

# Many Hands

Occasional Newsletter of the Port Royal  
Community Garden

June 2005

## Community Garden Calendar:

🌿	<b>Queensborough Day</b>	<b>Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup> 11 to 4</b>
🌿	<b>Summer Solstice (summer begins)</b>	<b>Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup></b>
🌿	<b>Urban Farmers Fall Fair</b>	<b>Sunday, Sept 25<sup>th</sup> 10 to 4</b>



## Companion Planting

An introduction to companion planting can be found in this year's Community Garden Question & Answer sheet.

### *Good and bad companions for vegetable crops*

CROP	DOES WELL WITH	DOES BADLY WITH
beans, broad	brassicas, carrots, celery, cucurbits, potatoes, summer savory, most herbs	onions & garlic
beans, bush	celery, cucurbits, potatoes, strawberries, corn	onions & garlic
beans, runner	corn, summer savory	beets & chard, kohlrabi
beets & chards	most beans, brassicas, onions & garlic, kohlrabi, parsnips, rutabagas	runner beans
brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, etc.)	bush beans, beets & chards, celery, dill, nasturtiums, onions & garlic, peas, potatoes	runner beans, strawberries
carrots	chives, leeks, lettuce, onions & garlic, peas, tomatoes	dill
celery	brassicas, beans, leek, tomatoes	
corn	beans, cucurbits, corn, peas, potatoes	sunflowers
cucurbits (cucumbers, squash, melons)	beans, nasturtiums, peas, corn	potatoes
leeks	carrots, celery, onions	
lettuce	carrots, cucurbits, radish, strawberries, chervil	
onions & garlic	beets & chards, lettuce, strawberries, summer savory, tomatoes	beans, peas
peas	beans, carrots, corn, cucurbits, potatoes, turnips	onions & garlic
peppers	basil	kohlrabi, radishes
potatoes	beans, brassicas, corn, peas	tomatoes, cucurbits
sunflowers	cucurbits, nasturtiums	potatoes, runner beans, grass
tomatoes	asparagus, basil, carrots, brassicas, onions & garlic, parsley	kohlrabi, potatoes
turnips & rutabagas	peas	

(adapted from *Bob Flowerdew's Organic Bible*, Kyle Cathie Ltd, 1998.)

## News and Notes...

One of our community garden members, is asking for a bit of help. Marilyn requests that if each gardener with a terraced plot could please clean out the grass growing between the cement blocks on the little walkway just next to their own plot, it would be most helpful. Marilyn will do the rest, but notes that it gets more difficult the longer it is left untended.

Marilyn has kindly cleaned out the community garden shed and announces, "The mouse poop's all gone!" She has asked us to include in the newsletter a friendly reminder not to put seeds or food of any kind in the shed, to prevent the return of opportunistic rodents. Thanks!

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## Bees!

When Europeans originally settled North America, they brought along the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) to pollinate their crops.

Honeybees will pollinate almost everything they come across, collecting pollen and feeding on nectar as they move from flower to flower. The actual transfer of pollen from one flower to another is critical for the proper formation of many kinds of fruits, and many of the vegetables that are technically fruits, such as tomatoes, beans and cucumbers.

The domestic honeybee is unfortunately a highly bred species, noted more for its docility and productivity than for its ability to survive in the wild, and recently, huge numbers have fallen prey to diseases and especially, parasitic mites that infest their colonies. Luckily, some of the pollination slack is taken up by other insects, such as butterflies, beetles, wasps and native bees (especially early in the season, when it's too cool for honeybees), but commercial fruit and vegetable production still relies on honeybees and the bee-keepers who transport and maintain hives.



Which kind of beehive do you think you'll see at the Urban Farmers Fall Fair?



## Picking Your Harvest

How do you know when your homegrown produce is ready for picking? Roger Swain (of the PBS program *The Victory Garden*), in his book *The*

*Practical Gardener* (Little Brown, 1989) relates a few tips for harvesting the earlier vegetables:

**Beans:** Green beans are best harvested before one can feel the the outlines of the individual seeds in the pods.

**Beets:** The inner leaves make the tastiest greens. With the exception of 'Long Season', which retains its quality even when huge, beetroots should be picked when the roots are no bigger than a tangerine.

**Broccoli:** The edible portion of broccoli is the flower stalk and buds. The latter open quickly into yellow flowers (which can nonetheless be eaten) if not picked promptly. Most cultivars will continue to produce a succession of small shoots once the main flower head is cut, so there is no need to extend the season by putting off harvesting broccoli that is ready to eat.

**Lettuce:** Even small seedlings are tasty; picking only the outer leaves of young plants prolongs the supply of greens. When the lettuce plant begins to expand upwards, the stem elongating between each leaf, it has begun to bolt and will shortly flower and set seed. The leaves of bolting lettuce are too bitter for most people to enjoy.

**Onions:** These are tasty at any age. Once the tops fall over, the onions should be pulled up, dried in the sun for a day, and braided. Large, mild onions like 'Sweet Spanish' should be eaten within a few weeks of harvest. 'Stuttgart', an authoritative onion, will keep many months.

**Peas:** Harvest as soon as the peas fill the pods. When peas are big enough to flatten each other in the pod, they taste starchy and bitter. Such overmature peas can be left on the vine, allowed to dry, shelled out, and used for soup.

**Potatoes:** Young potatoes begin to form when the plants bloom. Anytime afterward, a little surreptitious digging with one's fingers near the base of the plants will yield pullet-egg-size new potatoes.

**Summer Squash:** The younger the better. Failure to remove mature squash inhibits future flowers. In the case of zucchini, this may be a preferable option.