

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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LIFE LONG LEARNING FROM THE GARDEN

Olympus Garden Club gives this gardener many opportunities to learn about the world of ecology. I believe in "life long learning", and since I have been involved with the OGC it is easy to find new things to learn about; so many things - interesting, helpful and necessary for a good life that I can never run out of something to do.

Through the OGC, I attended the Northeastern Organic Farmers Association's annual conference in August. This was the second time I attended the three days of activities along with other club members. We car pooled to Massachusetts, the weather was great. The conference offered a variety of workshops, which explored current life sciences as they relate to survival on this planet, now

I harvested the last of my peppers a little over two weeks ago - orange, yellow, and green sweet peppers, Fatali, Caribbean Hot, Habanero, Chili, and Jalapeno hot peppers; then I left them on the counter longer than usual because things got a bit hectic. Most of the time I am appalled at the shelf life of the fruits and vegetables I buy, then the rare occasion would occur when the shelf life extended beyond my expected norms and I wondered why or how this seeming miracle did not crop up more frequently. If I was not convinced before, I am convinced now that the secret for this apparent miracle lies in the quality of our soil. As you hold that thought, keep in mind that the peppers stayed on the counter for more than two weeks.

The nutrient content of the foods we eat has diminished and in the future.

These workshops help keep the organic farmers, and urban gardeners like myself, on top of environmental science issues. NOFA offered so many workshops on the study of flora and fauna that we all agreed to make sure to take different sessions; and share what we learned later over our lunch or dinner. I attended a workshop on how to sharpen and care for gardening tools, and another on how to use some of those sharpened tools; subject was pruning. The instructor was selling his book at a discount price. It has a lot more information

It is Alive

over the past decades to the extent that an apple a day no longer keeps the doctor away. How did this change progress? Production at the expense of quality is the culprit that destroyed this life enhancing, nutrient rich cycle that the apple a day axiom supported. The production at the expense of quality practice permeates our lifecycles and is patently destructive.

We have been trained to focus on the primary nutrients Phosphorus, Potassium, and pH levels of our soil. Not Nitrogen because it cycles constantly and is available in many forms, some of which are toxic to biological life. The secondary macronutrients, Calcium, Sulfur and Magnesium are never addressed because they have stated that enough of

these nutrients are always in the soil. Calcium should be a primary nutrient because it is the element against which all other nutrients react to release their energy. They also say that large amounts of Calcium and Magnesium are added when lime is applied to acidic soils in the forms of calcium lime or dolomite lime, but the question of how to make this calcium available to the plants is not addressed and dolomite lime adds an excessive amount of magnesium to the soil that creates an



imbalance. Something else we are not informed about is that mineral deficient soils lead to mineral deficient plants (which attract pests and diseases), which in turn leads to mineral deficient food. This translates to the animals and people who eat these foods with results that lead to the proliferation of the myriad health problems that we encounter each day. Note the cycle.

This brings me back to the peppers that I mentioned earlier. They did not rot and after more than 2 weeks on the counter I cooked the sweet peppers, they were delicious, and made HOT sauce with the others. High quality food does not rot, it dehydrates. High quality food has better texture and flavor, weighs more (one of those peppers weighed 7 ounces), tends to be larger, has a longer shelf life

'High quality food does not rot'

I have a tree in my back yard that needs help. Now when the 'Tree Expert', who is also a member of the OGC, comes to my aid I feel confident that I will be able to assist him and hopefully help save a tree's life.

Olympus members frequently exchange emails sharing news or helpful hints concerning habitat science we should know about as citizens of the world. It is a win-win situation when we are "serving our community" we are helping our selves as well.

R. Raysor

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President's Message

The summer of 2008 included and concluded a variety of activities for Olympus. We put the finishing touches on the Time Capsule Memorial Garden at Prospect Heights High School in July. Unfortunately there were some plant losses resulting from lack of watering and other neglect that was out of the club's control, but we managed to salvage a few of the plants. After a hard day of weeding and mulching, the garden was restored and beautified. We hope that the powers responsible at the school will have learned something about garden care and will be more attentive in the future.



Euclid 500 & OGC

On a more positive note, club members attended several conferences. Roberta Raysor and Amelia Estrada along with Solita Stephens attended the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)

Conference held at the UMASS, Amherst campus. Solita attended the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets planning conference for urban agriculture and community gardens at SUNY, New Paltz. Several of us went to Milwaukee for the first Growing Food and Justice for all Initiative (GFJI) – “Dismantling Racism in the Food System”

where food justice organizers from the US & Canada got together to discuss ways to dismantle racism “norms” in the food system. To do this many of us had to acknowledge the different ways we practice racism and the privileged status that is inherent in the system as it exists today and then work to find ways to eliminate these practiced norms and assumptions so that we could work toward making this first “**Growing Food and Justice Initiative**” work for all people in the future. This conference was sponsored by Growing

Power, a group headed and begun by Will Allen, a former basketball player who has been using his many skills as an organizer and life-long farmer to engage youth, underserved communities, farmers and businesses with urban agriculture in groundbreaking ways. For his continued efforts in this arena he was a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation \$500,000 “genius grant”. Congratulations Will! We had a pleasant and rewarding time at these conferences and brought back lots of new insights and information to share with the club.

Olympus fulfilled its commitment to do a series of workshops on sustainability this summer made possible by a grant from Citizens Committee for NYC. We did workshops on composting, companion plants, beneficial insects and native and invasive plants. Cynthia Hossein of the Euclid 500 Community Garden hosted the last two workshops. Wow! What a wonderful hostess she was! We were nourished educationally, spiritually, and physically and met a group of wonderful gardeners and community residents. Thank you Cynthia!



Robert Florin, President

Olympus Word Scramble - Birds

'Bluebird	L U U N N N G X T T T X P V N N M N V C
Bluejay	C D Z N L L G K L A T N E L T N R T V L
Cardinal	C C X X T K S W D T L L L C S S W R N T
Crow	G G G F S S T A R L I N G G S S R R J J
Dove	S Z P F N L V V I T D F X P P F G T M C
Finch	N Z X V S P J J B L U E J A Y F D G S Z
Pidgeon	R R R R R R J J E D J N C N N N Q S S U
Purple martin	Z Z Q W S E A G U L L E C Q W O R C B Q
Robin	C Z T Q T K F D L H X R K H D E D L L J
Seagull	W W T V M C L L B Q Z N R X D G S M L M
Sparrow	Z O Q G M E Y D R K Q V L D D D D D B D
Starling	T R V V J P U R P L E M A R T I N K K S
Woodpecker	J R G Q P D D S D F C R N O I P R L T P
Wrens	J A Q Z D O V E X D I D T B T K L L F Z
	U P Q N D O V Z J K D L X I S R C D H Z
	Q S N E R W F R K X X L A N I D R A C G
	T J L Q N D V H N C R D Z D I A N D N D
	X L M Q Q C H H N C G J L X S J X X I V
	X B B Z T C Q H U P G Z O X Y U N W F G
	J Z Z Z Q K J H H H F F L L L H H D H P

Ans. on pg. 4
R. Murray



(Alive—Cont'd from page 1)

and has high nutrient content. I found my answer to what seemed like a miracle.

All of this starts with the soil, it is alive, it is supposed to be biologically and nutritionally in balance, it is magnetic. The magnetism is what holds the soil particles together and the minerals must be kept in balance so that this magnetism can remain free to move in the soil. We need to remineralize our soil so that the apple a day axiom can become real to us again.

Our agricultural practices must be changed for us to become a sustainable, healthy society. We need to be reeducated. It is time for another kind of CHANGE.

If this subject interests you, I recommend that you read Dr. Arden Anderson's book, *The Anatomy of Life and Energy in Agriculture*.

S. Stephens

Invasives: Weeds of a Different Stripe

Once, when our planet was filled with more plants than almost anything else, we humans called a plant that crossed into our gardens or farms weeds. In recent times however we've realized that plants brought from another part of the world to our own, have become in some cases the wrong choices. Plants, when they've adapted too well to a new place drive out indigenous species and in the worst cases alter the ecosystems. We call these plants invasives. Although such plants were not always introduced intentionally, (they may have hitched a ride in ship balast or as seeds mixed with grain), they got here in a faster way than would have been possible before human technology sped things up.

What makes plants invasive is that they share certain characteristics: They produce viable seed very quickly, animals and wind disperse their seeds, and they reproduce vegetatively and by seed. They also have long flowering and fruiting periods and germinate quite easily. They are usually able to self fertilize and they have large north-south ranges in the continent where they originate.

Common garden plants that we think of as either native to our area or harmless to the local environment are in fact neither. Buddleia or Butterfly Bush is fragrant and beautiful but is spreading rapidly in many places. Scotch Broom already covers more than 2 million acres in Washington, Oregon and California. It displaces native plant species and animal forage species as well as being flammable, carrying fire to the forest canopy. Japanese Knotweed is a particular problem in wet areas. It excludes native vegetation and reduces wildlife habitat. It also causes flooding by reducing water flow. Vinca minor is a useful garden plant for shaded areas but a single plant can spread vegetatively and cover large areas of wooded understory, crowding out native vegetation. English Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle and Japanese Barberry are also problematic with barberry being particularly successful in both sun and shade here in the northeast.

Although it will be disappointing to many gardeners, the use of these plants and others on the invasive species lists is not desirable. Although we will never be able to return to the natural world of even a hundred

years ago, we can try to use our many fine native species much more than we do. To the latter point I recommend that people learn about these plants which are in many cases rarely seen in the wild any more and are underused in horticulture.

R. Florin

Time to Gas Up

Here you are. You get to the gas station in your wonderful family car and you're ready to take a trip to the campgrounds or even just to the supermarket. You put the nozzle to the tank and press the start button. You watch as the dollar numbers go higher and higher. First fifty, then sixty, seventy, eighty, one hundred dollars. Less than a year ago, filling a gas tank would cost about twenty, thirty, forty, maybe fifty dollars for a family mini-van. Now it is about eighty to a hundred for that same van.

At the same time, you wonder if maybe you should drive less. After all, global warming is a serious issue that we need to address now. You need to be part of the solution, not the problem. Therefore, you

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Tip Time



Weeds in the soil are present to correct a soil imbalance. Broadleaf weeds correct the balance between potash and phosphate. Grassy weeds are present to correct calcium deficiency. Succulent weeds help to increase the water holding capacity of the soil and replenish carbonate ions.

If your plants are affected by pests and diseases, it is an indicator that they are suffering from a nutrient deficiency.

Calcium and phosphate are the first two deficiencies found in the soil when pest and disease start to become problems.

Pests and diseases are indicators of nutrient deficiencies in the soil. If you had problems this season., you need to amend your soil.

Seeds high in minerals sink to the bottom of the glass when soaked. These are the seeds you should plant.

If you plant trees this fall, inoculate the roots with a mycorrhizal fungi or compost tea.

'Don't use the entire packet'

Leafy greens or non-fruiting vegetables like broccoli can bolt or go to seed when fertilized. If you plant any of these this fall watch your fertilizer.

If there is a phosphate deficiency in the soil all other nutrients will be deficient because nutrients must be accompanied by phosphate to be properly absorbed.

It is better to lime your soil with calcium lime.

Do not use muriate of potash, anhy-

drous ammonia, triple-super-phosphate.

Wood ash dehydrates the soil, use caution if it's used.

Turn the leaves and fresh manure into the soil now so that they can break down without competing with your plants for the nitrogen.

The packet of flower preservative that comes with your bouquet of flowers can be used 3-4 times, so don't use the entire packet. In one shot.

It is not too late to plant winter rye as a cover crop.

Add bonemeal to the planting hole before you plant your bulbs.

Cut back and bring in dahlia's, canna's, taro and other tender bulbs after a hard frost; store in the basement in paper.

Gas - (Cont'd from page 3)
 take your bike out from its dusty corner so you can "drive" it to the grocery store. That works. But wait, how are you going to get to work? Carpooling is out of the question since no one near you goes to the same place of employment. So what do you do? You use your gas-guzzling, global-warming car.

The situation we have today, as we are all fully aware is that we cannot go back as a nation to the "horse and buggy." We are a nation of cars and we have to fill up our tanks. However, fossil fuels are no longer the boom they once were. They pollute the air, they increase the atmospheric temperature, and they are non-renewable. So what can be done about this? What we have always done; we find an alternative.

One of the alternative buzzwords that is thrown about a great deal is biofuels. However, it is not a

modern concept. The Appalachians used a plant-based product to fuel their engines when the car industry was young. Ethanol is an oxygen-bearing fuel that is made from sugar, which is derived from carbohydrates. Typically known as moonshine, it had to be 200 proof, pure alcohol, in order to combine with gasoline. The plants used for this process are corn, sugar cane, sweet sorghum or any plant with a high sugar content. Even the American grasslands are returning as the farmers convert their crops to a unique native called Switch Grass. This grass once covered the prairies for tens of millions of miles before the Europeans came. This 10-foot tall plant is proving to be a boom for the biofuel industry. It is big and tough, grows rapidly, and can thrive in the harshest of conditions.

The upside to this form of fuel is that the by-products can be used for human and animal consumption, it burns cleaner, and it is a renewable source. The downside is the fact that it takes more energy to make

this energy.
Now imagine that to make this energy for your car, instead of using "moonshine," you use French-fries. Or rather, the oil that you use to make French-fries. Another option for an alternative source of fuel is the oil obtained from various plant materials. The list of resources for this type of bio-fuel grows continuously as more research and data are developed. Such a list includes flax, seed and nut oils, *Jatropha*, Field Penny-cress (*Thlaspi arvense*), algae, vegetable oils and animal fats. Quite an interesting mix. You do not have to drive your car, all you have to do is add some salt and pepper and you can eat your car.

These sources are common enough, but a few are more viable than others. The oil from the seeds of the *Jatropha* plant when crushed produce a high-quality oil that rivals diesel fuel and can be used in a standard diesel car. This plant can survive the worst conditions and live in the poorest soils. *Jatropha* is indigenous to Central America. It is considered a poisonous shrub, but there are varieties that are non-toxic. The entire plant has many different uses, fuel being just one of them.

Algae are another desirable high-yield fuel source. It is extremely renewable. You can extract 100,000 gallons of algae oil a year per acre, three times that of corn and twice as much as soybeans. You do not need to use farmland that is reserved for food production. You can

build algae-growing facilities nearly anywhere there is a water source. Even wastewater can be used to grow it. There are so many pros in utilizing algae fuel that it is considered the ultimate in renewable energy.

As more options open up in the field of clean, alternative, renewable biofuels, people will not have to make the choice of using their cars for work versus deterring global warming. Just think, in the future you just might use your table scraps to fuel your car, much to the dismay of the family dog.

E. Cornier



Roots to Fuel

Our 2008 Monthly Meeting Schedule

October 27, 2008

Gardening Craft

November 24, 2008

Video - All about Grants

December 8, 2008

Holiday Craft

January 26, 2009

Planning for 2009

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

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Word Scramble Answer

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