

The Express

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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Tomato Harvest

As I told you here before, I grow all of my vegetables in containers. My Mom and I planted all of them in early May. Last year I planted really late, almost the end of June, so I was really happy to get that early start between the raindrops. My sense of satisfaction soon turned to worry because their growth was ooooooh so slow. For two weeks it seemed like they did not grow. It was much too cold. My peppers were not happy. The tomatoes looked limp. The eggplant seemed to grow but lost their blossoms. The zucchini kept flowering but got no fruit. Aye yaye yaye! I had a garden on freeze-frame.

I did not have to worry about the unseasonably rainy

Poetry Time

Olympus Garden Club is a Federated Garden Club of New York State, a Central Atlantic Region (CAR) Garden Club, and a National Garden Club (NGC), our parent organization.

Every year NGC sponsors several youth contests, see <http://www.gardenclub.org>. One of them is a poetry contest for children from kindergarten to ninth grade. The theme for the 2010 contest is 'Our Beautiful World'.

I work with three groups of children and I was able to get four of our young ones to write poems for this year's contest.

One of them wrote a beautiful Haiku last year when I asked them to write what they felt about gar-

weather because containers provide excellent drainage. Then we had two days of weather in the eighties and the tomatoes took off. Generally though, when giving my mom a progress report on the garden, I HAD NO GOOD NEWS. "The slugs ate all the leaves of the bok choy," I would say or the basil still looks the same. We continued to be disappointed

The next time she visited, we had just passed another group of days with temperatures in the eighties and like a human being deprived of water they gulped in the sun rays.

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dening; so I knew that she was going to submit something beautiful with no prompting from me. She is twelve years old and submitted "Our Beautiful Earth"

With no further prompting I also received another poem from a nine year old titled "I Love the Way the Wind Blows".

One of them "Animals & Plants" from the eleven year old, I felt needed some work. I sat with her to make some suggestions and she was not in the least bit happy with me. She firmly grumbled that she worked two days on it and started sulking and shrugging her shoulder at every suggestion. Time ran out, so I told her we would continue the following week. She showed no interest, but I was hopeful.

The next time we met, she was not enthusiastic but willing to give it a try. We sat down as a group and I decided to include all of them in the process of improving *Animals & Plants*.

We talked about describing things so that people would become excited. I gave examples and asked their opinion. I got thumbs up for a few of my suggestions. I asked them to think

about the last time they got home and raved about something that excited them to their parents and asked them to remember that when trying to write their poem. My young friend slowly lost her indifference during this process and started to participate.

She liked my suggestion about changing it to verses about each subject, answered more questions and we ended with something she liked. My goodness me, hard won approval but approval none the less.

While this group discussion was in process, a side discussion cropped up as they always do when working with the young ones. My ten year old fourth grader, with below grade level reading and spelling skills, suggested that we write something to follow the letters in a word. My indifferent eleven year old promptly said in a huff 'that is an acrostic, I showed you that, I don't want to do that now' and took herself out of that discussion. This did not deter my fourth grader and she decided that she wanted to write a poem using ANIMALS as the acrostic.

'How do you spell animals? she asked. They told her

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"Beautiful Things"

President's Message

As a strange and mostly wet growing season winds down, I've been reflecting on some of the goals of our club and the goals and purpose of the groups with which we partner.

Green Thumb of the Parks Department has supported community gardening in the city for decades now, bringing green space to concrete and blight that would truly surprise returning New Yorkers who have been away for many years. The city is a much improved place now, at least in the sense that you can in summer chance upon rows of cultivated raise beds or even a bit of urban forest. Such sights were almost absent in the city 50 years ago.

We also work with the organization Just Food, which tries to bring such things as food production, food preservation and fresh food availability to areas where it has been missing. Pro-

jects like beekeeping and chicken raising have given people access to healthy food that was once impossible to find outside of upscale neighborhoods.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden through its outreach division called Brooklyn GreenBridge has also greatly aided city gardeners to do and to be more in an effort to beautify the cityscape and to engage local people in the process. We at Olympus have been engaged in most if not all of these same activities with these groups and on our own. Our efforts to beautify I can say have yielded much satisfaction for each of us. When a teen plants a tree for the first time, when a senior works with us to complete a garden, when neighbors delight at flowers in a tree bed on their block which we installed, we are inspired and renewed.

Our mission in the end is one of urban renewal in the broadest sense. Many

years ago that phrase meant new (ugly) construction. Our purpose is not just to do gardens, but one of personal renewal gotten from the people with whom and for whom we work. We hope to help invent a new greener city one project, one plant at a time.

Members took part in many rewarding experiences this past summer, attending workshops at the annual NOFA conference in Amherst, MA, an outdoor woman's workshop near Glens Falls, NY and the Green Guerillas' Youth Tillers program where our Director, Solita Stephens taught teens about composting, raised beds and basic botany. Solita and member Amelia Estrada attended a Tree and Green Streets maintenance workshop and Elba did her first composting demonstration at the Louis Armstrong Senior Residence. Congratulations to everyone in what they've accomplished over the summer!

Robert Florin, President

Olympus Word Scramble - School Stuff

Auditorium	N	L	V	V	T	T	D	F	X	P	P	F	G	T	M
Bag	S	D	V	J	Q	L	N	F	J	J	F	F	D	G	S
Blackboard	R	R	U	L	E	R	J	N	C	N	N	N	N	S	S
Book	Q	A	X	G	B	L	L	E	C	Q	W	L	E	C	B
Bus	T	O	F	D	L	H	P	R	I	N	C	I	P	A	L
Carpool	M	B	O	O	K	Q	Z	A	R	X	D	G	S	M	O
Chalk	M	K	Y	R	R	K	Q	S	L	D	D	D	D	D	O
Eraser	J	C	H	E	P	L	C	E	X	R	T	V	N	K	P
Grade	P	A	U	D	I	T	O	R	I	U	M	P	R	L	R
Notepad	D	L	V	A	X	D	I	D	T	B	T	K	L	L	A
Pen	L	B	V	R	J	K	D	L	X	S	K	L	A	H	C
Pencil	R	W	F	G	K	X	X	L	A	N	S	I	R	H	C
Principal	N	D	V	H	A	C	R	D	T	E	A	C	H	E	R
Ruler	Q	C	H	H	N	B	G	J	L	X	G	N	X	X	T
Teacher	T	C	Q	H	U	U	G	Z	O	X	Y	E	N	W	F
Ans. on pg. 4	Q	K	J	H	H	S	F	N	O	T	E	P	A	D	H

Garden Journal Updates

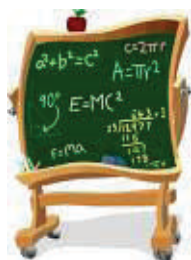
Prospect Heights Campus' Memorial Garden has something new blooming every time one of the OGC members passes. Mother Nature displays her majesty with out the student gardeners; Awesome.

OGC will bring the Caribbean flavor to Brooklyn on November 28, save the date in your social calendar. Look for more information and details in this newsletter.

Remember when we had all that rain, and most NON-gardeners were complaining. I would say to them the plants are happy.

It is about that time when I must think about bringing the houseplants that were spending the summer outside in the garden back inside for the winter.

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Top Down No Weed Gardens

Turning over soil has the unintended effect of growing weeds. Both plowing and hand tilling results in burying and uprooting weeds while at the same time exposing them to light and air -- just what they need. Some experts say that there are potentially 140 new weeds produced per pound of soil at various depths and uninvited seeds are added, carried into the garden by wind, on animals or deposited from within them. A layer of mulch usually eliminates these particular travelers. Digging helps to get the buried weeds started.

The basic components of weedless gardening have four essential requirements to:

1. **Minimize** soil disruption. Soil should not be turned by hand, rototiller or by plow. Do not disturb the natural layering of the soil more than necessary. There is a complex network beneath the soil surface that greatly aids plant culture.

2. **Protect** soil surface with some sort of covering, which may include mulch, compost and certain living plants called cover crops. These products keep weeds down.

3. **Avoid** soil compaction by keeping feet, wheelbarrows and garden carts off planted areas. Try to provide garden paths, stepping stones and narrow beds where appropriate.

4. **Use** drip irrigation when watering is needed. Drip provides water close to plants' actual needs. Another benefit of drip is that water is not being delivered to places where weeds potentially can sprout.



Digging the ground in spring allows bacteria and fungi, fueled by a shot of new air to gobble up roots, stems and leaves. This activity is not beneficial for seeds and small plants so planting is best delayed until it subsides and more tilling is usually nec-

essary before planting can be done in earnest. Dispensing with digging allows gardeners to get plants into the ground sooner.

Another benefit of not turning the soil is that organic materials remain on the surface. Organics at the soil's surface temper the effects of winter cold and the sun's heat. If you mix organic material into soil or bury them down deep, they don't do the job of protecting soil surface. Perhaps the greatest benefit (other than suppressing weeds) of leaving soil undisturbed is that it also preserves organic matter including humus. Like a vitamin rich salad, humus (the end product of compost) is a witch's brew of stuff beneficial to plants.

To learn more about this subject in detail including how to start a garden quickly and easily using top down techniques, pick up a copy of *Weedless Gardening* by Lee Reich, Workman Publishing Co., N.Y.

R. Florin



Tip Time



Ladybugs have been in the news lately on Staten Island. They have been going indoors through cracks, vents, and air conditioners. The brown colored Asian lady beetle have been trying to find warm places to rest for the winter. Just vacuum them up.

Press some of those gorgeous leaves that are falling to use as decoration. The fabulous yellow of the ginkgo, the oranges of the oaks, the burgundies of maples and euonymous make beautiful fall and winter decorations.

The Department of Sanitation is not collecting leaves for composting in New York City this year. A huge misstep and a backwards one at that when considering climate change, waste reduction, the city's green initia-

tive to name a few. Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Brooklyn GreenBridge and community gardeners have formulated a leaf collection plan to fill this gap. Check out the NYC Leaves website <http://nycleaves.org/> for more information and to find out how you can help.

How about trying trench composting. This is just another term for burying your food scraps. I tried it one winter and in the spring I had the most beautiful soil with the fattest worms that I have ever seen. Dig about a 12 - 15 inch trench now so that you don't have to do it in the COLD. Add your food scraps and cover as you go. I think of trench composting as a low input, high output, productive activity.

My neighbor already cleared his vegetable bed. He covered the entire area with a new piece of black plastic. This prevents soil erosion. Cover cropping does the same thing with the plus of adding organic matter and nutrients to the soil in the spring. A three inch layer of mulch will also prevent soil erosion.

Cover crops will also reduce soil compaction because some of them have long tap roots. Plant a combination of legumes and non-legumes to get the benefit of both. Legumes such as Clovers, Hairy Vetch, Alfalfa, and Soybean fix nitrogen in the soil so that it will be available to plants and microorganisms. Non-legumes such as Rye, Wheat, Oats, Buckwheat, recycle soil nitrogen and reduces leaching.

'Vacuum up the ladybugs'

(Poetry Time - Continued from page 1)

and she proceeded to write her poem. She took one of the gardening books out of my bag and interjected every so often to ask questions like, How do you spell Amaryllis? or Is this word a plant? Using this process she wrote her acrostic poem.

When we finished, I read the two poems to the group. My unenthusiastic eleven year old was smiling. I asked my below grade level reader what the words in her acrostic meant to her, She said, 'Beautiful Things in the World'. We decided to call her poem 'Beautiful Things'.

She was so proud of her poem. I, was proud of her because in spite of her poor reading skills she did not allow it to deter her from accomplishing something 'Beautiful'.

I am so proud of all of them and not only because of the poetry. Their presentation was also fun and creative. I tried to duplicate there creativity below.

Relaying this process to the group at our last meeting, Roberta asked if I had ever gone to a writing workshop. I told her no. She then said, 'You had a poetry workshop with them'.

I have to tell you that never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I would be helping our young ones to write poetry. Being involved in gardening and greening has led me down a multi-branched, never ending path that I have to tell you I am thrilled to continue exploring.

The theme for National Garden Clubs poetry contest next year (local deadline is October, 2010), for 2011 is "Fields of Daffodils".

Please take a few moments to read their poetry below

S. Stephens

Our Beautiful Earth By J. B.

*The sun is shining on your face,
You wonder,
what is this beautiful place.
The moon at night,
Shining so bright.
Flowers growing very tall,
Bees arrive as they call.
Butterflies flying high,
Crickets sob, hear them cry.
Look at the rainbow,
As it begins to glow.
The grass so green,
Growing slender and lean
What is this place, I have to blurt
It is our beautiful Earth.*

I love the way the wind blows

By E. D.

I love the way the wind blows

It can go fast

It can go slow

Out of all the things

I love the most

I just love the way the wind blows

Animals & Plants

By A. C.

I love Animals

I have a dog, a cat, and a lizard
Curie the dog, is a pit bull
Fluffy is a sassy cat
And lizard, we call **Mr. Whippleles**

Curie eats **milkbones**

Fluffy eats **Farina**

Mr. Whippleles eats **lettuce**
and that brings us to **Plants**

Roses are my favorite

I love them

and wish they were **blue**

All the **Animals** and **Plants**
make me think of

Our Beautiful World

Beautiful Things

By L. C. J. H.

A Amaryllis

N Nut Trees

I Insects

M Marigolds

A American

L Lilly

S Seeds

(Continued from page 1)

The tomatoes grew to the point of blossoms and by the third week of July I had tomatoes ready for picking.

That bright red color is surely enticing and appetizing. They kept hollering at me to pick them and I kept on asking them to be just a bit more patient, while hoping that the birds would keep their distance. You see, my mom was on vacation and I wanted her to pick them. The first thing she does when she comes to visit is walk through the garden and I knew that she would enjoy harvesting them.

I picked her up at night from the airport and left early the next morning. I knew she would follow her routine and I also knew she would pick them all. I got back late and walked through the kitchen without turning lights on. A basket of gleaming, gorgeous tomatoes and three okra greeted me the following morning. Picking up the basket it felt like about ten pounds. My/our/your (because family and friends helped to haul the compost, water, weed and commiserate it is our garden) first harvest was a site for tired eyes. WOW! Do I have to describe to you my level of excitement?

As always, I was ready with the camera and took the basket outside to get the pictures. My sister warned me that our mom was on her way down and that she had been fussing about my neglecting the garden. Now, I already told you that I had left them for her to harvest. As she came around the corner, demanding to know where I was and fussing before she even saw me, I said in response, "Mommy I left it for you to do the picking." She decided to overlook the two that she found on the ground rotting after I told her that.

As we sat down to breakfast, with me still bubbling over with excitement about my/our/your gleaming, gorgeous tomatoes, she said to my sister, "look at her, you would think you had given her diamonds." As we ate we decided how to share it. One neighbor got a Brandywine because she had never had one. One neighbor got some of each type because even though he had planted before me, he had only harvested a few cherries. Some were going to Brooklyn, NY and some were going to Silver Spring, Maryland to my sisters and a friend.

I have been gardening with my mom since I was a child and I am still fortunate to have her continued help in my own garden. She is eighty seven years old.

S. Stephens

First Annual
Caribbean Night
with
Olympus Garden Club

Saturday, November 28, 2009
901 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Time: 9:00pm – 2:00am

Donation: \$10.00

Free Food, Door Prize, Raffle
Refreshments on Sale

Phone: 718 360 1420
Email: olympusgarden@gmail.com

Directions: C train to Clinton/Washington, B45 bus to Washington/Atlantic Avenues
 B25 to St. James Place walk to Atlantic Avenue & St. James Pl. Building on Southeast corner

Harvest time is over and Caribbean Night with Olympus Garden Club will help us mark the time.

We hope that you will be able to join us as we celebrate the milestones we all reached and the bridges we all crossed over

the past months.

Come on over and dance til' you drop to the beat of the Caribbean. Aye! Yaye! Aye! Reggae, Calypso, Salsa! I'm feelin' HOT HOT HOT.

We will use the proceeds from this event to help us reach many more milestones and bridges.

Manure Happens!

So you're walking down the street and you step into a big pile of ..., well you fill in the rest. You, of course, will say every expletive in the book. But as you clean your shoe, your boot or your high heel, think about all the wonderful things that come about because of "manure". How something that smells so bad can produce things that taste so good.

OK, so maybe you are thinking of something else. But, consider as a gardener, the possibilities that come with applying manure in your garden. It is nutrient rich in nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium among many others. And it is a lot easier to use than you think. So how do we use this treasure trove of manure and where do we get it.

Manure can come in two forms, animal and green. Animal manure can be cow, horse, chicken, sheep, goat, and rabbit. The farmers at your local farmers' market can provide you with some manure for a small cost, or you can acquire some from a local horse stable or zoo. *However, do not ever use cat, dog, human or any carnivorous creature.* The manure they

produce may contain pathogens that carry diseases harmful to humans. Green manure can be any plant crop grown with the purpose of soil improvement. Good choices would be clover, rye, alfalfa, and buckwheat, just to name a few. Another "green manure" is seaweed. Obtaining seaweed is easy if you have access to a beach. Just remember to wash away the salt and sand from it before you use it.

Ok, so you got all this manure, what next? Put it in the garden as is? Do that and you may burn the plants. Raw or "hot" manure is too strong for plants to handle. Manure has to cure. It has to "age." Plant manure can be plowed or tilled into the earth and left to decompose. Most animal manure has to be left to cure on its own. Curing animal manure is a relatively easy process. Leaving the manure right where it is so the elements can take care of it is usually a very good way of curing it. That's ok if you live on a farm, but for those of us who live in the city or suburbia, that is not an option. A good way to cure ma-

nure is to bury it. You can bury it and then walk away, but you might forget where it was buried. A better way to bury it would be to put it in a container. I usually put the manure in a five gallon container, place a piece of loosely woven burlap to cover the top and I secure the burlap with some string. The loose weave of the burlap allows air, water and microorganisms to enter and interact with the manure to produce a product that is sweet smelling and rich in nutrients. Then I bury it for 6 to 12 months depending on the time of year that I acquire the manure. I make sure to cover the container with about a foot of soil, wait the allotted time and then dig it up. Presto, great stuff!

Now, what to do with all this beautiful rich stuff? You can till it into your soil. Best time to till is spring or fall. You can mix it into your compost or you can make "tea." Making tea from manure is very easy. Take the burlap you used as a cover and lay it on the ground. Put about 2 or 3 large cups in the center of the burlap. Tie into a hobo-like sack and place it into a large container, aka, the five gallon container and let sit for a few days. Voila! Tea! Take a pint or two of that tea and mix it with several gallons of water and give your plants a cup of tea. There you have it.

So remember the next time you step into a pile that manure happens!

E. Cornier

(Garden Journal Continued from page 2)
With all of the new growth, it is also a good time for propagation. Make cuttings and start small plants to give as gifts or for fundraisers. Also cutting back will help the plants take up less space, when space is at a premium. (Search online for information on cuttings or propagation if you need it).

The Growing Connection, at Brooklyn Public Library will continue the second week of September. Before I went on vacation the students were making hanging baskets. When we resume TGC will hang small plants in the window, and make plans for next spring.

R. Raysor

Our 2009/2010 Monthly Meeting Schedule

November 23, 2009

Activity - Textile Recycling

December 14, 2009

Holiday Plants

January 25, 2010

Planning Meeting

February 22, 2010

Planning Meeting

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

Word Scramble Answer

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

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