
NYACK COMMUNITY GARDEN

October-November 2021

Christina Clemente – “Mother of Butterflies/Keeper of Cocoons”

The Nyack Community Garden is truly a community – and not just a community, but a community of amazing people! And Christina Clemente (Plot 18) is one of them. If you notice her in the next few weeks prowling around your plot, she is not looking to harvest any of your veggies, she is trying to rescue caterpillars! If she didn't rescue them, you might not even notice them when you dismantle your plot and they would end up getting crushed in the compost bag and never transform into the gorgeous butterflies they could otherwise become.

We have a pollinator garden on one side of our garden and a butterfly garden on the other. Christina is determined that we do not ignore the pollinators when they're inside the garden in their caterpillar stage before they can become those lovely butterflies and pollinators!



These caterpillars munch on mostly carrot greens, parsley, dill, and fennel throughout the growing season and then, if given the chance, they mature enough to form cocoons where they transform into butterflies. Christina picks them off their veggies (delicately, because they are fragile,) mostly in October or November, brings them home, and raises them in a laundry hamper where they can overwinter unharmed. She feeds them sprigs of parsley every other day (and boy, are they hungry!) They tend to build their cocoons at the top of the hamper and, when she sees them climbing out of their cocoons, she releases her babies, around April until June, when and where she knows there will be plenty of food for them. At this point, they are gorgeous Spicebush Swallowtails, ready for a life in the wild.

Sometimes she observes one of them struggling to crawl out of their cocoon, so she, oh so gently, helps pull them out. And a few times, when she witnessed the “birth” of clearly disabled butterflies that she didn’t think would make it in the outside world, she raised them in the hamper, feeding them what they love to eat, allowing them to have longer, more satisfying lives under her own wing.



When she’s not the caterpillar rescuer, Christina is a Reiki Master and a spiritual coach. But they all connect together, as she sees the spiritual in everything, including the garden and its inhabitants. As she stated it: “Just like the tiny seeds we plant, which we watch transform into abundant vegetables that nourish us, the butterfly egg transforms into the caterpillar, which, in turn, transforms into the butterfly, which helps feed us by pollinating those same vegetable plants.” All are symbols of transformation and hope to Christina.

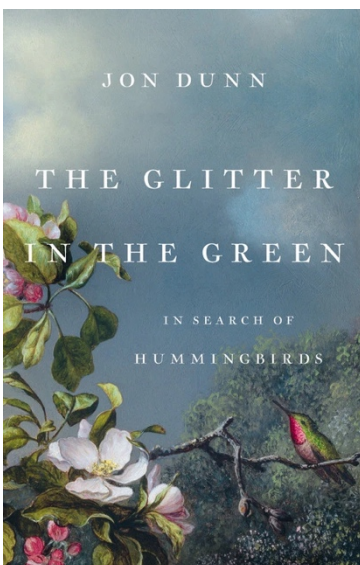
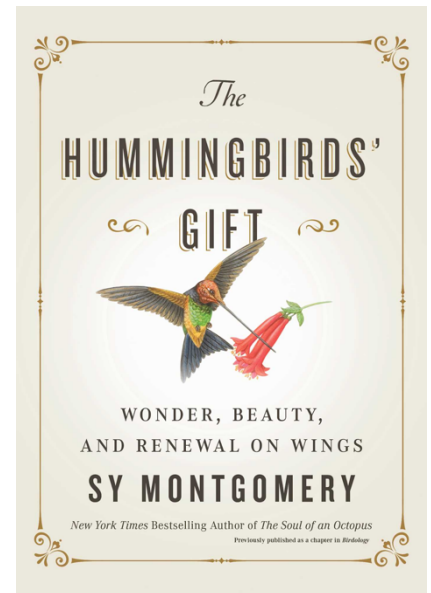
--Kathy Schwarz

Book Reviews

As we near the end of the growing season, my thoughts turn to hibernation. Though I appreciate winter far more than I did as a child -- I was always the first kid to abandon the sledding hill for an indoor mug of marshmallowy Swiss Miss, ice encrusted wool mittens steaming on the radiator -- I still look forward to the colder months and the excuse of the weather to stay inside. I'm also grateful to be able to afford warm boots and a jacket, waterproof gloves and reliable indoor heat.

I read all year round but the pile near my bed tends to grow exponentially during the darkest months. Luckily my library jobs provide a steady, and free supply of books. Here are some new-ish titles I've read or plan to read before it's time to plant again. Each title is linked to the library catalog -- I promise to share the wealth.

Hummingbirds are airborne jewels and important pollinators--that much I knew before reading Sy Montgomery's latest, [The Hummingbird's Gift](#). I now hope to someday see one flying backwards or dive bombing a bloomed flower at sixty miles per hour. Sy tells the story of Brenda Sherburn who finds and nurses abandoned baby hummingbirds the size of peanuts, until they are ready to live in the wild on their own. Nature writer Jon Dunn takes a wider view of this extraordinary bird, tracking as many species of hummingbirds as he can manage while traveling from the Arctic circle to near-Antarctic Islands in [The Glitter in the Green](#).



In [The Arbornaut](#), biologist, botanist and conservationist Meg Lowman takes the reader on an adventure in the eighth continent of the world's tree tops, where she has spent most of her adult life. Travel with her through Australia, Ethiopia, Scotland, the American northwest and many other countries in her quest to conserve, educate and provide hope that, through taking care of trees, humans may still yet make a lasting impact against climate change.

Back on the ground, Katharine Coles' new book [The Stranger I Become](#) takes the reader on a lyrical journey, all on foot, through the writer's immediate neighborhood in Utah, out into the United States and the world. By walking and paying attention, she breaches the divide between her inner and outer life, leading the reader to appreciate the permeable nature of all existence. Mexican writer Mariana Oliver's book [Migratory Birds](#)

(translated by Julia Sanches) contains essays focused on how humans--those featherless, flightless creatures--create and interact with the idea of home, words criss-cross the world from Turkey to Berlin to Canada to Cuba and the United States. Her writing is sturdy and poetic, examining both forced and welcomed travel.

Pull the camera back for context with geologist Andrew H. Knoll in his latest [*A Brief History of Earth*](#). Which is just that, in two hundred seventy-two illustrated pages. A biography covering 4.6 billion years written in language accessible to everyone.

Lastly, two new cookbooks to help use up the last of the harvest. In [*Vibrant Botanicals*](#), Jennifer McGruther explains how to make homemade herbal teas, tinctures, infused oils and tisanes then provides seventy omnivorous recipes incorporating these creations. [*Why We Cook: Women on Food, Identity, and Connection*](#), compiled and illustrated by Lindsay Gardner, contains essays, profiles, recipes and more from over one hundred women restaurateurs, activists, food writers, professional chefs, and home cooks. This book celebrates eating with abandon and the community built through the necessary act of sharing food.

--Rosemary Farrell

Did We Squash the Squash Borer?

In 2020, the Nyack Community Garden instituted a squash ban in an effort to eradicate the squash borer, a garden pest that destroys squash plants. We all went an entire summer without planting cucumbers, zucchini, summer squash, watermelons, butternut squash, and the like. What were the fruits of our labor? Did we effectively squash the squash borer? I reached out to gardener Brian Osborne to get the scoop.

Brian said that in past years, it looked like 4 out of every 5 squash plants were killed by the borer. He explained that he's tried to grow summer squash the last several years, and each time, they are killed by the borer—dead by mid-July!

So, what were the results of our squash ban? In 2021, we again planted squash, in the hope that the squash borer moved on from our garden. Brian said that this year, he noted that there were clearly more healthy plants than in the past. However, as several gardeners noted throughout the summer, some plants were still killed by the squash borer. Personally, Brian grew two plants, harvested lots of summer squash, and his plants were eventually killed by mildew in August, but not by the borer.

Ultimately, Brian said that the ban was partially successful. He suggested the garden might need a strategy for combatting the squash borer, such as growing squash only in alternate years.

--Liz Cherry

Plant-a-Row for 2021 Update

Jill Remaly, who is chair of the Plant-a-Row Committee, reported that as of this writing (mid-October) 604 pounds of produce had been donated to People to People from our garden! This is compared to 278 for all of last year.

I wondered whether all the rain had something to do with this, as my own garden seemed to thrive from it. I also wondered whether the ban on growing squash and cucumber last year (heavy vegetables) was the explanation. But Jill didn't think so. She said that this year "people have been really good about asking us to harvest their plots when they went on vacation." And probably few went on vacation last year at all. And she speculated that "new gardeners in particular are really good about sharing their bounty." Plus, as we all know, it has been a really good year for tomatoes!

Thanks to all the new gardeners and thanks to **everyone** who donates to Plant-a-Row! As prices for vegetables in the supermarkets rise, it becomes even more important to donate some of ours.

Please continue to contribute so we can up the poundage even more in the next few weeks!

--Kathy Schwarz

Congratulations to the 2021 Garden Contest Winners!

The Nyack Community Garden was able to resume the Garden Contest, which serves as a celebration of our gardens' beauty and bounty. Thanks to the Garden Contest Committee, including Marie Dilluvio (Chair), Stephanie Satler, Maritza de la Vega, and Alexandra Avila for their work. Guest judges included Laura Rothschild (Nyack Planning Board), Diane McPherson (former gardener), Teresa Kenny (Orangeburg Superintendent), Tony Scott (Owner of DPNP), and Jennifer Guinta (Owner of Cottage Creek Gardens).

Congratulations to this year's winners:

Best Overall Garden:

Jayne Stuecklen (36)

Best Maintained Garden:

#1 Niki Strippoli (7)

#2 Yodit & Elvin Delacruz (35)

#3 Michelle Adams & Chris Vergar (34)

Best Flower & Vegetable Garden:

#1 Lorenzo Tacadena (4B)

#2 Jill Remaly (30)

#3 Stephanie Salter (9)

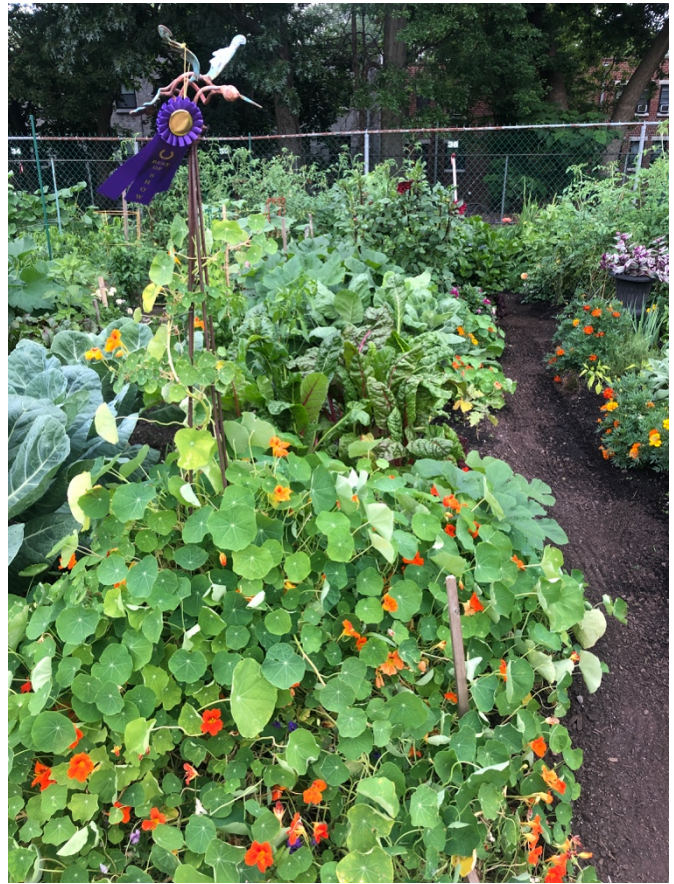
Most Creative Garden:

#1 Nicole & Donna Faustini (49)

#2 Marie Carmel Grube (23)

#3 Catherine Cutbill (17A)

--Liz Cherry



2021 Dates to Remember

- Mondays, around 10am** Plant A Row veggies in cooler will be given to food bank
- Sunday, November 7** Garden closes, all items removed and plots restored to state as of April 4
- Saturday, November 13** 8:00 AM sharp: Winter prep clean-up

News you can use!

Feed the birds!

Leave flower heads, especially zinnias, on the plants after they die so birds can eat the seeds. When you clean up your plot, save those for last!



No potluck dinner this year...

Unfortunately, due to COVID, the garden potluck was again canceled for this year.

Coming or going?

Please don't forget to lock the gate.



Conserve water—and hoses!

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



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.

Liz Cherry elizcherry@gmail.com
Kathy Schwarz Katherine.schwarz54@gmail.com
Rosemary Farrell rfarrell414@gmail.com

*Photographs by Liz Cherry and Nancy Jagelka.
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Notes from the Board:

Please notify us 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 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 37)	co-president	jillremaly217@gmail.com	914-393-6347
Michelle Morales (plot 22)	co-president	mzmichelle@hotmail.com	347-770-2198
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David Spatz (plot 5)	member	davidosco@mac.com	825-4224

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