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# Green Thumb Gazette

## Update from the Chair

Finally, it's raining!! If you are like me and were wondering if you were going to be watering every day for the entire gardening season, the last 24 hours should ease our minds on that score. At this point, most of the 32 plots in use at the Community garden have been planted and the plants/seeds are soaking up the moisture. Hopefully, the few that are not planted, will be cultivated soon to take advantage of this much needed rain.

Speaking of changes, there are several at the

Community Garden you will find of interest. As you drive in you will notice the kiosk on your left. The construction was done at the Merrimack Valley Middle School. It will provide space for garden related notices for both the Agricultural Commission and gardeners. Construction of the 8' by 8' herb garden is well underway. As the summer progresses, it will provide an opportunity to learn more about growing and using herbs. The bins next to the herb garden are being used to store wood chips, for mulch in and around

the herb garden, and to store manure for the herb garden and as part of the mix to build compost, in the last 2 bins, for use by community gardeners in 2016. See page 2 of the newsletter for photos of these projects. Additionally, the tilled, but unused ground, has been seeded to buckwheat. This cover crop should help with weed control and provide valuable nutrients that can be plowed back into the soil.

I began this talking about water and will end by reporting that water is

flowing to the garden spigots 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please use care when cultivating not to nick the buried plastic pipe delivering water to your spigot. When you finish watering, please turn off the red handle on the spigot. Please do not leave the garden with your water running. If you notice someone has done so, please take it upon yourself to turn their spigot off.

See you at the garden,  
John Keegan, Chair

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## Recipe Corner– All About Mint!

### Mint Water

Bruise 1 cup of mint leaves (peppermint, spearmint, etc.). Place in ½ gallon container and fill with water. Chill in refrigerator overnight, then strain. Serve on ice with a sprig of mint.

### Minted Simple Syrup

1 cup water  
1 cup sugar  
1 bunch mint

Over medium heat dissolve sugar in water. Simmer 5 minutes. Take an off heat and add mint leaves. Steep 5 minutes.

Strain.  
Cool at  
least 3  
hours.  
Can be  
refrigerated for 1 week.



Mint recipes submitted by  
Louise Jacob

## *Scenes from the Garden*

**The Kiosk is Up!**



Caden Swyers, Angela Swyers, Frank Laro, and Joe Brochu pose by the newly constructed kiosk, built by Merrimack Valley Middle School teacher Peter Satterfield and his students. The kiosk will be a central location at the garden for sharing information.

**The Herb Garden is in Progress!**



Ann Lacroix digs deep in the raised frame that will soon be home to the Herb Garden. Ann is spearheading construction of the Herb Garden as her Master Gardener project. The Herb Garden will provide fresh herbs to all of the community gardeners, and will be up and running in the next few weeks. (Also pictured are John Keegan and Louise Jacob.)

**The Water is On!**



Water on Demand! The water spigots in the garden are now on 24 hours a day. Please be sure to turn the water off at your plot when you are finished watering.

**Compost Bin Construction is Underway!**



Jeffrey Abbe and Frank Laro assemble the frame of the compost bins.



## *Weed Control in the Garden— by Ann Lacroix*

As crabgrass and other weeds take on vigorous growth in June, the best rule of thumb is to hand weed, hoe, or cultivate before the weeds get larger root systems. The old saying, “One year’s weed-seven years’ seed” has some truth to it. Weeds are adapted to grow fast, grow seeds, and steal away precious water and nutrients from your crops. Just a reminder that no herbicides are allowed to be used to kill off weeds at the community garden.

Since this year’s growing season kicks off

June with a deep (they say moderate)



drought, it’s even more important to cover the soil to con-

serve water and cool the soil by applying

mulches 3 inches thick after crops have been thinned out. Mulches

may range from dried grass clippings, shredded leaf matter, weed fabric, pine needles, sawdust, bagged mulch, or straw. Straw can be very pricey, so if you have a place selling \$2 mulch hay, first apply two layers thick of the white pages of newspaper before spreading hay so the weed seeds in the hay won’t grow. Newspaper is processed with organic soy-based ink which will not harm your crops. You would be amazed how much faster your plants will grow with more consistent protection around them!

## *Companion Planting— by Ann Lacroix*

Companion planting probably began when early gardeners noticed that some plants seemed to grow best when planted next to certain other plants. There is some science to back up this lore, but many still consider companion planting to be mostly unproven. Of course, gardeners can always try it to see if it works! Garlic and basil with tomatoes; onions and carrots;

marigolds and beans; white radishes interplanted with cucumbers.

Companion plants are used to confuse or repel plant pests, to encourage the growth of other plants and to act as a trap for pests and parasites. “Trap” crops draw harmful insects away from needed crops and some may provide food or habitat for

beneficial insects. Companion plants may produce odors that deter pests or their scent may mask or hide a crop from pests.

### Article online source:

[www.gardentoad.com/companion-plants.html](http://www.gardentoad.com/companion-plants.html).

Print out the 4 page chart for yourself and

experiment with a few plant companions!



*Marigolds help to deter pests near tomato plants.*

## *Insect Pest Alert— by Ann Lacroix*

While disturbing some sandy soil this afternoon, many small sized Japanese beetles popped up out of the soil ready to take flight, mate, lay eggs as grubs, and start chewing on vegetable and fruit crops. Eggs develop at different rates in different soil temperatures, developing most rapidly in warm soils of about 80 - 90 degrees F. Once they develop into larvae, they will move up toward the surface of the soil and start feeding on roots. Japanese beetles can attack vegetable leaves, raspber-

ries, grapes, as well as roses in their adult beetle stage.

**Solution:** Any organic sprays such as spinosad (Captain Jack's) or Dr. Earth Organic Vegetable Insect Spray sprayed on leaves in the evening will repel them from beans, peas, lettuce, etc. Also, if you have no flowers to be pollinated and see insects on your vegetables, erect a small outside frame and place white row cover over the plants until they

have flowers that need pollinating. Early June would be a great time to protect your plants. I bend #9 wire that comes in rolls at the local box stores into short hoops, then clip the row cover suspended over the hoops. Light and water go through but not insects. Pick off Japanese beetles and put them in a soapy water bucket.

If you see a small white butterfly flitting around, it's the cabbage butterfly are fly-

ing trying to lay eggs on your vegetables. The eggs hatch quickly into green worms which eat any leafy vegetable. Captain Jack's or Dr. Earth Veggie Spray works well on all stages of insects for organic control.



*Japanese Beetle*

## *Summer Workshop Series— Growing Strawberries*

### **Growing Strawberries in the Home Garden**

Monday, July 6, 2015  
at 6:30 PM

Join UNH Cooperative Extension Master Gardener, Betsy Fazio, for a talk about growing strawberries in the home garden.

Betsy will discuss the many options and considerations for growing strawberries at home. Learn how to grow strawberries in garden beds and containers.

Variety selection, pest management, and plant care will be discussed.

To register: contact the Boscawen Agricultural Commission at 753-9188 x 301 or email: [agriculture03303@gmail.com](mailto:agriculture03303@gmail.com)

This talk is free and will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Boscawen Municipal Complex.

