

Many Hands

Occasional Newsletter of the Port Royal
Community Garden

Spring 2005

Community Garden Calendar:

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| 🌿 | Manure Delivery | Friday, April 8th |
| 🌿 | Int'l Compost Awareness Week | May 1st to 7th |
| 🌿 | Queensborough Day | Sunday, May 29th 11 to 4 |
| 🌿 | Urban Farmers Fall Fair | Sunday, Sept 25th 10 to 4 |



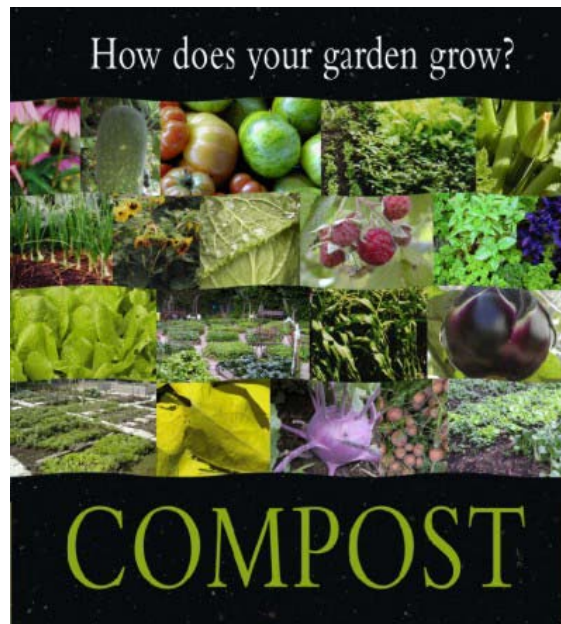
Compost and Manure Spreading and Clean-up

Don't forget that Saturday, April 9th is a big day in the community garden. Manure, compost and soil delivery is scheduled for Friday, and Saturday would be an excellent day to **s p r e a d** them around!

Making Compost (adapted from *Go Organic* by Bob Flowerdew, Hamlyn, 1993.

There are many different ways of composting, but they all come back to one principle.

- In general, composting proceeds best when there are many, varied materials, well divided, moistened and thoroughly mixed together with plentiful air.
- It helps to have roughly equal amounts of dry material and fresh green material, as too much of either will cause poor composting.
- Adding water when mixing is usually necessary, as many materials are too dry on their own.
- An activator is not essential, but speeds things up if added during the mixing. Rather than chemical additives, it is better to use urine or poultry manure. Seaweed or blood, fish and bone meal will do instead. Sievings from previous compost heaps are the best activator of all.



“Fresh compost, even when immature, can be mixed into the soil when you are planting trees and shrubs, but if it is to be used as a top-dressing or with small plants, it is best used matured and sieved. This takes extra effort, but produces a finer material, and the residue can be used to start the next heap. In any case, compost or well-rotted manure is best applied to growing crops in early spring, so that nutrients are taken up rather than leaching out of the soil over the winter months.”

Materials Suitable for Composting

Fast

Annual weeds (hot compost will kill seeds)
Grass mowings (mix well)
Poultry manure
Seaweed

Intermediate

Flowers
Fruit and vegetable scraps, small stems
Perennial weeds (must be dead)
Rhubarb leaves
Tea and coffee grounds

Slow

Leaves (deciduous)
Newspaper or cardboard (shredded)
Tree and shrub prunings (chipped or cut small)

Plant a Row Grow a Row

At the Port Royal Community Garden

Planting will begin at the end of March for the Plant a Row, Grow a Row program. We will be growing beans in plots 6 and 7.

Beans: Raw beans are good source of potassium and folic acid; they also contain vitamin C, magnesium, thiamine, iron, vitamin A and niacin, as well as traces of copper, phosphorus and calcium. Cooked fresh beans are an excellent source of potassium, a good source of folic acid, and contain vitamin C, magnesium, iron, vitamin A and copper. (From *The Visual Food Encyclopedia*, Québec/Amérique International, 1996.)



Growing beans is a snap. Kinds grown locally include runner, Lima and broad beans, but by far the most commonly grown are bush beans, which are also known as French, string, snap and green beans.

Beans can be sown from early spring, with protection, to late summer. Our allotments are ideal for beans—they prefer a warm, dry environment. Picking ensures continuous cropping. They will soon stop if the pods are left.

Good companions for beans include potatoes and strawberries. Later in the season, cucurbits (cucumbers, melons, and squashes) and corn should be tried, and where the soil is particularly fertile and well-watered, broccoli and celery. See the next issue of *Many Hands* for more on companion planting.



Did you know that **bees** are the theme for this year's Urban Farmers Fall Fair?

Why establish community gardens?

*Flowers grow in flower gardens
Vegetables grow in vegetable gardens
and people grow in community gardens*



- Community gardens involve residents in sharing in the creation, maintenance and rewards of gardening. They provide food, recreation and therapeutic opportunities for a community. They can also promote environmental awareness and provide community education.
- Where they exist, community gardens form an important part of a city's public open space network.
- Many cities in the developing world still source much of their food from within their urban boundaries. Meanwhile cities in the developed world—in North America, Europe and Australia, for example—are setting aside areas of public space for groups of like-minded residents to create gardens and share the maintenance and rewards. These community gardens were initially established 25 to 30 years ago and have increased in popularity as cities have intensified and private open space has reduced.
- Experience shows there are many reasons that members of a community come together and create a garden. Some reasons can be loosely described as ecological, others as social or community development.
- Community gardens are valued as open spaces and places for socializing and relaxing. The activities that take place in community gardens—sharing gardening tips, cooperating through work parties, arranging social events for gardeners and neighbours, and enjoying the fruits of the land—bring people from all walks of life and all ages together, building stronger, more integrated communities.
- Community gardens are also educational resources within a community, promoting environmental awareness and stewardship and providing opportunities for recycling organic waste and for solid waste and water re-use. Finally, they might also contribute to the diversity of open space use.

Adapted from the Auckland, New Zealand web site: <http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/council/documents/gardenpolicy/introduction.asp>