

Community Gardener's Companion

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DULUTH COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM



The MISSION of the Duluth Community Garden Program is to strengthen the Duluth area community and foster self-sufficiency by providing access for all to food production and preservation resources and promoting sustainable gardening practices.

Consecutive Planting

by Joel Rosen

“Did you get your garden in yet?” No matter where you go, you inevitably hear this (somewhat rhetorical) question, although the timing varies by geography. If only it were that simple. As a market gardener, I used a schedule with at least 12 distinct planting dates. For the sake of simplicity, let’s cut it down to a more workable number.

First, let’s talk about the things you only plant once in a growing season unless disaster strikes. This group can be subdivided into 3 groups: cool weather vegetables that take a full growing season to mature, warm weather vegetables that need the full frost-free growing season to mature, and cool weather vegetables that can mature in less time than the full growing season but are best planned to coincide with an optimum season.

OK. If you’re still with me, onions, leeks, and parsnips fall into the first group. They tolerate frost in spring as seedlings and welcome frost in fall as nearly or fully mature plants. Most of you will want to plant or transplant these in the first half of May (big sweet onions will do best if you give them a head start and transplant as seedlings). In a normal year, if you plant any earlier, the ground will not be warm enough for germination, and by the time

they come up, they’ll be overrun with weeds. Planted from seed any later than May 20, these won’t usually grow to their full potential before growth winds down sometime in September or October.

Just to complicate things, celery and celeriac like cool, damp conditions and tolerate light frost but may bolt if transplanted too early in the season. Set these out in early June during a mild spell, and you should have a fully matured crop by late September. Celeriac takes a little longer to mature, but having its edible portion underground, it will tolerate a harder frost. Remember, if you’re going to grow your own transplants, these are slow to germinate and seem to stay tiny forever. These are best started before you get the klister out of your wax kit (early March).

Now let’s talk about warm weather vegetables. In general these should be direct seeded or transplanted when past the usual last frost date and a warm settled period is under way or forecast. Soil temperatures should be warm enough to walk barefoot comfortably (approaching 60F at 4” depth) For those of you close to the lake this could be as early as May 20, while June 5-10 is closer to average for locations well inland. A special caution for those close to the lake. You may be safe from frost in late May,

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The Duluth
Community
Garden Program
newsletter is
published 4 times
per year:

Sept–Nov

Dec–Feb

Mar–May

June–Aug

**Community
Gardener's
Companion: News
of the Duluth
Community
Garden Program**

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Introducing New DCGP Coordinator Jahn Hibbs

by Jahn Hibbs

May 1, 2010

I remember when I fell in love with gardening. I was in the third grade. One of my mom's friends gave her a paper grocery bag of dead looking, dirt encrusted roots. She said they were irises. I planted them myself and delighted in monitoring the daily process of those surprising green shoots. Soil. Sun. Water. Hope. I've been hooked on the magic of that combination ever since then.

That was in Colorado, on the arid western slope; beautiful country, but I often missed the north with a longing for the color green and for the scent of rivers colored amber like root beer with a creamy cap of foam. So my path led me windingly back to northern Wisconsin, and then across the bridge to Duluth. I am home.

Along that winding path, I graduated with a degree in History with minors in Russian Studies and Museum Studies from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. I worked for a time doing public programming at Fairlawn Mansion. Always in my mind, though, is this longing to live more simply and grow food and share these things that give me such joy. I found a very nurturing community at the Whole Foods Co-op, where I've worked for a number of years—possibly the best place in Duluth to connect with people of like mind about local food issues, sustainability, and of course, eating! I have enjoyed learning about new foods, teaching cooking classes, getting to know local farmers, and working with the Urban Youth Farm Tour. I have also been fortunate to be a part of Grassroots Farm in Saginaw, to participate in LS-SFA's Farm Beginnings Program, and to garden at our own Strawberry Hill garden site.

I am delighted to have this opportunity now to work as program coordinator for the Duluth Community Garden Program—it's a nexus of culture, history, care for the environment, social justice, community building, education, art, camaraderie, and of course, eating!

One element of community gardening that I am most interested in is diversity, particularly the meeting ground that gardening in community creates for intergenerational exchange and support. I am very encouraged by the number of college students, families with small children, and other young people who have become community gardeners this year. I appreciate their energy and new perspectives. I also appreciate our "seasoned" gardeners. (Dan Kislinger says the "seasoning" is the salt and pepper in their hair!) I appreciate their patience, ideas, and the fact that some of them have had a hand in keeping this program going almost since its inception 33 years ago. I look forward to seeing what we can create together.

Soil. Sun. Water. Hope... And a program that can bring people together to a common purpose, regardless of age, ability, affluence, or experience. That is a great recipe for strengthening our community, indeed.

Last year the board of directors worked hard and made some difficult decisions, like so many non-profits, to restructure the program to meet the realities of budget constraints. DCGP has emerged as a volunteer-run organization with a part-time program coordinator (yours truly) to help keep all the moving parts moving and working together. Re-emphasizing the importance of gardeners' participation

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*...Introducing New DCGP Program Coordinator
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in keeping the program running in addition to help around their own garden site and their individual garden plots. Volunteer opportunities abound, including volunteering at events like our Seed and Transplant Sale, building projects, helping around the office, doing site maintenance projects like tansy control and cover cropping of problem areas—all tasks that work to improve and strengthen our community. This truly is a community garden program, and no matter what your age, ability, income level, experience, or availability, everyone has something to contribute. I hope you will stop in at the office or at one of our events and consider becoming more involved. I look forward to meeting you!

Update on Plot Sign-Ups

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's...your garden site map! Yep, they went out yesterday, folks, and at last the process of matching gardeners up with plots is drawing to a close.

What do 140 gardeners + 1 long waiting list + over 200 plots equal? A lot of phone tag!

Thank you to all of the volunteers who worked on plot sign ups this year—updating garden contracts, making phone calls, mailing spring fling invitations, making phone calls, drawing new maps, making phone calls, photocopying maps, printing mailing labels, making phone calls... It's all important, and we couldn't have done it without you!

A special shout out to Loni Coppin and her merry band of events organizers for their groundbreaking planning & energetic execution of our 1st Ever Annual Spring Fling and Plot Sign-up. It was a lot of fun and succeeded in signing up most of our 2010 gardeners. More importantly, it gave gardeners a chance to learn about the program and meet one another. Great job!

"Heirloom vegetables are irresistible, not just for the poetry in their names but because these titles stand for real stories. Vegetables acquire histories when they are saved as seeds for many generations, carefully maintained and passed by hand from one gardener to another."

—excerpt taken from Barbara Kingsolver's "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle."

Anastasia and The Ringing Cedars

by Nancy Knutson

When I opened the postal box that contained the nine Ringing Cedars series books and seven Dr. Leo Sharashkin lecture DVDs, I was somewhat perplexed as to why I had ordered "everything," rather than one or two to first peruse. As I began to read the books and view the videos, I realized that these were meant to be shared. A conversation with Duluth Community Garden member, Marian Syrjamaki-Kuchta, led to offering the DVD showings at Chester Creek Café in April/May.

What is this phenomenon?

An invitation to "wake up".... to the realization of who we truly are at our very essence and how we have been limited in our potential over thousands of years; to the reality that our very thoughts are energetic things that create our experience; to the idea that we must become consciously aware of our sacred bond to the earth and return to the land, to recreate a forgotten paradise. This is the creative vision of Anastasia, a reclusive, highly empowered woman living in the Siberian taiga wilderness in peaceful harmony with all of nature.

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“Locally grown is a denomination whose meaning is incorruptible. ... Local food is a handshake deal in a community gathering place. It involves farmers with first names, who show up week after week. ‘Local’ is farmers growing trust.”

—excerpt taken from Barbara Kingsolver’s “Animal, Vegetable, Miracle.”

Duluth—the Homecroft City

by Nancy Nelson

One hundred years ago Duluth was known throughout the United States as “The Homecroft City.”

Homecrofting, as described in a 1912 Duluth News Tribune editorial, is “the employment of whatever ground surface may be available in connection with the home, whether it be the back yard of the adjoining vacant lot, or a five-acre farm in the outskirts, in the raising of garden produce and poultry, utilizing the production of the soil for supplementing the family income, and making a knowledge of agriculture a means of useful education to the children of the family.”

How did Duluth become “The Homecroft City”? In the early 1900s, Duluth was growing fast. Promoters expected it to become a commercial center as important as Chicago. The city was already a major transportation center where railroads and ships distributed the region’s natural resources of iron ore and timber throughout the nation. A new steel plant was in the works.

Henry Ford had not yet introduced the affordable mass-produced automobile, so people lived close to their work and depended on the streetcar for transportation. It was a time before zoning regulations required that a portion of every city lot be left as open space. “In all the downtown district the lots are crowded with buildings; dwellings and tenements have been packed in like sardines...there is no room left for a clothes line nor a dog kennel; the children are forced to the streets and the police are forced to ask for laws to drive them back” is how the News Tribune described the housing conditions.

Because the land of northern Minnesota was mostly utilized for mining and timber production, few farms had been established and fresh vegetables were at a premium. Economic recession and a near-collapse of the financial system in late 1907 drove up the cost of living even higher.

One response to the 1907 recession was a back-to-the-land movement. The National Homecrofting Association was born, encouraging industrial workers throughout the country to acquire an acre of land and save money by growing their own food. Influenced by this national movement, Duluth’s Commercial Club, the News Tribune, and other civic organizations began promoting the idea of self-sufficiency by encouraging backyard gardens and the creation of “garden suburbs” where middle class families could live and garden on a one- or two-acre parcel of land.

Homecroft Park on Calvary Road was one of Duluth’s first garden suburbs. Located seven to twelve blocks from the end of the Woodland streetcar line, these one-acre lots were offered for sale by W. M Prindle & Co. beginning in 1909. Advertisements boasted “the soil consists of from three to six feet of rich black loam, unsurpassed for garden purposes; no stones and well drained.” The prices ranged from \$200 to \$275; terms were \$1.00 down and \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week until paid for; no interest; no payments when sick.

Greysolon Farms followed in 1910. Located near the intersection of Jean Duluth Road and Martin Road, this suburb of one-acre lots was expected to become a garden market for the city. The Duluth News Tribune described it in optimistic terms: “...it will be a market place to which everyone can go

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as often as they will and fill their baskets with the fruits of the soil, the hennery and dairy. It will be as convenient as a so-called 'central' market to nearly half the population." They also emphasized the importance of buying locally, "The product will be sold in Duluth, and the money used in Duluth."

George H. Maxwell of Chicago was the chief promoter of homecrofting and served as executive director of the National Homecrofting Association. He came to Duluth in early 1911 to share his ideas and to see what was already happening here. Maxwell was so impressed that in September of 1912 he devoted the entire issue of his magazine *The Talisman* to the homecroft movement in Duluth. He made famous "The Duluth Idea": Keep house by the year—garden for the year around—go to the garden in summer, go to the larder in winter, let sunshine and soil supply fruits, berries, and vegetables for all home needs from the home gardens, and educate the children in the public schools to live this way. Maxwell visited Duluth regularly for the next seven years, promoting the city as the national center of the homecrofting movement.

Educating the children was a central principle of Maxwell's vision. One of his favorite slogans was "every child in a garden." He believed that gardening would keep children off the streets, make them healthy, and teach them the skills they would need to work their own homecroft some day. Schools throughout Duluth created garden plots for their students to care for, and garden contests were held regularly, with detailed results published in the newspaper.

As the home garden movement boomed, the University of Minnesota established a demonstration farm in Duluth on a site that was offered by the Greysolon

Farms development. The University of Minnesota Experimental Farm was built in 1912 and became an important center for agricultural education and experimentation.

About the same time, the Alliance Real Estate Corporation starting selling one-acre lots at Exeter Farms, located just north of Lester Park along Maxwell Road. Because it was a long hike from the end of the streetcar line to the top of the ridge, a private bus company was created to provide transport for homeowners and their visitors between Lester Park and the Exeter Farms. As more families moved into the farms, they developed a strong sense of community.

What happened to the Homecroft Movement? In 1914 war broke out in Europe. Food production dropped dramatically in Europe, where agricultural laborers were recruited into military service and the remaining farms were devastated by the conflict. Even before officially joining the war, the United States helped by providing food to the Allies and their armies. Americans were encouraged to conserve food and eliminate waste so more food could be shipped abroad. In 1917 the government began a "war garden" campaign, urging citizens to utilize all available private and public lands for growing food. It became a patriotic duty to plant a war garden, and homecroft gardens were transformed into war gardens. As the *News Tribune* explained, "...the war garden is but the homecroft garden's successor. Few realize that this city's remarkable record in war gardening was but a sequence of homecrofting..."

Then, just as the war was drawing to a close, in October of 1918, the massive forest fire that destroyed the city of

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then start searching or
shopping and they'll
donate a penny (and
even more when you
buy) to the DCGP
each time you use the
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Consecutive Planting continued from page 1

but if onshore winds are persistent, your soil will not be warm enough for tender transplants. The first night transplants spend in their new environment, especially if they haven't been hardened off, can cause damage and growth checks even if they don't freeze, so wait until a nice mild evening with little or no wind to transplant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, and melons. Squash and pumpkins are a bit hardier and may even tolerate a touch of frost as young plants, but don't press your luck too far. Basil is even more sensitive than the nightshades and cucumbers; I usually recommend transplanting basil in unheated greenhouses or at least waiting until the weather really settles, usually sometime in early July. Be especially careful when direct seeding untreated sweet corn. In soil temperatures below 60F, it's prone to rot if the ground is wet, and then you'll just need to plant more corn. Early varieties of sweet corn described as 65-day corn will usually mature in our climate in less than 90 days (last year it was more like 100), and nearly mature corn will tolerate some light frost, so direct seeding as late as June 15 usually works out.

In the third group we have Brussels sprouts, some of the longer season cabbages for storage, and peas. The first two can take anywhere from 90 to 130 days from transplant to fully mature, and are best harvested as late in the season as reasonable. Generally, transplanting the first half of June works best for these, allowing for a late October harvest for storage cabbage and November/December harvests of Brussels sprouts following near zero night temperatures. Be careful about transplanting any later than early June or you may encounter what I sometimes call seasonal time/temperature warp. In other words, due to declining day length and temperature, the 30 days of growth you

usually get in September are not equal to 30 days in August, and if you transplant on July 1, counting 120 days until Halloween, you are not likely to see full-sized storage cabbage or Brussels sprouts. On the other hand, if you transplant too early, they will be overmature before they sweeten up in cold temperatures.

Peas are a special case. They grow best in moderately cool weather and can become noticeably less palatable in extended periods of hot weather. You might think they are a good candidate for spring and fall planting, but that second planting has never worked out for me. Peas will tolerate plenty of frost as young seedlings, but the flowers and seed pods are much more easily damaged by frost. If you're very close to the lake and have a significantly extended growing season, you might try a mid-July planting. Otherwise, stick to early to mid May, noting carefully the temperature and moisture levels of the soil. Untreated peas are prone to rot in cold, waterlogged soils (much like sweet corn, although the critical temperature is more like above 40F), so plant only as early as weather conditions allow. If your garden site almost never gets hot (a peninsula or island on Lake Superior), planting anytime in June should work well.

Now let's talk about the vegetables you might want to plant twice. These include some cool weather root crops, some fast maturing cole crops, and one warm weather vegetable. Early carrots and beets should be planted the first half of May at the same time as parsnips, but for a storage crop you hope to use all winter and spring, a second planting of carrots and beets made around the end of June is best. In a normal year, this will allow full maturation before the ground freezes up but reduce the risks of splitting in the field, woodiness, or disease.

Broccoli and cauliflower are at their best in early to mid-fall, but an early planting will usually yield good quality heads as well. For early broccoli and cauliflower, transplanting the first 10 days of May works well for a July harvest (before the dog days of August set in). July 1 transplanting will usually allow for late September harvest, and if you really want to do it right, time the broccoli, which tolerates (and sweetens up in) a much harder frost, for October harvest by transplanting around July 15. Chinese cabbage and short season, sweet cabbage varieties can be planted on the same schedule as broccoli.

Potatoes are another root crop that likes cool growing conditions and will give you best results if you make two plantings. I like to plant a small quantity in early May, with the idea that most of these will be consumed as small new potatoes in July and August. (Warning – be prepared to expand the size of your garden; these can be addictive, and if you eat them at golf ball size or smaller, each

person can consume a couple of hills at one meal.) For full-sized potatoes that you want to store through spring, planting the first half of June usually allows for full growth of all but the longest season varieties.

Beans are frost-sensitive once they're up out of the ground, but they're a little less prone to rot in cool wet soil than sweet corn. Most gardeners are happy with one planting of beans, but if you really want top-quality beans, make at least two plantings: one around June 1 and another around July 1. As long as you pick them on a regular basis, this should provide you with prime quality beans through first frost. If you're close to the lake and usually safe from frost until October 1, you could consider planting as late as July 10-15.

Now let's consider cool weather vegetables that for best results should be planted more than once or twice, often referred to as consecutive planting. We're talking about spinach, lettuce, and other salad greens. Most of these will surprise you with their frost hardiness both as seedlings and mature plants. Most varieties will mature from seed in 40 to 60 days or from transplant in 30 to 45 days. (Crisphead, also known as iceberg, lettuce is a special case. It's both more prone to frost damage once it heads up and also takes 10 to 15 days longer to mature.) Unlike peas, spinach and lettuce seeds are not prone to rot in cold, wet soil. Unlike carrots or parsnips, they will not take 3 weeks to germinate in cool early season conditions. Provided the ground is easily worked and soil temps are above 40F, first seeding or transplanting around May 1, or even earlier in some years, is a good idea. Under ideal conditions, arugula and mustard greens will germinate in 3 to 5 days, spinach in 4-7, and lettuce in about a week. Under cool spring conditions, growth is slow, but as temperatures warm and day length continues to increase, growth rates

accelerate. With an eye toward the seasonal time/temperature warp mentioned above, make the next couple of plantings about 3 weeks apart. Sometime in late June reduce the span to 2 weeks for the next few plantings. Try your last two plantings about a week apart – maturity times are increasing rapidly in late summer/fall. Lettuce can be direct seeded as late as Aug 1 or transplanted as late as Aug 10, while spinach, arugula, and mustards can be direct seeded as late as Aug 15. Short season cole crops like broccoli raab, Chinese broccoli, and baby bok choy can be treated similarly although you will probably be most impressed with the quality of these timed to harvest after light frost.

In the next issue, we'll take a look at harvest, post harvest handling, and winter storage.

SPRING FLING FOLLOW-UP

"Gotta like friendly, gentle gardening people," commented one of the gardeners, and, indeed, a vibrancy was palpable the day of the Vernal Equinox as gardeners attended the Duluth Community Garden Program's (DCGP) first annual Spring Fling, marking the beginning of the 2010 gardening season. As one outcome of DCGP efforts to reinvent ourselves, the Spring Fling became our first opportunity for everyone to put a face to a name and invite gardeners to think beyond their own garden plot.

Holding the Spring Fling in the Fellowship Hall of Peace Church provided a spacious, social setting for gardeners to enjoy the process of plot sign-up and learn more about the gardening program via visiting the "stations" set-up around the periphery of the room. Site coordinators for specific sites were seated at tables ready to introduce or reintroduce gardeners to assigned plots and establish contract conditions. A key station reviewed the Land Stewardship Committee mission and expectations; their mission is to encourage the core connection of the people digging in the dirt with the program. Another station gathered volunteer contact information and interests to plug gardeners into the various needs of the program itself. The "Get on the Map" Station took photos and gathered biographic information for all who wanted to be included in the program web site. One table had a great variety of seeds for sale; at another, gardeners tested their knowledge identifying seeds. Children painted potatoes and paper, their hands and faces, with bold tempera colors.

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The St. Louis County Extension website

Tune in to KDAL 610 radio on Tuesday mornings at 8:00 am to hear Bob Olen of Extension talk about what you need to know to make your garden successful. Listeners are encouraged to call in with their questions. (from St. Louis County extension website).

New Online Forum

The Duluth Community Gardening Program has a brand new online forum. Nothing in the world of gardening takes the place of getting your hands in the soil, but this is a tremendous way to share information.

The new forum is set up as a "members-only" forum, meaning we should not have to deal with unwanted visitors posting advertising or other spam. It would be great if all of the DCGP gardeners and staff would join the forum, even if you have limited access to a computer or the Internet. Just go to the DCGP main website (www.duluthcommunitygarden.org), and click on the text link that says "Brand new forum for gardeners."

The forum, like a garden, will wither and die without support, or it can become a wonderful, vibrant community for exchanging information, bragging about crops, warning about pests, organizing volunteers, planting and growth at the various DCGP gardening sites. It can also be a place to get to know each other a bit more, help us all do garden planning when the soil is covered with snow, provide a way to share, trade, barter, or sell our extra seeds, starts, tools, and supplies.

The DCGP forum will become whatever the members make it; it will not happen without member involvement. For anyone that is unfamiliar with forums, register, log-in, and take a look around. If anyone has any questions or if there is any way I can help with any forum functions, please don't hesitate to call me or fire off an email. Hope to see everyone there!

Dennis Leahy
hatejunqmale@hotmail.com

Gratitude list to our talented members

by Marian Syrjamaki-Kuchta

Energetic Jane Baxter joined the seed committee, worked on the seed packing party organization, cutting labels, marking drawers, sorting seeds into giant Ziplocks so we could read the package names. We sorted through boxes of old seeds and did some viability tests. Now Jane is lining up volunteers for the upcoming sale events, and potting trees that did not sell at the tree sale.

Gloria Piche works on the Operations Committee, and over the years has organized many volunteers for the sales and events.

Deb Shubat, eternally helpful to the garden program, shares soil recipes, orders plants for us from Bailey's (you need to have a real nursery license, and she does), teaching grafting and pruning classes.

Theresa Koenig and Linda Porter teach the chicken classes.

Stacy LaVres edits the newsletter, assigns articles, and coordinates the writers. Marian Syrjamaki-Kuchta edits all the content. Jennifer Gordon designs and lays out the newsletter. Nancy Nelson proofreads the newsletter.

Kayla Ricksham organizes the seed drawers in the office.

Paul Treuer, who long-ago recruited me to the board loves tilling gardens. He serves on the land stewardship committee, sharing his garden wisdom and oversight.

Dennis Leahy has created an online forum for the garden program. He is a professional computer programmer. See it at <http://duluthcommunitygarden.org/phpBB3/index.php>.

Francois Medion set up a PBWorks website for the staff to use to communicate and coordinate functions. Got a learning curve with this one!

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Dan Kislinger, our board president, who took the program in hand when we ran out of funding and has been leading us in a healthy direction for the past year or more, advocates for fermented foods, is always learning and reaching out. He works at the garden cleanups, at the sales, teaches sauerkraut class, drove to the Cities to pick up the raspberry plants, and helped to pot the trees last year.

Pat Farrell set in motion the garden mapping project. Watch for the new garden maps online.

Paul Steklenski, retired board member, continues to provide 3rd Street Bakery cookies and breads for our big events, and fetches our hundreds of pounds of spuds for the plant sales.

Alberta Marana translates for the Hmong gardeners. She took on the perennials part of the upcoming seed and transplant sale.

Visionary Loni Coppin organized the whiz-bang spring fling, which I certainly enjoyed.

Our new garden coordinator, Jahn Hibbs, works long and hard to make the program flow smoothly. She helps me in every way, anticipating what everyone needs and responding so efficiently and confidently.

Nancy Knutson shared her video collection, The Ringing Cedars Series, for the 6-week showing at Sara's Table Chester Creek Café, and thanks to Carla Blumberg for letting us use the basement room for the Friday movie night.

Barb Hollinday and Peggy Sobczak donated 3-gallon pots for potting up the remaining trees from the sale.

Joel Rosen is writing a series of articles on growing what succeeds best here in the Duluth area. He has many years' experience growing for market, and we are lucky to have him writing it all down for us.

I pick on these folks because I have had personal contact with each. They fill me with hope. They make me proud. They are the heart of what we do. And there are many more folks who help out in hundreds of ways. Who stands out for you?

*...Duluth the Homecroft City
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Cloquet swept through the outskirts of Duluth, destroying many homes and killing numerous people in the garden suburbs. Practically every house on Calvary Road and Homecroft Park was burned, along with the Homecroft School. Homes at Exeter Farms were also destroyed in the fire. Although many families returned to rebuild their homes and continue gardening, the times had changed.

George Maxwell continued to promote homecrofting, but by 1919 he shifted most of his energy to his other favorite topic—irrigation. He moved on to Arizona where he spent the rest of his career working for the National Irrigation Association.

Although we may no longer remember George Maxwell or the meaning of the term "homecroft," those of us who work our community garden plots or raise a flock of urban chickens or sell produce at the farmers' market are carrying on the rich legacy of Duluth's homecroft movement.

Soil testing

is done by the University of Minnesota Soil Testing Laboratory to evaluate soil fertility and pH level. You can visit their website to print out the form you will need to send in your soil sample (<http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>). The website also has instructions on how to take your sample. If you are not able to access the Soil Testing Laboratory website, the Extension Office in Duluth (733-2870) or Virginia (749-7120) will be happy to provide you with the needed form.

Nettle-Lentil Lasagna

After drying or cooking, nettles' formic acid content is neutralized and they are ready to eat. Nettles contain one of the highest amounts of protein of all greens, and also have many vitamins, minerals, and trace elements in incredibly generous proportions. They have anti-inflammatory qualities as well. Read all the way through this recipe before you begin.

Dice a medium onion and lots of garlic (3-4 large cloves) into enough olive oil to saute, and cook the onion-garlic mixture gently until it is translucent. Add 2 cups of hot water and 1 cup of dried lentils to the pot; simmer, loosely covered, for 25 minutes or until the lentils are cooked to the softness you like. Don't let them get over-cooked and "mushy." If all the water is not absorbed at the end of cooking, drain the water out, so as not to make a soupy lasagna.

While the lentils are cooking, re-hydrate your dried nettles. (Or you can use fresh, see below.) For a 9x12 casserole pan of finished lasagna, use a cup or 1 1/2 cups dried nettles (can be purchased at Whole Foods Co-op) and pour over this, in a separate large bowl, about 2 cups of boiling water; stir, cover, and let the dried nettles re-hydrate for 20 minutes or so. Add more boiling water if they seem stiff and not re-hydrated enough, let sit a little longer, covered. If, after re-hydrating, the nettles are soupy, strain out the extra water. (Drink as tea!!) Press the water out with the back of a spoon in the strainer; otherwise the lasagna will be soupy.

If using fresh nettles, use the amount you would of spinach or other greens, which will cook down quickly to a much smaller amount than you would suspect!! You may want to use gloves when the nettles are fresh, or if you let them wilt on the cutting board

for 20 minutes before chopping, that may take out their "bite." Use young nettles before they have flowered with their little grey-green, seedy/grainy - looking flowers. Chop the leaves and stems up so that you don't have long stems in your finished product, which people will struggle to cut through at table. (They made the bridge over the River Kwai with nettle stems.) Maybe 4-5 packed cups fresh nettles will cook down to a generous layer for the lasagna. You can just par-boil them for an instant if they are too "puffy" to make into a tidy layer in your casserole pan. Be sure to drain all excess water out.

Make your lasagna the way you usually do - in a 9x13 oven-proof, rectangular casserole pan, having cooked the amount of lasagna noodles you need for your layers. (Cook the lasagna noodles according to package directions.) I make 3 or 4 layers, so I use 12 whole lasagna noodles. Cook the noodles to al dente tenderness. Drain.

Now for the construction process! Pour a little olive oil and /or tomato sauce onto the bottom of your lasagna casserole dish, just to keep the noodles from sticking and burning onto the bottom of your pan. Add onto this the bottom layer of cooked lasagna noodles, then the layer of the cooked, seasoned lentils, then tomato sauce, noodle layer, nettle layer, tomato sauce, and so on. A layer of ricotta cheese is nice, (drain this, too, if needed), then tomato sauce, noodles, and atop the whole thing a layer of tomato sauce and then generous slices of mozzarella cheese. Be somewhat sparing of the tomato sauce throughout; you want the finished product to be moist and spicy, but you don't want it to be so drowned in tomato sauce that you can't lift tidy squares out for servings.

Bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 - 45 minutes, until the sauce bubbles, and the mozzarella cheese on top is melted. Let sit for 5 minutes after removing from oven; this resting period makes it easier to slice through neatly. Serve generous squares and seconds!

A nice salad and garlic bread on the side are good accompaniments.

Courtesy of Giving Ground Wild Medicinal Herb Retreats,
Brimson, Mn , Pam Thompson, 1-218-848-2302,

www.givingground.com

Announcements

Get on the Map

At the Spring Fling, among the many tables and stations in the room, one particular station gave gardeners the opportunity to put themselves on the new map. "What map?" you may ask. If you go to the "Get on the Map" link at the Duluth Community Garden Program Web site, www.duluthcommunitygarden.org, you can click on your garden and see who the other gardeners are at your site, thanks to the work of community gardener and UMD student Andrea Duca; and director of the Geographic Information Science lab at UMD, Stacey Stark.

This is a work in progress, and anyone can "Get on the Map" at any time. We especially encourage site coordinators to do so. If you would like your short bio and a photograph added to the map, please submit your name, with the following information and a digital photograph, to Marian Syrjamaki-Kuchta at msyrjama@hotmail.com.

1. Your Name
2. Your Garden Site
3. What do you want other gardeners to know about you?
4. How long have you been gardening?
5. Do you have any specialties/special interests/special talents (e.g., garlic, strawberries, composting)?

Thanks to all those who participated in "Getting on the Map" at the Spring Fling. It's an experiment we hope gardeners will enjoy and find useful. Let us know by sending email to duluthcommgarden@yahoo.com.



Welcome the Hanson's New Addition

Her name is Sylva Jane Hanson.

She was born Wednesday, April 28, 2010, around 8:30.

She was 7 lbs., 12.5 oz.

She's beautiful. (check out the attached photo) We're all doing well. Can't wait for you all to meet her!

Love, Katie and Scott Hanson

Spring Fling Follow-Up continued from page 7

Expectations for gardener attendance and participation were greatly met. Participation was estimated to be at least 72% of all our gardeners with plots, both new and returning. Gardener feedback on the evaluation form was very positive: "Great process. Enjoyed meeting other gardeners and seeing how program has grown." "Everyone was very helpful and informative." Almost everyone came away with more knowledge about the program and a clearer understanding of the expectations of both the program and the gardeners. Volunteers, staff and gardeners meeting at one place and one time presented multiple opportunities for problem solving and just getting to know each other. And, some people, initially determined to spend the minimum amount of time needed to settle up their contracts, were found lingering, loitering, and learning. "Gotta like friendly, gentle gardening people."

The DCGP thanks all the volunteers, gardeners and program members for making the first event of the growing season, and our first time holding this event, a resounding success!

The Vernal Equinox signals a time of awakening and anticipation. Many seeds were planted at the Spring Fling: Seeds of expectation, opportunity and networking; Seeds of community and conviviality. This is the beginning of a shift of awareness for many from one gardener and one plot to a larger awareness of the gardening community around them. As you sow your own seeds in the soil this spring, may you reap a satisfying and successful gardening season.

Duluth Community Garden Program

plant•a•lot



206 West Fourth Street
Duluth, MN 55806
218.722.4583
www.duluthcommunitygarden.org
duluthcommgarden@yahoo.com

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Duluth, MN

Anastasia and Ringing Cedars continued from page 3

She is considered to be a surviving member of an ancient Vedic civilization whose extraordinary powers and knowledge far exceed anything known today. Anastasia (meaning "resurrection") displays highly developed physical, psychic and mental powers, including remote viewing and healing, mind reading, and seemingly perfect memory. Though she exhibits what most would call "super natural" powers, she states she is "Man," a human being simply living her full human potential.

Vladimir Megre first came upon Anastasia in 1995, during one of his routine traveling merchant trips into the taiga. The extraordinary empowerment of this unusual individual captivated him; Anastasia had created this first encounter as a vehicle for greater manifestations in the future.

Megre is the author of the nine Ringing Cedars Series books, through the psychic involvement of Anastasia. She has a story to tell and a vision to share of a magnificent future. She calls on all of us to remember who we are and again embrace the earth, to which we are all inextricably tied.

Dr. Leo Sharashkin, the Russian editor of the English translation for the nine books, provides us with wonderful insights on this information in his seven videos, filmed during lectures given at conferences and workshops. The phenomenon of the Anastasia vision has been growing throughout the world for the past 15 years.

The "Ringing Cedars" are the Siberian Cedar trees (akin to the white pine), which begin an audible ringing sound during their later years, signifying that it is time to be harvested for their healing properties. The wood is made into pendants and other prized articles. Cedar nut oil has long been recognized for its healing properties.

Throughout The Ringing Cedars series, Anastasia provides thought provoking and practical information in interconnected areas of experience such as...creation, eternal cycle, creating a space of love (kin domain), spiritual reconnection to nature, gardening, healing, childbirth, child rearing, schooling, peace and harmony. The extraordinary vision of Anastasia could be regarded as an important aspect in the return of the divine feminine and the restoration of balance to this physical plane.

For more information, visit the website at "www.ringingcedars.com." The DVDs and books are available to borrow. Contact Nancy Knutson at 218-340-1147, njknutson@hotmail.com.

We thank all our supporters:

Lake Superior Initiative
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United Way of Greater Duluth
Whole Foods Co-op
Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation
Minnesota Power
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Positively Third Street Bakery
Northeast Minnesota Regional
Sustainable Development
Partnership

Please support the Duluth Community Garden Program

The Duluth Community Garden Program (DCGP) has provided gardening opportunities to Duluth neighborhoods since 1980. There are 17 community gardens located throughout the city, developed and operated by volunteers and DCGP staff.

Become a member or renew your membership today.

The DCGP relies on members to put the *community* in the program. By becoming a member, or renewing your existing membership, you will not only support the mission of the DCGP, but receive the following benefits:

Quarterly newsletter - *Community Gardener's Companion*

Access to tool lending library and access to canning and food processing equipment at no cost

Notification of DCGP classes through community education

Invitations to DCGP special events

- Annual Individual/Family Membership \$25
If you are renting a plot, annual membership is included in your plot fee.
- Annual Business Membership \$100
- Lifetime Membership \$500

Make a Donation.

The DCGP relies on contributions from our community to help us meet our annual operating budget. Please consider an additional gift to the DCGP today.

- I am a DCGP member and would like to donate an additional amount \$ _____
- I am not a DCGP member, but I would like to make a donation of \$ _____

Sponsor a Garden.

- I want to sponsor improvements to a DCGP garden site with a donation of \$ _____

Name of garden site I want to sponsor _____

For tribute gifts, sponsorships, and bequests, please contact us at 218-722-4583.

Please send this completed form and contribution to: Duluth Community Garden Program
206 West 4th Street, Duluth MN 55806

Name		
Street address		
City	State	Zipcode
E-mail address	Phone	

- I prefer my Newsletter in print
- I will read my Newsletter online at http://www.duluthcommunitygarden.org/res_newsletter.html.

Thank you for supporting sustainable food production in our community
The Duluth Community Garden Program is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation