



The Express

VOLUME III ISSUE II

Spring 2006

Our Mission

The mission of the Olympus Garden Club is to promote and support the love of gardening, floral arranging, landscape design, horticulture, plant research and environmental improvement by providing education, resources, networking and leadership opportunities to our members and the community.

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GARDEN LITERACY Let's Read!

Most dedicated gardeners are either tending to indoor plants, browsing through catalogs looking for new plants to add to their gardens this spring, cleaning tools, or otherwise keeping busy with gardening plans. If you've done all of the above and/or the children are restless and need something more to do, try the old standby, read a story. This is a good time to cuddle up with a book and read to the future garden lovers.

Let's start by teaching children that there are

Worms Into Greens: A Tall Man's Tale

On the very last Saturday of winter, community gardeners and other residents assembled at Hostos Community College in the Bronx for "Grow Together", the annual community gardening symposium hosted by Green Thumb NYC, a department of the New York City's Parks and Recreation.

The event was very well attended and began in the auditorium with the usual introductions and speeches. This year they were mercifully short and to the point. This brevity was challenged

by keynote speaker, Mr. Will Allen, of Growing Power in Milwaukee, WI and I must say that it was



Will Allen & OGC members

far from an ordeal. He has developed different kinds of food production methods and works tirelessly to bring his urban agriculture practices to vari-

ous communities in the United States. He constructed 17 greenhouses on the last farm site within the city of Milwaukee, employing 20 staff people and generating many different cash streams from his "intensive" farm. This operation relies greatly on vermiculture, and his innovative techniques have produced over 5,000 pounds of worms. Their waste products, called castings, enrich his cultivated plots so amazingly that there are vegetables being pro-

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bugs in the garden and give them a fun viewpoint. Read, while they learn about a part of nature, insects and bugs.

The Leaf Men and the Brave Good Bugs by William Joyce.

My 15 month old granddaughter, Serene, seemed intrigued by the pictures in this book. I found this interesting children's book while browsing through a Village bookstore. Leaf Men tells a story about an elderly woman who becomes ill and is saved by the hardworking efforts of a band of good bugs (the

Doodle Bug Guild whose motto is - "Tiny of body but brave of heart, we will finish what we start!"). The insects undertake a dangerous mission to help the woman and succeed in the end. Your little ones will form a new view of the garden and its inhabitants.

Your child will enjoy meeting the characters in this book. My sole objection to this book is that spiders and ants are cast as villains, and the only obviously female characters (the spider and the old woman) are either helpless or wicked. As a follow-up, I

recommend that you get other books, such as Miss Spider's Tea Party by David Kirk and Stellaluna by Janell Cannon to provide the counterbalancing viewpoint. Their female characters are clever and strong.

Other bug books of note:

Diary of a Spider by Doreen Cronin. Harry Bliss (Illustrator). Cost - about \$16 offers the funny observations of a young spider written in the form of diary entries. The book educates children about

(Cont'd on page 4)

President's Message

As I write this, OGC members have just completed a round of community events and met for our annual dinner. We participated in the BBG Making Brooklyn Bloom on March 11 where we led a workshop on seed starting & propagation and displayed club and other useful material. We also had a sprouting display and answered questions on that subject. Treasurer Johanna Willins was interviewed by a cable TV reporter during the event and she talked about our club and her own activities in East New York.

The following Saturday we attended the wonderful Grow Together, given annually by Green Thumb. We did

workshops there on companion planting and on sprouting edible food plants. Several new workshops were offered and members tried to attend what they could. We were also privileged to hear about the accomplishments of Will Allen, the guest speaker at the event who invited members to see and participate at his farm this spring. His project is described in more detail in this newsletter. Finally, members participated in our District II flower show the first weekend in April.

All in all the spring events got off to an enthusiastic start. We are all looking forward to the coming growing season when we will be "getting

down" with some real digging at the Friend's Meeting House project and of course we will be forging ahead with many more community activities. As soon as the current cold snap eases, we will be getting to it, trying to make our own corner of Brooklyn bloom, while helping others to do the same.

Happy spring to all!
Robert Florin President



Our treasurer, Johanna Willins was presented with a plaque for her positive and diligent work in the Greater East New York Community by the East New York United Concerned Citizens, in commemoration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized, on January 21, 2006. **NEWS**

Solita Stephens received a certificate of appreciation for her service to the Long Island Horticultural Society in March.

Olympus' Harry Potter Word Scramble - The Animals

Aragog		A S C X Q U I X T T T X P I N N M N V C
Arnold		C A R N O L D L Y T L X R R R R W R V E
Binky		C C E X X L S W S T L L L C S R W R N T
Buckbeak		G I P F G Z K J W V Z V R G S S R R J J
Cat		H Z P F G K K J Q V E I X I P N E T M C
Crookshanks		W Z I V H H F W Q Q K V X W N V R G S Z
Dragon		T H R E S A L J Z K J J J D N V R S S U
Errol		A Z Q W C Q U J A A X T R E B R O N Z Q
Fawkes		C Z Z Q A X F D H E X R C H D G L L D J
Fluffy		B Q Q Z B X F D J B X E D D D X X T S K
Hedwig		B W G G B L Y D R K Q V X D D C D D E D
Mrs. Norris		B V V V E V Y D B C R O O K S H A N K S
Nagini		G G G N R O C I N U R R H H I K R L W P
Norbert		H G Q Z S Q Z N X B K G Q K R K A L A Z
Pig		L L Q N R Q Z I J K K L Q K R G G P F Z
Pixie		L V T N H F F G K X X L Z Z O Z O P G G
Ripper		J J A J H L F A R T T S S S N O G A R D
Salamander		X K M Q Q Y K N I B G J G X S J X X L V
Scabbers		R. Murray E B B Z T Q Q H U P G J J X R V P P G G
Snake		Ans. On pg. 4 J Z Z Z Q K J H H H S A L A M A N D E R
Thresal		
Trevor		
Unicorn		

Harry Potter & Olympus Garden Club

Question: What possible connection would a Brooklyn based community garden club have with the well-known Harry Potter, of book and movie fame?

Answer: Easy. Both understand the important contribution plant life and wildlife make to our every day lives. The following examples are provided for those readers who may not readily see the similarity. Quite naturally, a basic familiarity with the adventures of Harry Potter is essential!

1) HP: Wildlife of all types play a significant role in the world of Harry Potter.

(Cont'd on page 3)

(Harry Cont'd from page 2)

Owls deliver the mail, a giant snake is enlisted to protect a secret chamber, and among other things, a dog-named Fang is a giant's best friend.

OGC members have a heightened awareness of how wildlife can impact the environment. The uses of worms in composting, planting to attract butterflies, and the identification of native birds, are but a few examples.

2) HP: Gnomes are a type of garden pest that (Harry's friend) Ron Weasley has had to contend with. The garden, at his home, is overrun with them! The Gnomes actually eat the roots of a plant, and leave behind the tell tale sign of a little pile of earth, like a mole might do. It is possible to de-gnome a garden. Simply grab the gnome by the ankles, swing it around your head and throw.

OGC has led workshops and demonstrations on the topic of Integrated Pest Management or IPM. IPM helps

people to control garden pests with methods that minimize environmental, and health risks.

3) HP: Second year students, enrolled at Harry's school, are expected to take a class in herbology. Several plot twists are subverted, as a result of information taught there.

Monthly educational lectures are a regular feature of each and every OGC meeting. This knowledge is shared with the community via our participation in street fairs and farmers markets.

4) HP: The groundskeeper, at Harry's school, grows pumpkins the size of a garden shed. They are used to decorate the Great Hall in celebration of the highly anticipated Halloween feast. The sumptuous decor features elements of the environment, such as the aforementioned pumpkins, decorated trees and the night sky.

OGC constructed a therapeutic and accessible garden, at a local nursing

home. Such gardens provide the residents, staff and guests with pleasant surroundings that encourage positive feelings and reduce stress.

Throughout this series the idea of compassion and the concern for all living things is constantly underscored. Harry's reaction to the enslavement of house-elves, the foiled execution of an animal called a hippogriff, and the role of plants and their special properties, support this theme.

In a likewise manner, the OGC was formed by caring and civic minded individuals who have dedicated themselves to the beautification of the environment and the betterment of our community.

It may be a bit of a stretch for some, but Harry Potter and the Brooklyn based Olympus Garden Club share a belief in the important contribution plants and animals make in our every day lives.

R. Murray



Tip Time



Your indoor seeds need supplemental light to prevent leggy growth and weak stems.

Now that your seedlings are up, remember to transplant them to individual pots after the second set of leaves appear.

Don't forget to fertilize the seedlings with a quarter strength solution when they need water.

Delfino cilantro, Head's UP cabbage, Jade bush green beans, Cheddar cauliflower, Galia muskmelon, & Magic Lantern pumpkin are on the 2006 Cornell list of suggested vegetable varieties.

2006 AAS (All America Selection) winners are Pepper FI 'Mariachi', Pepper FI 'Carmen', Cilantro 'Delfino', Carrot

FI 'Purple Haze', Zinnia FI 'Zowie! Yellow Flame', Viola FI 'Skippy XL Red-Gold', Salvia farinacea 'Evolution', Ornamental Pepper 'Black Pearl', Nicotiana FI 'Perfume Deep Purple', Diascia FI 'Diamante Coral Rose', Dianthus FI 'Supra Purple'.

Celosia 'Flamingo Feather', Cosmos, Gloriosa daisy, Cleome, Blanket flower, Dahlias, Bidens 'Golden Goddess', Canna's, Basil 'Purple Ruffles', Zinnias, Mexican Sun Flower, Verbena 'Homestead Purple', Salvias especially 'Indigo Spires', Dwarf Sunflowers, Ornamental Millet, Broom Corn, Lantana, Fern leaf lavender, Pentas, & Portulacas are some of my favorite annuals to grow.

I know that May 15 is the last frost date in New York City and we are anxious to put in our annuals. I have found it more prudent to wait until Memorial day to plant because the days between the 15-31 of May are frequently much too cool for our warm season annual flowers and vegetable plants to thrive.

If you would like to make the best use of your vegetable garden, it is a wonderful idea to plant early, then mid and finally late season vegetables.

Early season: plant beets, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, radishes, peas, & turnips.

Mid season or from Memorial Day: plant corn, beans, squash, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, etc.

Late season: plant in July broccoli, carrots, collards, kale, cauliflower, & beets.

**Send email if
you grow any
of these
varieties this
summer**

(Read cont'd from page 1)
 spider behavior and interesting facts, for example, the young spider's favorite book is Charlotte's Web. Amongst the laughs is a message of acceptance of other's differences.

2. The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle, a miniature (5"x 4") board book with toy costs about \$25. The hardcover version costs about \$20. It follows the progress of a hungry little caterpillar as he eats his way through a varied and very large quantity of food until, full at last, he forms a cocoon around himself and goes to sleep. Die-cut pages illustrate what the caterpillar eats on successive days. Children learn about nature, food and the days of the week in one beautifully illustrated book. Carle's books use various gimmicks to teach conventions. This one has the caterpillar eating holes in all of the

food, including the book. Carle also authored *The Very Busy Spider*, with its tactile web and animal sounds; *The Very Quiet Cricket* features chirping; and *The Very Grouchy Ladybug*, which teaches time.

3. Ruby Lee the Bumble Bee: A Bee's Bit of Wisdom by Dawn Matheson. Pamela Barcita, Illustrator. Costs about \$18. This story takes place in the garden. Ruby Lee, the bumblebee, encourages children to bee-lieve in their natural abilities, to face their fears and meet life's challenges with courage and faith.

4. Diary of a Worm by Doreen Cronin. Harry Bliss (Illustrator). Costs about \$18. There were times when I found this a hilarious story written in diary form. This book manages to give a mixture of the facts about worm behavior in between the make believe

and the observations of a young school aged male earthworm. For example, March 20 - "Mom says there are three things I should always remember: 1. The earth gives us everything we need..."

C. L. Charles-King

(Worms continued from page 1)
 duced year round, in a city where temperatures typically fall to -15°F.

With limited resources Mr. Allen proves that one person with the right planning and hard work can really contribute to positive change while making strides towards self-sustainability. Since there is limited space he grows a variety of crops vertically as well as horizontally in soil that maintains its fertility for upwards of 4 years. He does aquaculture (fish farming) where Tilapias is the money crop. He produces honey and is working on a cheese project. His production is sold through restaurants, school cafeterias and community supported agriculture subscriptions.

Mr. Allen is a passionate man who has a mission: To prove that his methods work and to also help young people learn the skills needed to practice today's farming. He wants the youth to appreciate the taste of "real"

food that has been freshly grown. I think that everyone present that day was inspired, and that we came away feeling that there are people who can, in not such a small way make a difference.

R. Florin

Our Monthly Meeting Schedule

April 24, 2006

Spring Gardening Video

May 22, 2006

Vegetable Gardening Video

June 26, 2006

IPM Video

July 24, 2006

Herbal Teas w/Johanna Willins

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

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Word Scramble Answer

A C C G H W T A C B B B G H L L J X J E
 S A C I Z Z Z Q W V G G L L V J K B B Z
 C R P P R Q Z Q Z V G V Z N M A M B B Z
 X N X F F V E W Q Z G V Z N M H H Q Q T Q
 Q O L S W J J W Z A H B B C C U U R R I I G A N H
 U L S W J J W Z A H B B C C U U R R I I G A N H
 I D S W J J W Z A H B B C C U U R R I I G A N H
 X L S W J J W Z A H B B C C U U R R I I G A N H
 T Y S W J J W Z A H B B C C U U R R I I G A N H
 T T V V Q Q K A E B B C C U U R R I I G A N H
 T L L V Z E K J X X R R Q Q K K L L S S R R
 X L L V Z E K J X X R R Q Q K K L L S S R R
 P R L R X X J J R R O O H H Q Q K K Z Z S S
 I R C G I W D D D D D D S S L R O Z S R M
 N R S S P N N B B D D D D S S L R O Z S R M
 N R R S S N V V R R O L L X D A P A G G O G G X P P
 M W R R R T G S N L L T D N L L P P A L L G E
 V V N J M S S Z D D S E K K W A F G R L V R
 C E T J C Z U Q J K D S P Z Z G D V G R