




DOWLING COMMUNITY GARDEN

SPRING 2007
GARDENING NEWS AND VIEWS

newsletter


Spring Planting Date: JUNE 3

 Gardens must be planted by Sunday, June 3, 2007

Plots must be prepared and at least half planted by this date. If not, your garden space will be considered abandoned and reassigned immediately, with no refund. We have a very long waiting list of persons eager to garden.

About Your SERVICE COMMITMENT

Each Dowling gardener is expected to assist with the chores that keep this garden running. Your service commitment assignment and coordinator's name and contact information is enclosed in this newsletter. Please be responsible about completing your chosen tasks.

 Gardeners are required to perform 4 hours minimum in service to the garden each season

REPORT YOUR SERVICE HOURS Keep track of your service hours and report them within one week to your project coordinator. It is your responsibility to keep track of, and report, your service hours. All service hours *must* be completed by October 31 and reported by November 7, 2007. Only reported hours verified by your coordinator will be credited.

NEW POLICY: NON-PERFORMANCE OF SERVICE Failure to perform the minimum service will result in a \$75 non-performance penalty added to your plot fee the following year. We've adopted this policy because some of you do not perform your service hours. Failure to honor your service assignment is unfair to those who willingly complete assigned tasks, and results in additional work for other gardeners. Please be courteous and follow through on your service assignment in a timely manner.

Dowling Garden IN THE NEWS

DOWLING GETS A MAGAZINE MENTION. *Garden Solutions*, the new publication of a membership club about gardening, featured Dowling in it's inaugural issue in January. Managing editor Scott Atkinson visited the garden last summer when he was in town; he plans to feature a community garden each issue.

COMMUNITY GARDENING RESOURCE FAIR. Augsburg College was the site of the second annual resource fair, sponsored by Garden Works and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. Dowling gardeners presented information on heirloom varieties and how to save seeds. This was a great opportunity to meet others in the community involved in gardening projects that might mesh with those at Dowling.

SEED SAVERS EXCHANGE. Three Dowling gardeners are listed in the 2007 Yearbook, offering seeds to other SSE members. If you'd like information about Seed Savers Exchange, or how to be part of Dowling's seed-saving program, contact Susan at srdesign@visi.com or 612/722-8022.

Upcoming HEIRLOOM EVENTS

DOWLING'S HEIRLOOM PLANT SALE. Why grow old-fashioned varieties? Because they taste great, you'll preserve history and it's lots of fun! Choose from over 100 hard-to-find varieties of vegetables, herbs and flowers for your garden and help support our Heirloom Festival in August. More than 50 kinds of heirloom tomatoes, 25 kinds of sweet and hot peppers, eggplants, herbs and flowers will be available. Look for a list of plants in the bulletin board in early May.

Saturday, May 12, 11 AM-2 PM in the garden.

FOURTH ANNUAL HEIRLOOM FESTIVAL SHOWCASES SWEET AND HOT PEPPERS. Heirloom Festival, our annual celebration of great-tasting food and beautiful flowers, focuses on peppers this summer. Many gardeners are gearing up to plant sweet and hot varieties for display and tasting.

We encourage you to take part: consider planting heirloom peppers in your garden this year. Use short and colorful hot peppers as a decorative border, try a new sweet pepper like a mini-bell or paprika, or be brave and grow a truly atomic variety! Then let us know what you are growing.

Heirloom Festival will continue to offer many samples of tomatoes to taste and evaluate, and present information on saving seeds, gardening resources and sustainable agriculture. Displays of heirloom produce and flowers will be featured.

Saturday, August 18, 10 AM-1 PM in the Garden.

If you have ideas for this summer's Heirloom Festival, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Susan at srdesign@visi.com or 612/722-8022.



SPRING CLEAN-UP Saturday May 5, 10 AM - Noon

We will clean up debris, get out water barrels, prepare the raised beds, and complete other seasonal chores. If your service assignment is clean-up, plan to attend.

Bring garden tools (rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, pruners), weed trimmers, lawn mowers, trash bags, garden gloves.

*Free seeds will be available for pick up. Also bring usable garden items that you no longer need for Swap Day (but you **must** take home with you any items not claimed by others!)*

WATER SYSTEM DEMONSTRATION. Come to a demonstration of Dowling's water system, and the proper techniques to care for system components.

ATTENTION NEW GARDENERS. New gardeners at Dowling are encouraged to attend the clean-up. This is a great opportunity to meet other gardeners, and you'll be shown how to use the water system. You will also find out about tools in the shed available for use, and expected care of community resources.

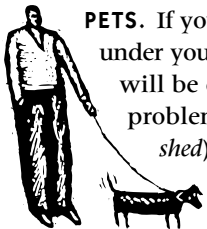
IMPORTANT Reminders

NO PESTICIDES OR HERBICIDES MAY BE USED. Pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides are prohibited at the Dowling Community Garden, per state law and school policy.

Most common commercial products (and most "organics") are not allowed. To determine which products are acceptable or prohibited, go to www.DowlingCommunityGarden.org, click on "Rules", then click the "Pesticide Information" link. All products in toxicity categories 1-2-3 are prohibited at Dowling. (Don't have internet access? Call the garden voice mail, 651/255.6607, and leave a message with your name and number, the products you'd like checked; someone will call you back.) Violation of this rule is grounds for garden forfeiture! More information is available in newsletters from August 2001 and July 2002; see the web site or call for copies.

FENCES. Keep all plants off the perimeter fence, and keep one foot between your plants and the fenceline. 46th Avenue gardeners need to remove all plants outside the fence up to the sidewalk.

PATHS. Keep rocks, weeds and garden debris out of the path; keep the path mowed; and make sure it's accessible for carts and lawn mowers. Don't use non-organic materials in your path. Keep garden plants out of paths or they will be cut down. Vining plants and raspberries are common problems.



PETS. If you bring your pet to the garden, it must be under your control at all times. Minneapolis leash law will be enforced: Call Animal Control to report problem animals (telephone number is posted on the shed). Keep your dog out of other gardens. Clean up after your dog. Do not dispose of dog waste in the garbage can by the shed.

PLANT SALES AND SWAPS

Dowling Heirloom Plant Sale Saturday May 12, 11am-2pm at the garden. Sale will feature over 100 varieties of hard-to-find plants: more than 50 kinds of tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers, eggplants; herbs; old-fashioned and unusual flowers. Proceeds support Heirloom Festival on August 18.

"Cans for Sam" Plant Sale Saturday May 19, 8am-2pm at 3608 38th Avenue South. Proceeds support care, services for abandoned animals.

Friends School Plant Sale May 11, 11am-8pm; May 12, 10am-8pm; May 13, noon-4pm (half-price day). State Fair Grounds, Grandstand building, St. Paul. For more information: <http://www.friendschoolplantsale.com/>

Longfellow Garden Club Plant Swap Wednesday, May 9, 7pm, Epworth United Methodist Church (3207 37th Avenue South). Bring perennials and extra flower or vegetable seedlings to share with other gardeners, and plan to take home some new plants!



SPRING GARDENING TIP

Start indoors instead of directly planting Planting transplants of lettuce, instead of direct seeding into your garden, allows the heads to mature to a good size before heat sets in and they begin to bolt. This also works for other cool weather crops like bok choy and Asian greens.

Try setting out plants of kale; the larger plants can withstand more flea beetle damage and will recover better than a small seedling.

PLOTS. Gardens were measured last fall. Check the map on the web site to determine your plot dimensions. Don't remove plot stakes, or expand your garden into the path. All gardens will be identified with numbered markers later this season.

DON'T LEAVE ITEMS BY THE SHED! If you have usable garden materials you no longer want, call the Dowling voice mail, 651/255-6607, to have a notice posted in the bulletin board. Or bring them to Swap Day at spring or fall cleanup (unclaimed items must be removed by end of day). Do not leave trash or garden materials by the shed. You must dispose of trash (plastic plant pots, flats, etc.) in your home garbage can.

Behind the Scenes: GARDEN COMMITTEE

Did you ever wonder how all of the tasks that make Dowling Community Garden function get done? Who manages our membership of more than 200 gardeners, collects rents and pays the bills, negotiates and manages our lease and insurance, creates and mails newsletters, maintains the web site, arranges for delivery of manure/compost/wood chips, and maintains the garden grounds? These tasks and many more are done by members of the Dowling Community Garden Committee. Members regularly attend monthly meetings to manage ongoing garden issues and plan for future improvements. In addition, each Committee member assumes responsibility for one or more major garden task.

Members of the Committee also identify other sources of financial support. (For example, improvements to the water system were paid for by grant money – no rent money was used. The perennial garden and benches were grant funded, as were the new tools that appeared in the shed last year.) Members seek ways for the Garden to contribute to the community by planning public events and educational outreach. They also work with other garden groups to identify solutions to common problems.

PLEASE JOIN US We need gardeners who are willing to assume responsibility for a major garden task. Coordinators supervise the water and surplus produce distribution programs, manage communications, organize clean-ups, maintain the raised beds and flower gardens: all of the service commitment activities in the list that accompanied your renewal form require a coordinator. Coordinator positions require a greater commitment of time than the four hours per year required of all gardeners.

All task coordinators are welcome to be members of the Committee and attend monthly meetings to determine the Garden's direction. We are always looking for suggestions to help make the Garden run smoothly. Leave a message on the Dowling voice mail, 651/255-6607, and a member of the Committee will contact you.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS

GARDEN MARKERS This year we are hoping to add numbered markers to all of the plots. In previous years we've had wooden stakes with plot numbers inscribed. This has not proved to be an effective long-term strategy, so we are looking for a better solution. The markers should be weatherproof and reasonably permanent, and stand 2-3 feet tall. Since there are 200 plots, cost is also a consideration. If any of you have ideas about materials and design, please call the Dowling voice mail, 651/255-6607 or email Jan at dowling.garden@comcast.net.

VANDALISM AND THEFT are recurring problems. We are looking for new and better ways to combat these acts. If anyone has good ideas, we'd like to hear them. Leave a message on the Dowling voice mail, 651/255-6607. Only nonviolent solutions please!

If you witness theft or vandalism at the garden, please take note of the time and date, appearance and age of persons, and the vehicle they are driving. If possible, get the license plate number. Call 911, or for non-emergencies, 311. Give this address for the garden: 39th Street and 46th Avenue South (*a consistent address allows police to track incidents at the garden*). Insist that the call be dispatched/logged, so the SAFE officer can investigate. Call the Dowling voice mail with the information, and the steps you have taken. Alert others in the garden.

STEVENS HOUSE Gardens

Since 2003, Dowling Community Garden members have maintained the vegetable garden at the John H. Stevens House. Stevens House is the small house, surrounded by a white picket fence, in Minnehaha Park. Completed in early 1850, it was the first house to be built in what would become downtown Minneapolis. It was moved to Minnehaha Park in 1896.

Dowling gardeners plant and maintain heirloom and historic varieties of vegetables in the Stevens garden. Although we know the general vegetable types, such as tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages, and so on, we do not know the exact varieties that Stevens grew. The semi-shady location of the current garden limits what can be grown; however, every effort is made to plant varieties similar to those Stevens probably grew.

In addition to the vegetable garden, there are beds of Minnesota native plants around the house and adjacent to the garden. They desperately need maintenance and identification. If you have knowledge of Minnesota native plants and would be willing to volunteer some time to maintain the beds and identify and tag the plants, please leave a message on the Dowling voice mail, 651/255-6607.

Can You Help with a **CHERRY TOMATO** Experiment?

Last season, a tomato grown in the Heirloom Garden turned out to be an orange cherry instead of the larger fruit expected. This cherry tomato was prolific and flavorful. We'd like to see if seed saved from this tomato will produce the same cherry-size fruit.

We're looking for five volunteers to grow this tomato in their gardens, and allow us to save some seeds from the plants. You tend the plant, and eat the tomatoes (except those few we're saving for seed!) If you'd like to get a free plant, contact Susan by May 1 at srdesign@visi.com or 612/722-8022.

IMPORTANT DOWLING DATES

MAY 5

Spring Clean-up and Swap Day, 10 AM-Noon

MAY 12

Dowling's Heirloom Plant Sale, 11 AM-2 PM

JUNE 3

Your garden must be prepared and at least half planted

AUGUST 18

Dowling's Heirloom Festival, 10 AM-1 PM

OCTOBER 13

Fall Clean-up and Swap Day, 10 AM-Noon

OCTOBER 31

Service hours must be completed

NOVEMBER 4

Your garden must be cleaned up. Put dead plants on compost pile, take down seasonal supports and arrange leaf bags neatly.

NOVEMBER 7

All 2007 service hours should be reported to your coordinator

JANUARY 2008

Seed swap and placing a group order for seeds by mail. Email or postcard notices are sent out in late December.



2007 PRODUCE DONATION Program

Donate your extra vegetables to our Surplus Produce Program, or grow extra to contribute. The food shelves have been very grateful to Dowling for our contributions. Produce pick ups will occur mornings, three times per week June-September. Place produce in coolers outside the shed. Look for the pick-up schedule on the shed and on the web site later this spring.

Our **WEB SITE** is a Great Place to Explore!

WWW.DOWLINGCOMMUNITYGARDEN.ORG Need information about starting seeds? Want to see back issues of the newsletters or read about Dowling's start as a Victory Garden? Having problems with insects on your vegetables? The Dowling web site is a resource for gardening advice, timely notices about upcoming events, recipes and lots more. Let us know how you use the site, and other information you'd be interested to see added, by calling the voice mail, 651/255-6607.

MINNEHAHA FALLS NURSERY AND LANDSCAPING

offers a one-time 10% discount on plants
with this coupon. Good for 2007.

MOTHER EARTH GARDENS green • grown • goods

offers a one-time 10% discount on plants
with this coupon. Good for 2007.

Gardening CLASSES AND PROGRAMS

RAIN GARDEN WORKSHOPS. The why's and how's of installing rain gardens, rain barrels and gardening to keep land and waters clean. Presented by Metro/Minneapolis Blooms. April 12, 6:30-8:30 pm at Powderhorn Park Recreation Center, 3400 15th Ave S. Advance registration is required at www.MetroBlooms.org.

CLASS AT CENTER FOR NORTHERN GARDENING.

Heirloom Vegetables – Healthy Eating! Heirlooms have been saved for generations to preserve a healthy food source and for qualities of hardiness and flavor. Learn advantages/disadvantages and leave with a plant sustainable for northern gardens. Tuesday, May 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Enrollment is limited/registration is required. 1755 Prior Ave. North, Falcon Heights. To register, or for cost information, call 651/643-3601, ext 211.

THE ARBORETUM GARDENING SCHOOL. These classes are offered at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. For more information, call 952/443-1422 or email ArbEdu@umn.edu.

Using Native Plants in the Garden. Designing with native plants and other local materials, how to best utilize your garden site and what native plant species will thrive in that site. Includes a visit to some sites at the Arboretum. Saturday, April 28; 10am-12:30pm

The following series highlights unique gardening styles and is designed for home gardeners, horticulture professionals and Master Gardeners.

Gardening with Herbs Saturday, June 2

Container Gardening Saturday, June 9

Edible Landscaping: Combining Flowers with Vegetables
Saturday, June 16

REDUCED COST RAIN BARRELS. 2,000 rain barrels are available to Minneapolis residents for use on their properties. When connected to a downspout, the 55-gallon barrels store rain water for later use. Cost is \$45. To order: 612/724-2608 or www.thereusecenter.com. Quantities are limited so order early.

ART IN BLOOM. Minneapolis Institute of Arts presents a 4-day festival that celebrates art and fresh flowers. 3400 Third Ave. South, April 26-29, www.artsmia.org for more information.

GARDEN RESOURCES

Rototilling Contact these individuals for garden rototilling at a reasonable cost (*call for prices*):

Clarence Day 612/724-4973

Jeff Wagner 612/722-8920

Soil Testing Contact the University of Minnesota Soil Testing Lab, 612/625-3101 or soiltest@umn.edu, for directions on sending soil samples.

Woodchips are periodically available in the woods south of the prairie, or for pickup at these locations: 36th Street and West River Parkway; Wabun Park in the lower lot on west side of road; Bossen Field on East 58th Street between 28th-31st Avenues; north side of Lake Nokomis between East 50th Street and 22nd Avenue South; and west of Cedar Avenue adjacent to 29th Street between 17th-18th Avenues.

Compost will be available at the garden again this spring. Look for the pile on the edge of the woods. It goes fast, so check the area often!

Horse Manure is periodically available in the woods south of the prairie. Dowling gardener Steve Dosch will deliver manure to a spot near your garden. Contact him directly to discuss quantity and cost: 612/729-1865.

Longfellow Garden Club meets on the second Wednesday each month, 7 PM at Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Avenue South. Meetings are free, and cover a wide range of gardening and landscaping topics. Call 612/722-8022 for more information.

Informational Web Sites

•Gardening information and specific plant forums:

<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/>

<http://www.tomatoville.com/>

•U of M Extension Service, plant culture information:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/topics.html?topic=5>

•GardenWorks – local community gardening resource:

<http://www.gardenworksmn.org/> or call (612) 278-7123

GO TO WWW.DOWLINGCOMMUNITYGARDENING.ORG FOR SEED-STARTING INFORMATION, GARDENING TIPS, DOWLING HISTORY & MORE!

Dowling Community Garden

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Return Service Requested