
NYACK COMMUNITY GARDEN

July-August 2020

Plant a Row – More Important This Year than Ever!

As we have been doing every year, we will be bringing your donated produce to People to People for distribution to those who are food insecure in Rockland County. Starting later in July (there will be an email announcing the start date), we will be placing the big bin next to the shed on Sundays and bringing the produce to People to People Monday mornings around 10 AM. But please remember that **the need for the food is much greater this year than it has ever been.**

Due to COVID-19 and especially due to the economic downturn, many have lost their jobs in the county and the need for the extra food is that much greater than it has been in years past. Diane Serratore, Executive Director of People to People, shared some of their statistics: in February they were supplying 1200 households (about 3800 people) with a monthly food package. In May it was up to 1700 households (about 6000 people)! Diane called the food security situation here in the county and around the country “very scary.”



People to People always obtains some of the food they distribute from the regional Food Bank, but this year the Food Bank is experiencing shortages of some of the staples because the demand is so huge everywhere and some of the supply chains have been disrupted. Although our garden can't make up for some of those staples, Diane said people always greatly appreciate some fresh produce that we do donate.

Some of the organizations that traditionally fundraise for People to People are not in positions to do their fundraising due to the lockdown. So they could use your financial donations, too. Your dollars would be going, at least in part, to purchase food from local farmers, who are also hurting during these hard times. And also consider volunteering for People to People. They only have 5 full-time staff serving 6000 people and many of their long-time volunteers aren't helping out right now due to fear of the virus.

Jill Remaly is in charge of our Plant-A-Row effort. She recommends that we stick to the produce that won't wilt quickly after being harvested – no lettuce or less hardy greens. Try to harvest it as close to the Monday morning pick-up time as possible. (Since we are only in the garden every other day, that would be late on Sunday or early on Monday.) Unfortunately, we are not planting squash or

cucumber this year, which, in previous years always added greatly to our bulk. But we request that you be generous with everything else.



By the way, Nyack Center also accepts food donations on Wednesdays from 2-4 in their back parking lot for distribution to local kids and their families on Thursdays. They list their needed staple supplies at <https://www.timetosignup.com/nyackcenter/sheet/1299139/> but might accept some fresh produce if something is ready to be harvested on Tuesday that wouldn't last until the next week's donation to People to People.

We are a beautiful community of gardeners. Let's be beautiful neighbors to the larger community, too!

--Kathy Schwarz

We're Now Part of Nyack's Pollinator Pathway!

For years already we have had the magnificent Butterfly Garden on the southwest corner, just outside the fence. We have Laura Pakaln and the Butterfly Garden Committee to thank. Not only is it beautiful, but it is attracting butterflies and other pollinators to our garden, which help us grow our crops!

And now we are also part of a bigger effort to build a whole pollinator pathway through Nyack. And the newer garden on the northwest corner of the garden, just outside the fence is the newest part of the pollinator pathway. And our pollinator pathway is part of a bigger effort on the worldwide level and, more locally, 80 towns in Westchester and Connecticut are building them. Nyack will be the first in Rockland County.

The idea is to plant gardens that are attractive to pollinators: bees, butterflies, moths, ladybugs, flies, some bird species, etc. There are 200,000 pollinators worldwide, although not all are indigenous to this area. But all that are need food and places to lay their eggs to thrive. (There are 420 species of native bees in New York State!) With so much human interference in their habitat, some species aren't doing well. So we want to grow more habitat for these essential species, that give so much back to us by pollinating our plants. So the pollinator pathway takes patches of land to plant pollinator-friendly plants, to return their habitat to them.

Nyack Pollinator Pathway was born out of the Sustainability Committee of Nyack and Dana Harkrider and Lorian Barlow are its parents, with help from a team of other volunteers. Last fall they planted 4 different pollinator-friendly beds, scattered around downtown Nyack, along with the one next to our garden. (You'll notice the "Please Mind the Garden" signs.) They plant only indigenous plants, native to this area. Some of the plants that are growing in our patch are:



Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'
Feather Reed Grass

'Karl Foerster' is the most popular of the hybrid feather reed grasses sold in commerce today. It is noted for its narrow-vertical growth of bright green leaves to 3' tall and 2' wide and feathery plumes of summer-blooming pink to purple tinged flowers on narrow upright stalks rising well above the foliage to 5' tall. 2001 Perennial Plant of the Year Award.

Ratibida pinnata
Yellow coneflower

Yellow Coneflower is native to dry prairies and savannas. It has stiff and rough-feeling coarse leaves, and showy yellow flowers which have droopy soft yellow rays. The cone-like green centers eventually change to a dark purple or brown. Many insects are attracted to this plant such as butterflies and bees. It grows and transplants very easily, is drought-tolerant, and makes an excellent cut flower.



Symphyotrichum cordifolium/Aster cordifolius
Heart-leaved Aster/Blue wood aster

Aster cordifolius is an upright perennial. Heart shaped leaves occur at ground level and form a nice groundcover in spring. In early to mid-fall small daisy-like asters cover the plant. Flowers are blue with yellow centers and are attractive to bees, skippers and butterflies. Plants are tough and adaptable prospering in sun or shade and in difficult disturbed sites.

Baptisia australis
Blue wild indigo

Probably the most familiar and wide-ranging of Baptisias, Blue Wild Indigo can provide an early deep blue flare in spring in native plantings where its bushy structure complements summer bloomers. Their 4' height and branching habit make wide spacing advisable in home landscaping. The branching foliage and blossoms become showier and more developed with each subsequent growing season.





Amsonia hubrichtii

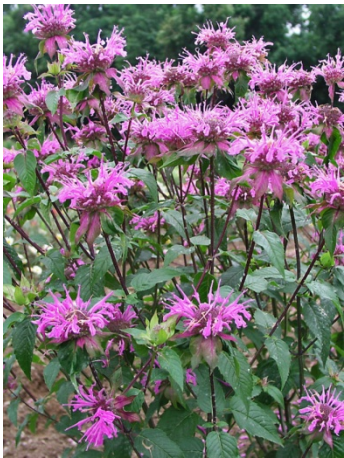
Blue star

An erect, clump-forming plant that is primarily grown in cultivation for its blue spring flowers, feathery green summer foliage and golden fall color. Powdery blue, 1/2" star-like flowers appear in terminal clusters in late spring atop stems rising to 3' tall. Feathery, soft-textured, needle-like, alternate leaves are bright green in spring and summer, but turn bright gold in autumn. From a distance plants have an almost lily-like appearance.

Agastache foeniculum

Anise hyssop

Anise Hyssop has very showy flowers, fragrant foliage and is of little interest to deer. It self-seeds readily and often blooms the first year. New seedlings are hardy and can be transplanted easily. It's a bee, hummingbird, and butterfly magnet and makes an excellent addition to herb gardens, borders, perennial gardens, and prairies. When the leaves of the Anise Hyssop are crushed they smell like licorice and have been used to make tea and cold remedies.



Monarda fistulosa 'Claire Grace'

Wild bergamot

Soft lavender pin cushion-like flowers. Mildew resistant, with excellent, shiny foliage. Extremely showy. A must for the avid butterfly gardener.

Stachys officinalis 'Hummelo'

Betony

'Hummelo' features basal rosettes of ovate, glossy, dark green leaves and tiny, two-lipped, rose-lavender flowers which appear in dense spikes atop mostly leafless flowering stems rising well above the foliage mat to 1.5-2' tall in summer.





Allium cernuum
Nodding wild onion

Features clumps of flat, narrow, grass-like leaves (to 12" tall) and tiny bell-shaped, pink to lilac pink (occasionally white) flowers which appear in loose, nodding clusters (umbels) atop erect, leafless scapes rising slightly above the foliage. Wild nodding onion is distinguished from most other native alliums by the fact that its scapes crook sharply downward at the top just below the flower so that the flower umbel nods (hence the common name).

Ruellia humilis
Wild petunia

Features tubular, bell-shaped, petunia-like flowers (to 3" long), each with five shallow rounded lobes. May to October bloom period. Lavender to lilac flowers appear singly or in clusters in the upper leaf axils.



They are all planned to bloom at different times of the year, to suit the needs of as many pollinators as they can.

Dana and Lorian are planning to put in a few more patches of the pathway this year in Nyack and hope to grow it every year. They are on the lookout for patches of land to incorporate into the pathway. If you know of any – maybe a patch in your own yard – you can be part of this effort, too. Laura Pakaln's own yard around her house has been planted for pollinators long before there was a Nyack Pollinator Pathway and it is absolutely gorgeous!

You can check out Nyackpollinatorpathway.org. Dana and Lorian are dreaming of a map of Nyack showing all the pieces of the pollinator pathway puzzle for humans to see, not that the pollinators will need to consult the map.

--Kathy Schwarz

Gardener Spotlight: Andrea Joyce

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced some changes on all of us. So many people have lost their jobs, which has led to more and more people being food insecure – so the need for our donations to People to People are especially critical this year. We are anxiously awaiting the harvesting of more healthy food. Some members of the garden may have lost jobs and can't wait until some of their fresh produce ripens to supplement what they have to buy in the supermarket (or even to avoid

having to go to the supermarket.) All of the fresh produce will also help all of us with boosting our immune systems, which could help us to fight the virus, if we become infected.

COVID-19 has forced some changes on our garden, too. We have some new rules by which we need to abide. Among them are the every-other-day rule in order to help us keep at least 6 feet from one another while working on our plots. That, coupled with our isolation in our own homes could have resulted in *less* of a sense of community. But that's not what Andrea Joyce (plot #38A) has observed. She has observed the opposite – at least in our garden, there is more of a sense of fellowship than in any of the 4 previous years she has been in the garden – with more sharing and kindness – what a true *community* garden should be.

And the garden has been a Godsend to Andrea, too, for other reasons. She was one of those who didn't lose her job completely, but almost lost her whole business. She had started her own Hair Salon (*Euphoria* in West Nyack) back in October of 2019. So she was just really starting up when she was forced to close her doors in March. So she has been consumed with worry about her own finances as a small businesswoman. She said it has been her saving grace to be able dig in the dirt and to socialize with her garden mates, even if they were not her immediate neighbors. We are there to help nourish ourselves and others in so many ways! Let's keep that part going after the pandemic is over!

Andrea's salon is just starting to open up again, so if anyone needs a haircut (and who doesn't?) you can make your appointment at plot #38A - actually at 845-512-8961.

--Kathy Schwarz

Black Farming and Institutionalized Racism at the USDA

In recent months, thanks to a resurgence of Black Lives Matter protests, our society has been considering the ways various institutions have contributed to what social scientists call institutionalized, or structural, racism—that is, the way racist policies and practices are built into the very institutions and fabric of our society.

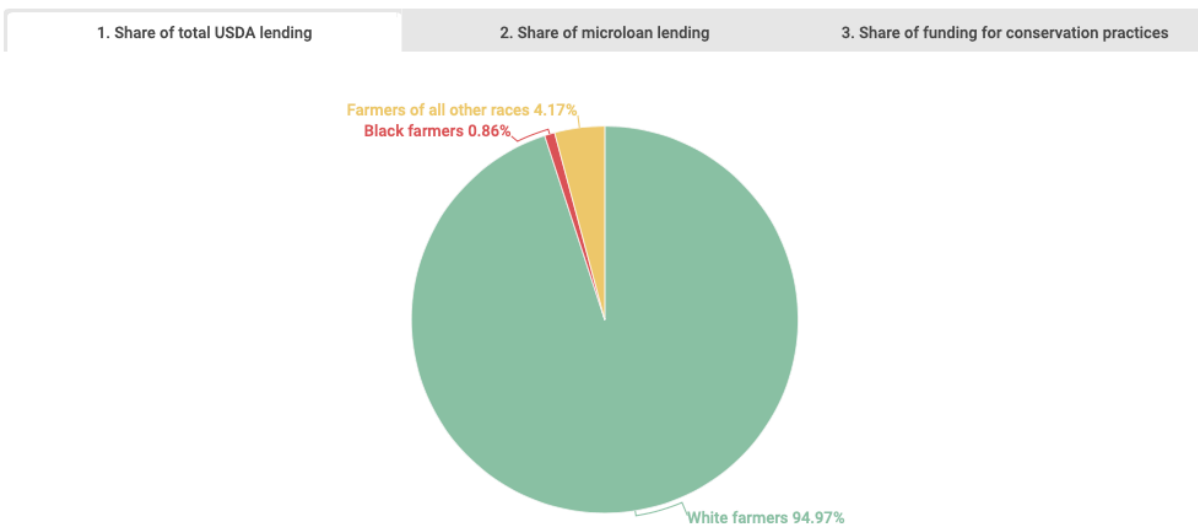
One primary institution under scrutiny is the federal government. Some examples of institutionalized racism from the federal government easily come to mind, such as redlining. [Redlining](#) refers to the legal process through which the Federal Housing Authority subsidized white wealth through housing loans, while refusing to insure mortgages in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Just as with housing segregation, the policies and practices implemented by the federal government have played a role in segregating farming and agriculture.

One hundred years ago, fifteen percent of all farmers in the United States were Black. Today, that number has shrunk to less than two percent. [Black farmers today](#) make less than \$40,000 annually, in comparison to over \$190,000 by white farmers, in part because their average acreage is about one quarter of white farmers. How did we get here?

According to the think tank [Center for American Progress](#), Black farmers in the U.S. lost 80% of their land between 1910 and 2007, a loss the think tank directly attributes to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Some of the discrimination was overt, such as forcing Black farmers off their land or working with banks and land developers to strip Black landowners of their property titles. Other forms of discrimination were more covert, such as denying Black farmers the same loans given to white farmers. When the USDA promoted farm loan programs, they did not do any outreach to Black farmers, and when Black farmers were made aware of farm loan programs, their applications were systematically denied for decades. The consequences are such that during this time, when Black farmers lost 80% of their land, white farmers only lost 2% during the same time period. The USDA was more than six times as likely to foreclose on a Black farmer as on a white farmer.

These losses add up to [12 million acres](#) over the last century, with most of the losses occurring from the 1950s onward. In 1965, the United States Commission on Civil Rights found that the Farmers Home Administration (a program within the Department of Agriculture) provided much larger loans to white farmers than to Black farmers, even when taking into account the size and the net worth of the farm.

USDA funding, as disbursed by program and race



Source: Freedom of Information Act requests. "White farmers" includes both non-Hispanic and Hispanic white farmers.

Image Source: [The Counter](#)

The USDA [distorted data](#) to conceal their discrimination against black farmers. Their 2014 Census of Agriculture was framed to suggest a 9% increase in Black farming, which was not true. At the same time they were hiding their discriminatory practices, the USDA was foreclosing on Black farmers who had made discrimination complaints, threw out new complaints, and misrepresented the frequency of complaints.

What can be done? The [Center for American Progress](#) recommends that federal lawmakers do the following:

- Establish a public land trust for beginning farmers of color
- Enact a federal law to protect inherited land—heirs' property—from forced sales
- Expand technical assistance and outreach to farmers of color
- Conduct strict and sustained oversight of the USDA

You can get involved with nonprofit organizations like [Food First](#) and [contact your elected officials](#) to voice support for these efforts as well.

2020 Dates to Remember

Mondays, around 10am Plant A Row veggies in cooler will be given to food bank

There will be no garden contest this year.

Thursday, Oct. 22 Potluck dinner

Sunday, Nov. 8 Garden closes, all items removed and plots restored to state as of April 18

Saturday, Nov. 14 8:00 AM sharp: Winter prep clean-up

News you can use!

Squash that Squash

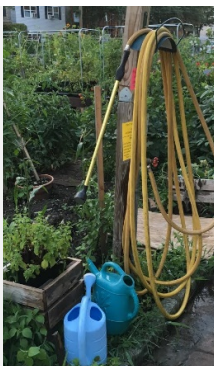
Squash Vine Borers have moved into the garden. The only way to stop them is to not have any squash in the garden! No zucchini, cucumber, watermelons, pumpkins, or winter squash.

Maintain Physical Distance

Only visit the garden on your assigned days, wear gloves and a mask. Stay safe!

Coming or going?

Please don't forget to lock the gate.



Give a hose a chance!

Don't forget to turn the hose off after use. Then open the nozzle and drain. Thanks!

Garden Gratitude

If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need. – Cicero

A Message from Your Newsletter Team

It's your newsletter, so please send us your garden story or let us know what you want to read about. We'd love to hear from you.

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Andrea Joyce angbeck@mac.com
Hilary Rosen hilary.rosen@yahoo.com

Images sourced via Wikimedia Commons.

Notes from the Board:

Please notify us at nyackcommunitygarden@gmail.com if our garden information has incorrect information for you such as wrong name spelling, email, phone number, plot number, committee assignment, or address OR 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

John Dunnigan (plot 16)	co-president	pickwickbooks@gmail.com	358-9126
Lynda Grant (plot 42)	co-president/secretary	lhgrant1@gmail.com	358-2175
Marie Dilluvio (plot 15)	treasurer	mvenus1220@aol.com	358-5877
Jill Remaly (plot 37)	member	jillremaly217@gmail.com	358-3427
Laura Pakaln (plot 32)	member	lpakaln@verizon.net	358-0593

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