

ORGANICALLY YOURS, LISA COONS, CENTER COORDINATOR

OH, THE GARDENS are beautiful today! We just had an overnight rainfall and as I walked through the gardens this early morning, the plants were glistening with tiny drops winking their secrets at me before they dripped or dried as I strolled among your lovingly tended gardens. The birds in the gardens seemed as excited as I am about this well-timed rain as they hustle from ground to tree with a newly caught worm to feed themselves or their hatchlings.

The gardens are teeming with life and it's thanks to all of you and your commitment to growing your food organically. We want the gardens to be a place where life in many forms thrives from the billions of microscopic organisms that feed the soil and our plants to the birds that act as our cheaper-than-cheap pest control to the snakes that pitch in on this endeavor to...well, okay so the baby bunnies have helped themselves to a bit more of our harvest than some of us planned to share but they're so cute anyway!

We're off to a fantastic beginning this garden season with many more gardening folk finding us this year than in years past. It was apparent that we would need to expand the gardens

when at the end of March not a single plot was left. We completed an expansion with the help of the Minnesota DNR and the dedicated SSND Maintenance Crew who pitched in to advise, plan, trouble-shoot challenges and even install new fencing. Adding 80 new plots has allowed us to welcome all who wanted to get in on the beautiful Community Garden experience at Good Counsel Hill. More than half those plots are filled—enthusiastically filled, I might add. Undaunted by the open field of unbroken ground these gardeners (many of them brand new gardeners) took to the task of prepping their beds with more perseverance and determination than you could shake a stick at (which many of

them could do, what with all the sticks from all those trees they dug out of their beds!)

We've had numerous donations for the Community gardens this year from Minnesota Green Program and local garden centers and businesses that have benefited all the gardeners, but especially our Echo Food Shelf Gardens and the Kids Peace Garden—both of which are growing beautifully—in more than the physical sense—this year. The sweat of our summer intern, Linda Brown and her small but dedicated crew of Food Shelf garden volunteers got the Echo beds planted while long-time community gardener, Lynn Rozen transformed the Kids Peace Garden from what was a weedy mess

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last year to what has become a point of beauty in our south gardens. Many of you contributed ideas and donated plants to get the “Sharing Garden plots,” designed to add an element of unbridled sharing to the community of gardeners, off the ground. Others of you offer advise and encouragement to the newest gardeners, making their foray into food growing an easier one. Still others stop to bend over and pick up a small piece of trash that may have blown away from a fellow gardener or take a few minutes to sweep out the barn or re-organize the tools or do countless other tasks that might go unnoticed. All of these efforts make everyone’s experience in the gardens richer and for that, I am grateful. What a gift it is to all of us! ☆

MEET LINDA

HI, I’M LINDA BROWN, the summer intern for the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. I, along with volunteers, have been prepping and planting the Echo Food Shelf Gardens. It has been an exciting few weeks and the hard work is finally showing with the seeds popping out of the ground. The gardens look fabulous. My husband and I farm a short distance from Mankato; and my father-in-law said he always planted when the leaves of an oak tree were the size of a squirrel’s ear. Yes, it must be time for planting.

One Saturday as I was walking through the gardens, I heard some chatter from two gardeners working diligently in their gardens. I planted myself on the ground. Melissa Matthies and Kim Horkey were attending their gardens side by side. I thought it quite unusual but beautifully successful in their way of ‘square foot gardening’. Melissa knew what she wanted to plant and how to plant the seeds this year. She is more confident this year in practicing her successes and mistakes from her first garden plot

last year. She has gone from planting in rows to square foot gardening. She also rotated her plants from last year; that is, not planting the same seed in the same spot as last year.

According to Melissa, there are many reasons for her to plant an organic garden in the community gardens. The mulch, garden tools, and water are available at the red barn to nurture her garden plot. Books are available to provide the knowledge to experiment, and the wisdom and expertise from a master gardener close by and Lisa who is always visible and available to gardeners within the community gardens.

Also, for Melissa, her garden plot is a very personal accomplishment. Two years ago she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. One year ago, she was walking with the use of a cane. She no longer uses the cane and feels eating healthier, organic produce has certainly helped. She is more conscious about what she eats and how the produce is grown. This year planting began the week after Easter unlike last year when she began around June 10th. Melissa is already enjoying the fruits of her labor with her harvesting several varieties of lettuce and radishes.

In the distance, I hear voices from the Peace Garden. Kim’s two children, Colin and Zaylie are participating and come to their mother’s aid to give their plantings a drink of water. Kim, husband, and family moved from California to Minnesota to be closer to their families. They are neighbors to Melissa and their friendship has blossomed, and so has Kim’s family’s desire to participate in the community gardens. Melissa promised to help.

This leads us back to chatting about what Kim has in her garden and the kinds of vegetables her children like. Kim has planted potatoes, beans, peas, and onions that magically re-appeared from last year awaiting Kim’s arrival. Melissa also enjoys canning some of her produce, and I’m

sure Kim will be following in her footsteps close behind. They are both excited about some of the seeds they’ve planted—kaleidoscope mix of carrot seed (purple and red carrots), and black radishes.

If you are in the Community Gardens Saturday mornings, stop by and say ‘hello’ to the two gardeners tending to their seeds. As Melissa states, this is her ‘sanity’. I have to agree. Where else can you go and be entertained by the sounds of the environment and the surrounding chatter of voices throughout the gardens? ☆

DONATIONS

SPECIAL THANKS to all our donors! Your contributions help make the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry the overwhelming success that it is!

IN-KIND DONATIONS FROM

AREA BUSINESSES:

Drummer’s Garden Center • Edenvale Nursery • Greenwald’s Greenhouse and Garden Center • SMC Compost Facility • Tom Depuydt (The Straw Man) of Lookout Drive Welding

VOLUNTEERS AND IN-KIND DONATIONS:

Monika Antonelli • Justin Bourgeois • Linda Brown • Anika Cristwell • John and Wanda Domeier • Ted Downey • Cora Eskridge • Paul Eskridge • Kay and Annette Fernholz, SSNDs at EarthRise Farm • Marion Fullmer • Melissa Lorentz • Gladys Frydendall • Ross Gerstan • Lynn Rozen • Lien Huynh • Chantill Kahler-Royer • Barb Lamson • Anna Larson • Jean Lovett • Roland Nord • Patti Ruskey • Sandra Woods • Dolly Rye • Peggy Sorenson • Sr. Kathleen Storms • MN Green, a program of the MN State Horticulture Society.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS:

Toby Leonard • Ann and Henry Quade

THE KID'S PEACE GARDEN

THIS YEAR KIDS HAVE their own oasis in our community gardens. The Kids Peace Garden is located in the south garden. Head toward a teepee shaped trellis next to a willow tree and you'll be in the middle of a garden designed with kids in mind.

Families are welcome to come and enjoy the Kid's Peace Garden. Sit on a bench or under the willow tree in the kid's garden and you are bound to find something delightful. This time of year you'll see young vegetable plants and flowers planted by kids, as well as a "Touch Me" pot, filled with Lambs Ears, Bunny Tails, and Sensitive plant—a plant that responds to a light touch by moving its leaves.

Later in the season the teepee trellis will turn into a playhouse with walls made of red, green, and pink pole beans. Spend a bit of time in the garden to observe the garden critters. The Kids Peace Garden has a resident garden snake, plenty of worms, butterflies, and a baby bunny who has already eaten more than its share of peas and sunflowers. If you look closely in the next few weeks, you may even find the word "PEACE" written in flowers.

Produce from the Kids Peace Garden will be donated to the ECHO food shelf. Children are welcome to nibble from the garden or take a bit home to try. Right now there are herbs to pick: chives, oregano, lemon balm, tarragon, sage, and dill. Later in the season there will be beans and tomatoes. ☆

Please remember to supervise your child in the garden and to be respectful of the garden space.

RECIPE FROM THE KID'S PEACE GARDEN!

Herb Salad Dressing BY CORA AND SHELBY

1/3 cup olive oil
3 TBS. cider vinegar
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper
pinch of sugar
fresh chives, chopped
fresh oregano, chopped
fresh dill, chopped

ORGANIC GARDENING CLASSES FOR KIDS AT THE COMMUNITY GARDENS

KIDS CAN EXPERIENCE the joy of organic gardening this summer by joining the Kid's Peace Garden class for ages 6 to 12 with Lynn Rozen or the Little Sprouts pre-school drop-in class with Lisa Coons.



Garden Volunteers, Westminster Youth Ministries, Minneapolis

The Little Sprouts class is a free, drop-in class at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays. Parents accompany their kids and join the fun.

The Kids Peace Garden class just finished a spring session, but the summer session is still open for registration through Community Education. The summer session, led by Lynn Rozen, begins Monday, July 30 at 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$20.00 for a four week session. Register at the Lincoln Community Center, 387-8824, or online at www.mankatocer.com.

In the spring session Lynn Rozen led the class in planting potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, flowers, popcorn, beans, melons, and pumpkins, as well as painting bricks, learning about worms and compost, eating a fresh garden salad, and having a salad dressing cook-off. In the summer session, we'll harvest, make toad houses, play water games, learn about water and garden critters, and make and eat fresh summer salsa. ☆

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Worm Composting: July 28, 10 a.m., Red Barn
- Kids Peace Garden: Mondays, July 30–August 20
- Sprouts Pre-School Garden classes: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. all summer long!
- Full Moon Yoga: 7 p.m., July 29, August 28
- Community Gardener's Potluck Dinner: July 18, 6–8 p.m.
Bring food to share and something to grill, if you'd like.

RECIPES

A COMMON GARDEN WEED

called lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*) is related to beets and is very rich in iron. The tender new growth can be used raw in a salad or cooked as greens or in soup. The leaves are covered with a grey powder that does not need to be washed off. The older stems get quite tough. One Lithuanian grandmother made the following soup each spring using the fresh new lamb's quarters

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SOL: A SOLSTICE POEM

BY ANIKA CRISTWELL, 2007

High Sun the merciful, warmer of bones,
midwife of springtime, blessings forever.
now comes the time when the Earth star stands
on tiptoe to see the warm soil, the giddy
grass, the nourishing and nourished crops.

High sun the Beautiful, your face as terrible as
a laughing infant's—too much, too much joy for the eyes to contain
you leave us dazzled with star spots and light drunk.

Here is the time again. We put our hands to soil
and push, push our hopes into the ground. High
Sun welds our intentions with the Earth,
marries us. Our heads rise in sympathy with the herbs of the field.
Our heads reach for the sun. Our hearts bask in the mind's shade.

Yellow star. Sol. Greater part of the light of
Creation, dispeller of dank, sister to shadow, play mate
of children and wild growing things. Sol,
you light the moon and raise our winter spirits
to God's altar. We can smell you, Sun,
in the chives, in the roses. We can taste you, Sun, in the prickle
of thistle and the giggle of mint. We can feel you in our brown
skin, our warmed muscles, our bright veins. We are grateful you,
God's bright star, Sun. ☆

RECIPES

continuation from Common Garden Weed
and the last of the potatoes that were saved over the winter
that were not used as seed potatoes.

Grandma's Lamb's Quarter's Soup

Potatoes—as many washed, peeled, and cut up as
will fill half the pot

Onions—a generous handful of spring onions,
washed and chopped up, tops and bulbs both or
1 large onion, chopped

1 or 2 bouillon cubes, to taste

2 bay leaves

lamb's quarters—a double handful or so with the
dirt washed off

Directions

Cover the ingredients with enough water to fill up the pot 3/4
full. Bring to a boil and stir. The lamb's quarters will wilt imme-
diately. Cover and simmer until the potatoes are nice and soft,
stirring occasionally. If you would like this soup to be creamier,
add some powdered milk after the heat is turned off. The
amounts of everything are flexible, depending on what you
have and what you like.

☆☆☆

Squash and Squash Blossom Soup

*This is traditional Mexican food— it doesn't taste like what you get
at the Tex-Mex place, but this is it! Delicious!*

- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large tomato, diced
- splash of beer, optional
- 1/2 chipotle pepper or fresh jalapeno
- 3 - 4 cup vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 small zucchinis (green, yellow, or one of each), cut into small pieces
- 6-10 squash blossoms, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup roasted corn kernels (frozen or canned is fine) continued

cumin, to taste
salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

Saute the onion and garlic in a large heavy bottomed soup pot.
When nicely brown, add the chopped tomato and saute until most
of the moisture is gone. Add a splash of beer (hopefully Mexican)
and reduce. If you're not using beer, use a splash of your broth
instead.

Add the rest of the ingredients up to corn, and simmer about
five minutes. I would start with 3 cup of broth and go from there,
based on how thick you want the soup. When zucchini is crisp-ten-
der, remove from heat and season with salt, pepper, and cumin.

For garnish serve with a liberal amount of chopped cilantro
and a nice cool lime wedge.

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