

# EcoSource Community Gardens

ISSUE 01 YEAR 09



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## ECOSOURCE

*Growing a Green Community*

### What is a community garden?

Our community gardens are shared spaces where people of all ages, cultural, religious and spiritual backgrounds can come together to grow food. Our gardens program hosts workshops and harvest festivals, donates fresh organic produce to local food banks, and participates in community events.

### Where can I garden?

EcoSource currently facilitates two community gardens in Mississauga – The Garden of the Valley in central Mississauga, and the Hillside Park Garden in Clarkson. Visit us online to get involved!

## Garden Heroes

Throughout the day – when all is quiet and only the birds are flying and bees are buzzing, the all too (mysterious) important Garden Hero can be found working away at your local community garden. Garden Heroes are very unassuming individuals; they are rarely seen at work and do not seek praise for their efforts. They come out to the garden and lend a hand where it appears that help is needed.



EXHIBIT A - Evidence of Garden Heroes working in the community plot – looks like it could be the work of the gardeners in plot #3

Garden Heroes are most commonly known for with their willingness to take on mundane tasks including weeding, watering and filling empty rain barrels as needed. They are typically the creative and resourceful type, able to source necessary garden materials and design inexpensive and effective solutions to everyday garden problems.

Due to the nature of the Garden Hero, many of them remain anonymous, but if you look closely, if you will find evidence of their efforts throughout the garden. There are a few Garden Heroes who have been 'seen in action' and would deserve an official thank, but that does not make the work of the unseen Garden Hero any less important.

To all the Garden Heroes we are sending out a heartfelt thank you - your hard work and dedication is greatly appreciated.

## Overcrowded Plots Inspire Garden Improvements at the Valleys

Early in the season a number of the garden plots at the Garden of the Valley quickly became overcrowded. As gardeners began to thin their garden plots, a few decided to try some experimental transplants.

Diane Naiker's excess calendula flowers inspired a garden beautification project. Together we transplanted 6 calendula plants along the central garden row.

Jan and Emilia, donated some extra tomato plants, and successfully transplant beets! Not to mention the anonymous tomatoes and cucumber - All the plants are doing very well and making a difference in the garden.

If at any time you have extra plants that you wish to donate, please contact us – we will be more than happy to take them – garden space pending of course.



Jan and Emilia's once homeless tomato plant thrives in the community plot

## Garden Inspired Adventures

Early spring arrives and the danger of frost is gone – seeds are sown and gardeners everywhere patiently wait. Weeks go by and the seedlings slowly grow and mature until one day BAM!



A box full of fresh vegetables harvested at The Valleys in 2008

The anticipated bountiful explosion of perfectly ripe

\*\*\* Please choose one or more of the following:

carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, leafy salad green, beet, turnips, beans, cabbages, collard green, sweet peas, peppers, eggplants, cauliflower..... you name it\*\*\* – the list goes on and on.

No matter what freshly harvest crop you are dealing with, the sudden abundance of any of these tasty treats is sure to inspire (or dictate) a few culinary adventures.

A couple gardeners share their garden inspired adventures.

## Alex and Breanna's Experiment with Cabbage

Faced with an excess of cabbage and knowing you can only eat so much cole-slaw before getting a stomach ache we decided to make kraut. Only one problem, we hadn't a clue how.

So like with any other home making quandary, when in doubt call Mom who then calls and Aunt who then logs on to the web and then the magic recipe comes back. You could have procured this information yourself but somehow it seems to have more authority when obtained through a viable homemaking network.

After harvesting the cabbage and having the technique now in hand they needed a good de-slugging and wash down. With cabbage adequately washed and the outer green leaves and core removed the cutting begins. Make sure to cut it into bite-sized pieces whether square or in ribbons just make sure the pieces aren't really large.

In my experiment I used 3 medium heads of cabbage. Put all the cut pieces into a large clean bowl. Cleanliness counts since you don't want to introduce the wrong type of bacteria into the process.

Cabbage Clean &Ready



Cutting the Cabbage



The Crock



Salted and in Crock



# Garden Fresh Mint Chutney

An abundance of garden fresh mint inspired Divina to share a recipe for her favorite **Mint Chutney**. This is an extremely versatile recipe and can be used in many ways. Try it as:

- A sandwich spread
- Combined with one cup of yogurt to make a delicious veggie dip
- Or mix 4 tbsp of the Mint Chutney with a cup of yogurt and half a cup of water for a cool after meal drink on a hot summer day for digestion

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups fresh mint leaves
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- 1 medium onion
- 1 green apple, seeds removed
- 6-8 flakes of garlic flakes / cloves
- 1 inch piece of ginger
- 1 or 2 green chilies
- 2 tbsp lemon juice (or to taste)  
or ½ green mango flesh, peeled
- 1 cup coriander leaves with stalks (optional)

Combine all the ingredients in a blender, and puree (adding water as necessary) until a smooth paste forms.



Red Baron bunching onions from the community plots – unrelated to Mint Chutney, but isn't it beautiful! Perhaps it would be useful in making a colourful chutney!



Sprinkle fine salt onto the cabbage, about 1 tablespoon per head of cabbage. It's better to be on the light side I think.

Once the salt is coating the cabbage you need to put into your container. You need a crock or large jar that you can fit a lid down inside of. (see pic. 5). Pack it in tight and cover with a lid pressed down over the cabbage. Weight the lid down with something heavy. I used a jar full of water. Make sure the jar is cleaned first. The lid need not fit tightly it is just to hold down the cabbage so it does not float once the water starts to seep from the fermenting cabbage.

The water will start to seep out of the cabbage right away and if it does not make enough water in 24 hours to cover itself then add 1 tablespoon of salt to about a cup of water and add that to the crock so that the cabbage is completely covered with water. If the cabbage is not covered it will rot instead of ferment. You can cover your crock with a clean towel but at no time seal it up, especially if you use a jar. The pressure created from fermentation could result in a cabbage explosion.

Keep an eye on it over the next few days to make sure the water level stays over the cabbage. In about 4 days you can give a taste, I'm told 2 weeks is when it hits peak tastiness. After that you need to think about pickling it or having a kraut party. Mine tasted great after about 4 days. Good Luck! →

Covered and Weighted with Water Filled Jar



The Sleeping Cabbage



4 Days Later: The Cabbage Emerges



Tasty Goodness



### \*\*\*Later in the Week Update\*\*\*

The cabbage was good for a few days but I think it became contaminated with a spoon or something because it turned into something awful, and the trash chute was out of commission so this morning the 28th floor was being overrun by an unimaginable cabbage smell coming from the trash room. I hope it got fixed today or we may not be able to stand it.

# Plentiful Garden Vegetables!

Looking around the garden there is no disguising the fact that zucchinis are here in full force! Here are some interesting facts about the summer squash for you to enjoy. Did you know?



Although zucchinis are tastiest when young and tender, NEVER FEAR overgrown, tough skinned zucchini is still edible and actually perfect for baking! Speaking of baking check out Sarah Homer's recipe below!

The name *zucchini* is derived from the Italian word *zucchino*, meaning small squash. They are also commonly known by their French name courgette.

Zucchini is part of the Cucurbitaceae or gourd family which includes other well known fruits like cucumbers, watermelon, musk melon, squash and even pumpkins!

Zucchini Flowers are edible!

Zucchini come in a variety of shapes, colours and sizes, but they do not differ much in taste.

Zucchini is a good source of Vitamins A and C, Potassium, and is low in calories.

It is believed that zucchini traveled to Europe from the New World – believe it or not, they did not become popular in their native North America until they were reintroduced by Italian immigrants in the 1950s.

## Plants on Double<sup>(quadruple?)</sup> Duty

It's hard to miss the brightly coloured calendula and nasturtiums flowers throughout the garden. Believe it or not, these plants are actually working harder than you think.

Firstly, they look nice

Secondly, they attract birds and pollinating insects to the garden

Thirdly, they are both edible flowers. For the adventurous gardener, the nasturtium leaves and flowers have peppery flavor, while the calendula flowers can be used as a colourful garnish on a salad.

Lastly, they act as a catch crop. When planted together with other vegetable plants, insect pest like aphids are more likely to choose to munch on these flowers as opposed to the adjacent vegetable crops.

And there you have it.



Nasturtiums in Bloom

## ...What to do with all that Zucchini?

Sarah Homer has come to the rescue with **Pineapple Zucchini Bread!**  
(24 muffins or 2 loaves)

3 eggs  
1 cup oil  
2 cups sugar  
2 tsp vanilla  
2 cups coarsely shredded unpeeled zucchini  
1 can crushed pineapple drained  
3 ¼ cups flour  
2 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp baking powder  
1 ½ tsp cinnamon  
¾ tsp nutmeg  
1 cup raisins  
1 cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 350°F

Combine flour, baking soda, salt, baking powder and spices and set aside.

In a separate bowl, beat eggs with an electric mixer slowly adding oil, sugar and vanilla. Beat until thick and foamy. With a spoon, stir in zucchini and pineapple. Stir in the dry ingredients until combined then add raisins and nuts.

**For 24 Muffins:**

Fill paper lined muffin tins. Bake for 24 - 30 min.

**For 2 Loaves:**

Bake for 45 - 60 min.

Eat and enjoy! Serve when cool for a delicious snack for all. These freeze well for later.



## A Garden is Born

Breaking ground in July? Isn't it a little late to be starting a garden? Can you still grow anything? I don't think these gardeners will be harvesting much this season – you'd hear the skeptics say. Despite the reservations, with the pathways mulched and the native wildflower garden in place, the eager Hillside gardeners got to work.

### Garden Fresh Stakes!

As many of you may have noticed, the community plot at the Garden of the Valley suddenly sprouted some very, very nice tomato stakes – compliments of gardener Tom from plot #23.

After a brief conversation in the garden with Tom on a Tuesday afternoon, we returned to the garden on Saturday morning to find each of the tomato plants had a stake to support it.

We can't thank you enough for your quick action and generous donation. The stakes will be used and reused for many years to come.



Staked tomato plant



July 1<sup>st</sup> marks the launch of Hillside garden - Gardeners work to mulch the new garden's pathways and native wildflower bed


Since the garden opening just a few weeks ago, Hillside's gardeners have harvested numerous crops including lettuce, tomatoes, zucchinis, eggplants and fresh herbs just to name a few.

Give yourselves a pat on the back Hillside Gardeners! You are the garden's pioneers – the guinea pigs (if you will) bravely exploring new territory, as you work to establish the new garden. It is hard to believe how much you have been able to do in such a short amount of time. Your hard work and dedication is very clearly illustrated by the bounty of your garden. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the **Wal Mart Evergreen Green Grants Program** in supporting this exciting new garden's first season!

With the unusually cool weather of 2009 working in their favor, and garden centers liquidating remaining stock, the empty garden plots were quickly filled with the ever important hot season seedlings of various shapes and sizes (and quality) and seeded with quick growing radishes, beans and salad greens as well as late season carrots, beets and peas.

Hillside quickly evolved into a lush, highly productive, community garden. Today, the yellowing 50 cent peppers, and spindly neglected office seedlings are not to be recognized – they look like a million bucks and are making babies!

## Making a Difference



A listening ear,  
Food to fill the gap,  
Connections to community services

A place where everyone  
is welcome

**Thank you so much.  
Your donation makes all the  
difference.**

Sincerely,  
**The Staff and Clients of  
The Compass**

310 Lakeshore Rd. West  
Mississauga, ON L5H 1G8  
Tel: 905-274-9309  
www.thecompass.ca

Over the course of this garden season, The Compass has gratefully accepted copious amounts of fresh lettuce, green beans, bunching onions, beets, and cucumbers from the community plot, as well as a number of zucchinis that were generously donated by a garden member overwhelmed by her plot's bounty.

Please don't let surplus produce go to waste. The Compass is always looking for donation of fresh seasonal produce. If your garden plot is more productive than you, your family and friends can handle, remember there are those in need who would gladly take the extras off your hands.

# Mad Bees Attack at the Garden of the Valley!

Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> started like any other day, sitting at my desk taking a look at the day's newest e-mails and noticed "Subject: Mad Bees Attack"..... \*double click\*

Hi Monika/Carolyn,

Just a quick note to let you guys to know to **stay away from the compost**. I decided to be a nice guy last night and turn the compost. As I was really getting into it I turned over a large nest of yellow jackets. Luckily it was a bit cool last night so I was able to fight the good fight (also know as running faster than Carl Lewis) and get away with only a few bites. Probably provided some laughs if anyone was watching my new dance moves and enjoyed being high on antihistamines. All humour aside please stay away and post a sign, these guys were angry and I'm not sure if they moved on after I destroyed their nest.

Best Regards,

Alex Blackman



Luckily, Alex made a full and speedy recovery from the unexpected attack – Alex, your good sprit and humour following this unfortunate experience must be recognized! This recall of events is simply hilarious – thank you so much for letting us share it with the rest of the gardeners. Although the yellow jackets didn't appreciate your random act of kindness – we at the garden certainly did!

## Bean Keepers



Future Bean keeper?

Photo By Elsa Galan

The Garden of the Valley's action packed Children's Garden Day inspired a number of children to become bean keepers. At the end of the day, with seed balls in hand, the children set forth to fulfill their bean keeping duties.

As a bean keeper, the main goal is to grow bean plants and successfully harvest bean seeds so that they can be planted to following year. A bean keeper must:

1. Plant the bean
2. Take good care of the growing bean plant
3. Leave some of the bean pods to dry and ripen on the vine
4. Collect the dry ripe bean pods and save them for next spring
5. Wait until spring
6. Start all over again!

For kids of all ages, this is fun way to learn how things grow. Although the young gardeners do not realize it, they actually are playing a very important role in preserving the biodiversity of vegetable crops.

## Innovative and Effective

Whoever made the wooden plugs/holders for the water barrels is to be commended. The Wormwood/driftwood feel is very esthetically pleasing.

I wondered why they were there at first, and then I realized how they held in the hoses from falling out. If I find them on the ground, I put them back in.

It is such a simple idea: take the plug out, fill the watering can, and then slip the plug back in.

Thank you to the artistic person who made these!! Diane #4, the Garden of the Valley.



# Growing Tomatoes

To Stake and Prune or Not to Stake and Prune? That is the million dollar question. Is it really that important? In my opinion staking is always necessary but pruning can be optional. Here are some facts to help you decide.

## Pros:

### Reduces likelihood of disease

Many tomato diseases are soil borne; staking keeps the plants off the ground. Pruning promotes air circulation, reducing moisture in turn preventing the onset of many diseases.

### Produce fruit earlier, and keep giving longer

A sprawling plant invests a great deal of energy into growing leaves and vines as appose to producing quality fruit.

### Physically Supports Plants

Tomato plants are not that sturdy. Without proper support they can break from the weight of their own fruit, or experience serious damage from strong winds and heavy rains

### Can Grow More Plants in Less Space

Staking tomatoes makes use of vertical garden space, allowing you to grow more tomato plants in a small garden space!

## Cons:

### Time Consuming Process

The process can become quite time consuming. Suckers should be pinched out regularly, and tomato plants should be tied to the plant in intervals of about 12 inches.

### Resulting Plants are less Lush

Pruning will result in a plant with fewer leaves and stems, especially if pruning to a single stem. Gardeners can choose to go 'light', strategically leaving multiple stems – this option offers the best of both worlds.

### Garden Stakes are Unattractive

Some may feel that garden stakes look unnatural and unattractive, but with a little creativity, this problem can easily be solved.

### Plant Disease

Unstaked tomato plants sprawl on the soil and are more susceptible to many common foliage diseases

## Attention Non-Pruners!

For those of who shudder at the thought of a constant battle against suckers, and continuously anchoring growing vines to stakes Determinate tomato varieties are probably right for you.

Unlike indeterminate plants which keep growing and sprawling until something kills them, determinate varieties are bushy plants which rarely exceed 3 feet in height. They grow thick stems with flower clusters on the end of each branch. Once the flowers form the plant stops growing.

Their short stature means you'll only need to tie these to their stakes once or twice, and they generally require no pruning!

There is a catch – because the plant stops growing after the first cluster of flowers is formed, the plant will produce all its fruits just one, and you guessed it, all at the same time.

A small price to pay I think.



## How to Prune/Sucker/Pinch a Tomato



Figure 1. First and Second Leader



Figure 2. Suckers should be removed from the main axile

Here are some general guidelines

Once your baby tomato is in the ground, match it with a stake (the perfect stake is about 6 feet tall, placed at least 3 inches away from the plant, and driven 1 foot into the ground)

When the tomato plants are 2-3 feet tall, they will start to produce suckers. Suckers should be pinched off the main leaf axis (fig.2) –you want only leaves coming off the stems, not more stems. Check for new suckers every 8-10 days.

Some gardeners recommend preserving the 'first sucker', which is the sucker that forms below the first cluster of flowers (fig.1). This sucker is then tied to the stake just like the lead.

## Please Note:

Only work with tomatoes when they are dry. Tomatoes hate being wet, and excess moisture allows for easy transmission of diseases. Wet tomatoes can quickly become sick tomatoes.

Suckers should be pinched off the plant by hand. Using the same knife or scissors for many plants can spread disease.

To maximize the harvest, 30 days before the last frost date (or once the plant has exceeded the height of its stake, snap off the leader – instead of allowing the plant to try and produce more fruit, its energy will go to ripening existing fruits.

# Summer of 2009

## Hillside's Volunteers

We would like to thank Hillside Garden's volunteers – our two favorite Master gardeners in the making, Diane and Martha.

They have been on board since day one helping to plant and weed the wildflower garden and community plots, stake the countless tomatoes, and help with general garden maintenance.

We would also like to thank the two most energetic people in the world, Sue and Richard. Your willingness to help at garden events and take on the gardens' less popular tasks is greatly appreciated.

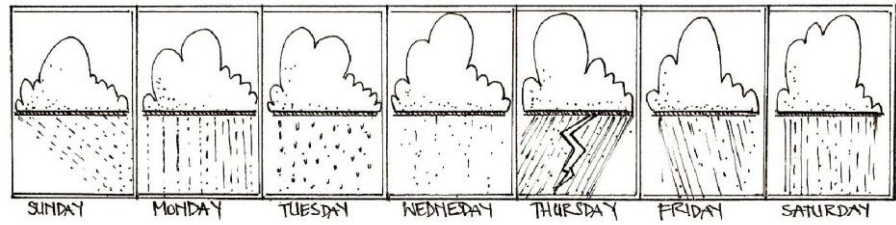
Your ongoing support and dedication is very much appreciated and you have truly the time in the garden more enjoyable.

My Dear Community Gardeners,

The unusual summer months of 2009 have flown by and September is just around the corner marking the end of my time officially spent in the garden.

First of all, I would like to all the Gardeners of the Valley and at Hillside for your hard work and dedication to this project – without you, there would be no garden. I was inspired by your creative garden solutions and your ongoing enthusiasm. You have all successfully transformed a tiny piece of land into a productive organic food garden while creating a bountiful oasis in the middle of the city.

### YOUR JUNE & JULY 2009 TYPICAL 7 DAY FORECAST



Monika Kokoszka

I would also like to thank Carolyn Bailey and EcoSource for giving me this unique opportunity. This has been an amazing experience, the garden really is a place to learn, laugh and grow. I have learned so much from your garden adventures and hope that I have also inspired a few.

Until the start of my next endeavor, I will continue to work at the garden, this time as a volunteer. I will always remember this as the summer that was stormy but fruitful – not just the vegetables.

Happy Gardening!

Monika.

EcoSource is an innovative environmental organization that empowers the community to become more environmentally responsible through creative public education.

The Community Gardens and School Learning Gardens Program is led by EcoSource in partnership with the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel (MIAG) and the City of Mississauga, and is generously funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This program supports EcoSource Elementary Green Schools to design and plant outdoor teaching spaces, and connects communities with neighbourhood spaces to grow fresh organic food.



Sun Flower Photo By Diane Naiker



THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO



ECOSOURCE Growing a Green Community



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