small unconventional plots, that are also designed by people to host and share dinners with benches and tables made with the same spirit of re-purposing things. You hear music in the background or attend a music show, while you are sitting picnicking and picking tomatoes from vines. The garden uses

raised beds and bring its own soil to avoid using the possibly contaminated airport soil. People stroll to the park daily to get together like they would in a living room, except that they can watch the sunset there. Above all, Tempelhofer Park is a testimony to the creative spirit a community and the centrality of food culture in celebrating, living and building this sort of surreal living room together.



## IN PRAISE OF COMPOSTING AT HOME

November has arrived and the community garden is officially closed. It was a wonderful season with bountiful tomatoes, zephyr squash, butternut squash, collard greens, broccoli, and swiss chard. It may have been the best year yet for me. The plants were just so productive.

I had the same plot for two or three years. This year I did something I hadn't done before. Instead of buying organic garden fertilizer I brought in composted soil from my home based composter and mixed it into the soil in my plot. I think this was a major factor in the success of my garden.

Composting is a natural process of recycling organic material such as leaves and vegetable scraps into a humus rich soil nicknamed Black Gold. Here are just some of the many benefits of composting. It contains the full spectrum of essential plant nutrients, particularly micronutrients such as iron and manganese that are often absent in synthetic fertilizers. Compost helps the soil absorb and retain nutrients and moisture. Better moisture retention means less watering, allowing conservation of water. Compost reduces the need for chemical pesticides because it contains beneficial microorganisms that protect your plants from diseases and pests. It introduces and feeds diverse life in the soil, including bacteria, insects, worms, and more, which support vigorous plant growth.

Composting is so easy to do. If you have space for a composter outside there are many options. The composter I use was a freebie from Cornell Cooperative Extension though they are no longer free. This particular one is called an Earth Machine and it looks like Darth Vader's head. The process for this composter is like making lasagna, You simply layer brown and green organic material into it starting with the brown layer. The green layer provides nitrogen-rich materials, including vegetable scraps from meal preparation, egg shells (not eggs) coffee grounds, inedible leftovers, grass clippings garden weeds. (It does NOT include meat, oily materials, dairy products, or bones as these risk attracting pests to the compost area.)

The brown layer can be made of straw, dried leaves, wood chips, sawdust, even torn up paper. All these materials are carbon-rich, supplying a critical food source to the decomposer organisms.

With this layering technique it is not necessary to turn the compost but you can to get it finished sooner. Compost forks or other digging tools can be used to stir ingredients right in the bin. The length of time it takes for the compost to be ready depends on many factors, like weather conditions, materials included, and amount of turning, Generally, a year should be sufficient.

Other important reasons to compost are it keeps a LOT of waste out of the landfill where it would have to be transported using fossil fuels that contribute to global warming and it reduces the use of plastic bags that most people use to contain this waste, It just makes good sense. Even if you don't garden the compost can be used for potted plants or mixed into any soil. I encourage ALL of us to start composting now and use that amazing Black Gold in the coming Spring.

Submitted by Michelle Solomaon