



Important News About Water

Due to cloudy water that was discovered when the water barrels were filled for the first time in the spring, water samples were taken and sent to a laboratory for testing. The water was found to be within acceptable levels, after flushing the pipes for a few minutes. Water test results are available; send a self-addressed and stamped envelope to the garden address.

If you are on the water team, please flush the water line by letting the water run on the grass (*outside the barrels*) 3–5 minutes before filling the barrels. This flushing will insure that the water in the barrels is as clean as possible. During times of drought, like we have had recently, you should attempt to fill your assigned barrels more than once a day. When there is high demand for water, the barrels empty quickly and by afternoon the barrels are often empty. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Hollander, the Water Coordinator, at 612/724.9425.

Wood Chips Available

Wood chips are available in the wooded area south of the prairie area. These are great for keeping pathways weed-free (just remember to remove existing weeds first). Wood chips are for your Dowling Garden only; please don't remove them for home use. *Free woodchips are available for pickup at two south Minneapolis locations: East 29th Street, between 17th and 18th Avenues; and East 50th Street at 2nd Avenue South.*

The Weed Patrol is on the Lookout!

Avoid a call from the weed patrol by keeping your garden and pathway free of weeds. Many pathways are becoming very difficult to walk through. Maintenance of paths between plots is important for the safety of

everyone in the garden, especially for elderly gardeners and people with carts. You are responsible for half of the path next to your plot: mow the path (*a push lawn-mower is available in the shed*) and do not throw weeds, rocks, or garden plants into the paths. Weeds must not be allowed to become taller than 8 inches, according to City Code and Dowling Garden rules. Garden plots are being monitored; if you hear from the weed patrol, you'll have one week to get your weeds under control. If you need help maintaining your plot and/or pathway, call the Garden Coordinator, 651/255.6607, to get names of people who can be hired to help with weed-whacking.

Attention 46th Street Gardeners!

Thanks to the gardeners along 46th Avenue who are keeping their weeds and garden plants off the fence and sidewalk. For those of you who have plants growing on or through the fence, please remove them. Our directive from the school is that we maintain a 12" buffer space between garden plants and the fenceline.

If you have not picked up landscape fabric with your name on it in the shed, please do so and install it ASAP. The school can no longer use herbicides regularly to control weeds, and gardeners along the fence must be diligent about keeping weeds and plants under control.

Tires

Outdoor storage of tires is illegal in the City of Minneapolis, and so is also prohibited at the Dowling Garden. This is a public health issue; tires accumulate water which breeds mosquitoes. (The mosquito that carries encephalitis breeds almost exclusively in the water found in tires.) If your plot is found to have empty tires (*without soil*), you will be contacted to remove them.

Important News about Your Dowling Garden Plot: **Pesticide, Herbicide, and Fungicide Use is Now Prohibited**

Effective June 29, 2001 the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides are prohibited at the Dowling Community Garden. The Garden Committee was notified by the Minneapolis Public Schools Environmental Health & Safety Division of this new rule, which is based on MN state law. The Janet B. Johnson Parents' Right-to-Know Act of 2000 (Article 7, Chapter 121A.30 Minnesota Statute) requires schools to notify parents every time pesticides are applied on school grounds. Since it is impossible for the school to notify parents every time a gardener applies these products, we have been told that gardeners will not be able to use them.

This new law even restricts the use of common commercial organic products, such as insecticidal soap, BT, and diatomaceous earth. A recent check of the herbicide, fungicide, and insecticide products available at Mother Earth Gardens determined that none of the products available were acceptable for use at Dowling. Although all the products sold there were considered organic and less toxic than most, their toxicity was still too high to be allowed at Dowling.

Never fear! There are still ways to avoid being overrun with weeds and bugs! Gardening methods and home-made concoctions are available to control pests. Read on for some alternative ways to deal with garden problems.

The best prevention for insect or disease problems is growing healthy plants. Make sure your soil is providing the *right nutrients* in the right proportions. Have your soil tested by the U of M (*call the Minnesota Extension Service Yard & Garden Line, 612/624.4771, for soil testing information*). Apply *compost* to your garden each year; compost is a balanced fertilizer and provides trace nutrients. Also, *plant disease resistant varieties* and *rotate your garden plantings*.

Insect Control

For insect problems, hand-picking larger insects is the best control. Use a home made dish soap-based spray where hand removal is not possible. You can make your own *soap spray* by combining 1 TB dishwashing detergent with 1/2 gallon of water. Put in small pump sprayer and be sure to target insects directly. Be careful about applying soap sprays in direct sunlight, and test the spray on plant foliage first to avoid damage. *Garlic pepper spray*: In a blender half full of water, liquefy 2 bulbs of garlic and 2 cayenne or habanero peppers. Strain the solids and add enough water to the garlic/pepper juice to make 1 gallon of concentrate. Shake well before using and add ¼ cup of the concentrate to each gallon of water in the sprayer. For added strength, add 2 tablespoons of vegetable or horticultural oil to each gallon of water in the sprayer. To make *garlic tea*, omit the pepper and add another bulb of garlic. These may not work for all plants or situations; experiment with different formulas and do additional research to find out what works best in your garden.

This web site that has recipes for making your own non-toxic products: <http://www.firststrays.com/remedies.htm>. Also try www.organicgardening.com.

Consider growing some crops under *row covers*, light-weight fabrics that prevent insects from getting on your plants. Row covers work well for plants that do not require pollination to set fruit (or cover plants until flowers begin to form, then remove for the rest of the growing season). Use row covers to control leaf miners, flea beetles, cabbage moth caterpillars and other flying insects or their larva.

Weed Control

Hand-pulling weeds is the most effective way to remove them. Use *mulches* around your plants to keep weeds from growing. Fall leaves make a good mulch, also straw and dried grass clippings; landscape fabric and plastics also will work, although they won't let in a much water and may heat soil temperatures. Use a weed trimmer or lawn mower (*in the shed*) to keep grass cut short in pathways next to your garden, or consider using wood chips to control weeds in the pathways. Remove as many weeds as possible and apply a thick layer of chips to keep weeds from resprouting. (*Optional: put layers of black/white newspaper between soil and chips.*)

Dowling Community Garden

PO Box 6757
Minneapolis, MN 55406
651/255.6607

Forward and Address Correction Requested

Summer Recipes for a Plentiful Harvest

Lucy's Zucchini-Custard Casserole

2 pounds zucchini (4 cups), sliced
1 TB onion, minced
¼ cup olive oil & butter mix
3 eggs
½ cup milk or cream
½ cup Parmesan or other cheese, grated
2 TB dry bread crumbs (optional)
¼ tsp salt
dash cayenne pepper
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated

In a large skillet, melt butter/oil mix and saute zucchini and onion until tender. In a large bowl, beat eggs and milk. Add ½ cup cheese, bread crumbs, salt and pepper. Stir in zucchini and onions. Put mixture in buttered 1½-quart casserole and sprinkle top with grated Parmesan. Bake uncovered, 350 degrees, for 35-40 minutes. *Serves 2-3 as main course, 4-6 as side dish*

Recipes are from Forget About Meat Cookbook by Karen Brooks.

Ratatouille

1 eggplant, cut in cubes
2 TB olive oil
2 TB butter
1 onion, chopped
2 green peppers, seeded and chopped
4 zucchini squash, cut in cubes
4-6 tomatoes, cut in cubes
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 TB parsley, chopped
1 tsp oregano
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
salt and pepper to taste

In a large skillet, saute eggplant in oil and butter until tender. Remove from pan. Saute onions, peppers, zucchini and tomatoes. Combine all ingredients in oiled baking dish and bake at 300 degrees for 15 minutes. *Serves 8*



The wheelchair-accessible raised garden beds are completed! Here, Peter Schmidt helps install the pathways between beds. Thanks to the Neighborhood Revitalization Program for funding materials for this project, and to the gardeners who contributed their labor to construct the beds.

photo courtesy of Joel Carter

Dowling Community Garden Newsletter We welcome your comments and contributions to the newsletter. Call the Dowling Community Garden phone line, 651/255.6607. Thanks to Eric Hart, Joan Krey, Steve Janega, Monika Bauerlein and Susan Reed for contributions to this issue.

Adventures in Organic Gardening

by Tom Mater

I planted my first organic garden in 1973. At the time I lived in Georgia. The dirt is a bit different there; hard, red, acidic and it can easily be cut into bricks in case you need to build a house quickly. Luckily, I had horses, chickens and cows which allowed me the opportunity to learn the art of composting. I can still feel the pleasure of putting on my frost shoes, trudging out to the pile, turning it over and over, and watching the steam billow out into the tundra-like 28 degrees of the Arctic blast which grips the state in Winter.

Peat by the truckload and a compost pile the size of a Iowa corn silo finally made the clay a hospitable place for the growing of groceries. I learned the art of constructing a support for pole beans. I learned the delight of growing half runners the next year while gaining the experience that pole beans can survive the harshest of winters and return with super legume strength. The next year it seemed like the beans had cross bred with the famous Kudzu vine and were making a dash toward the house. I lost my tractor for the summer that year when I left it overnight alongside the garden.

Here, gardening is different. The soil is black. It also has many benefits that have allowed me to think of my pick-ax and pneumatic jackhammer as something other than basic gardening essentials. I have noticed that it has a lot of sand in it. This is great for drainage but apparently it makes the soil form rocks. I know this because every time I have cleared my garden of rocks, there are more the next day. I am sure this is a Minnesota tradition because of that pink rock which is on display.

I love to look around and see all the different techniques of weed control, growing, staking and landscaping. Organic gardening means that we use a form of pest control that does not involve harsh or toxic chemicals. In Georgia, I battled a variety of pests. Caterpillars, slugs, snakes, as well as the more common four legged varmints: mice, rabbits, moles, and an occasional dog. We also had a particularly persistent pest called a Japanese Beetle: a hard shelled, iron jawed, flying beetle who would flip it's hind legs up in a karate-like move at the approach of anything that might dare to disturb a meal. It was a constant battle to brew up organic concoctions (garlic, onions, carnations, peppers), that didn't act like salad dressing to the little devils. Here, of course, there are mosquitoes. Muscles bulging from the steroids of Wisconsin cattle, they have jumped several eons of evolution by snacking on genetically engineered corn. I

had to convert my pneumatic plow from Georgia into a vortex disrupter so they wouldn't carry off my dog.

I love it at Dowling. I want my garden to improve every year. I think I am going to ask a friend of mine in Georgia to send me up a Grits bush. Nothing like a big bowl of Grits to start your day. See you around.

Longtime Dowling Gardeners Remembered

by Monika Bauerlein

The Dowling garden lost two of its veterans this summer – or perhaps "lost" is not the right word, since their work lives on in the patch of soil we have come to cherish. Bob Monhardt and Fred Burke were among the determined souls who tended Dowling through the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, back when gardening wasn't trendy and community gardens were few and far between. The garden itself was not the tapestry of tiny patches we see today; it consisted of a few dozen large squares, reminiscent of farmhouse back yards more than urban hobby plots.

Bob and Fred knew those farm gardens well. Like most of the people who settled this corner of Minneapolis after World War II they had grown up in rural Minnesota, in homes where raising vegetables was necessity more than pastime. When fellow Dowling volunteer Emily Green and I arrived at Bob's house – a tidy bungalow just a water-hose length from the garden – last year to interview him for a garden history project, he chuckled at telling us that he had been put to work in his mother's vegetable patch so much he'd vowed never to have a garden of his own. But that conviction faded when a neighbor urged him to take one of Dowling's plots. He discovered a flair for experimentation and for a time served as one of the Burpee seed company's beta testers; one of his ventures, growing luffa gourds, landed him in the pages of the Star Tribune. Even after arthritis forced him to give up his plot, he kept a seed-starting setup in his basement, and each year he would grow enough impatiens to fill a dozen containers surrounding the house.

Perhaps my favorite story among the many Bob told us involved the patch of flowers he grew each year from mixed-and-matched seeds in his Dowling plot. One day, he recalls, a boy peered at him from across the fence that separated the corner site from the street. "He was probably eight years old, and he said: Mister, could I have some of your flowers? I said: I don't know, what are you going to do with them? He said: My mother is getting married and she doesn't have any money and I'd

like to give her a bouquet. I said: You come on in and get the flowers. I don't know where he came from or where he went – never saw him again."

People who knew Fred Burke would have recognized that same generous spirit. A gentleman in the true sense of the word, with a presence that put you instantly at ease and a pair of eyes that belied his age, Fred was in the habit of tilling plots for new members when he served as chair of the garden committee. But "till" is putting it mildly: He would sift every foot of dirt through a screen to remove the rocks and those vexing bits of quackgrass. It never occurred to him, he told us, that this might be an awful lot of work to put in for a perfect stranger: "I like physical work," he said simply.

A onetime farmer forced to switch professions because of an injury, Fred thought of the garden as a lifeline – a balance to his job as a social worker. "When you work with the mentally ill, it's hard," he explained. "All your emotional energy goes out, and eventually you become bankrupt of energy. But I would go out in the garden and just look, and I could feel energy pouring back into my chest. It was a very important aspect of helping me do my work." Many of today's Dowling gardeners know that feeling – and if we're lucky, we'll be able to do for others what Fred and Bob did for us, caretaking our patch of soil and inspiring future gardeners.

When I think of Fred, I will always remember his generosity. He was always willing to help out with Dowling Garden projects, help fellow gardeners with projects in their own plots, answer gardening questions, and give practical advice. He was famous for sharing his harvest far and wide, giving away lots of vegetables to fellow gardeners, people at his church, and to residents at the Danebo retirement home. I was always amazed by his productive and weed free plot. Fred loved to garden and he shared this passion with others by his enthusiasm, encouragement and just simply by lending a hand.

– Joan Krey, Garden Coordinator

New Dowling Garden Website

<http://tcfreenet.org/org/lcc/commcg.html> Scroll to the Dowling Community Garden link near the top.

Free Food Preservation Classes

Canning Tomatoes

Tuesday, August 21, 7-9 PM

Freezing and Drying Vegetables and Herbs

Tuesday, August 28, 7-9 PM

Classes are held in the kitchen of Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 East 22nd Street, Minneapolis. For more information, contact the Home Gardening Project at 612/813.5522. Please RSVP for classes.