

# DIGGING IN

At Troy Community Gardens  
Madison, WI

## Notes from a Beginner

By Carrie Kilman

Early March. Glancing out our living room window, it's hard to believe spring will ever come again. The lake is frozen; people walk with their faces down, bundled and scarved; the sky hangs a hard, perpetual gray. Last October, before saying the end-of-season goodbye to our garden, I planted eight rows of garlic and shallot bulbs to wait out the winter. Now, with two feet of snow packed against the dirt, the day I'll pull them up feels ages away.

This weekend Joe went down to the basement to get some potatoes left over from last fall. We thought we'd stored them in a dark and cool and dry enough spot, but when he pulled the paper bag from its hiding place, we found all but a handful had sprouted. Useless.

It wasn't just that, but a combination of things, including the fact the garden is a 20-minute drive from our house, that inspired Joe to raise the question of not gardening this year. It was his idea in the first place. I wouldn't say I was unwilling, but I was deeply skeptical: We knew nothing about gardens or dirt or composting; we hardly owned any tools; it was a rare good week when I could carve enough time to walk to the

farmer's market and buy produce displayed neatly in their bins — where on earth would we find time to garden? But now, after one and a half seasons, I'm the one who's fallen in love with the process. Joe loves the results, and the theory behind learning to grow your own food; but I suspect he sees gardening mostly as an enjoyable chore.

Last year I might've agreed with him — we'd had the garden for half of a season, and it was hard work on a very short learning curve. But this weekend, it wasn't up for discussion. I can't wait for my house to overflow

again with vegetables in their bulging reds and shiny greens, or my kitchen to smell like fresh, wet dirt after bringing in the first big bag of tomatoes or lettuce or corn.

Because, to my own surprise, I'm starting to know what I'm doing.

The past two summers, we were lucky to get seeds to grow. We moved blindly from sprout to table, no safety net of prior experience guiding our way. I never thought I'd get excited over seed catalogs.

Now here we are, moving an inch or two away from being true beginners, toward a slightly more certain center. And when I look outside my window and see a frozen lake and a dull gray sky,



Photo by Carrie Kilman

## WORK DAY

**SATURDAY**  
**June 19**  
**9 AM - 12 NOON**

If it is raining on June 19, the work day will be changed to June 20, 9 a.m.

Hnub ua haujlwm pab dawb yog 6/19/10, 9 a.m. txog 12 teev tavsus, yog los nag muab pauv rau 6/20/10 9 a.m.

### Día de Trabajo

El Sábado 19 de junio 9 a.m. - 12 medio día  
Si llegara a llover el 19 de junio, el día de trabajo será cambiado para el día 20 de junio 9 a.m.

nothing makes me happier to imagine than green fields at mid-day and hot sun on your neck and an ache in your muscles that says you've done something good and real.

*Carrie Kilman, her partner, Joe Kollar, and their dog, Milo, have been gardening at Troy since 2008. To read more of Carrie's writing about her gardening experiences, visit the new Community GroundWorks blog at <http://www.troygardens.org/who-we-are/blog>. Turn the page for a listing of resources for gardeners and details about our upcoming **Gardener Q&A event on June 19.***

# Gardening Resources

In an effort to help new and returning Troy gardeners have successful and productive gardening experiences, the Steering/Leadership Committee for the Community Gardens recently decided to make available a few donated gardening books and print outs of selected University of Wisconsin Extension publications. These will be located on the top shelf of the bookcase in the yellow garden tool shed. These materials are for gardeners to reference and should not leave the property. Please place the material back on the shelf when you are finished with it.

In addition, we have listed several other resources for gardeners below. And, don't miss our first ever **Gardener Q & A Event at 11 a.m. on June 19** (see inset for details).

If you know of other gardening resources that are useful, please contact Jill Schneider (see inset for contact info), and she can list those as part of the resource material in the shed or include the information in subsequent communications to gardeners.

## Basic Gardening Books

These books can be checked out from the library and often can be found used at local booksellers.

- *The Wisconsin Garden Guide* by Jerry Minnich
- *Square Foot Gardening* by Mel Bartholomew
- *Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening* by Anna Kruger, Maria Rodale, and Pauline Pears

## UW Extension Publications

Publications about growing vegetables and their common diseases, disorders and pests can be printed for free from the web site listed below or purchased for a minimal cost by calling 877-947-7827.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/fruitveggies/VeggiePubs.htm#GeneralTechniques>

## Wisconsin Public Radio's *Garden Talk* . . . and more

Wisconsin Public Radio show's *Garden Talk* hosted by Larry Meiller is a weekly call-in show for gardening questions (airs Fri. at 11 a.m.; rebroadcast Sat. at 7 a.m.). Each week a different guest expert with a gardening specialty joins Larry and answers the questions of listeners. Some guests are horticulture professors who can answer a wide variety of general gardening questions. Others specialize in lawns, trees, fruits,

vegetables, native plants, organic gardening and more. You can find Wisconsin Public Radio at 970 AM, or you can stream the broadcast at their web site [www.wpr.org](http://www.wpr.org).

And, if you are busy during these times, you can listen to an archive of the show available at their web site by clicking on Larry Meiller under WPR Shows and then on Audio Archives. Here you will also find archives of Larry's other shows, including when Phil Pellitteri is a guest on the show (about once a month). Phil is a well-known UW-Extension Entomologist and can answer garden insect questions in addition to general insect questions.

## Gardener Q & A Event June 19, 11 a.m.

Are you a new Troy gardener looking for someone to answer your burning gardening questions? Do you wish you had access to gardeners with years of experience? If so, you're in luck. On **June 19 at 11 a.m.** please join us for a question and answer gathering where experienced Troy gardeners will be available to share their gardening wisdom and methods. You will have an opportunity to ask questions of long-time gardeners and discuss what methods they have found to work at Troy Community Gardens.

June 19 is also our monthly work day, so if you need to earn volunteer hours yet, consider joining us at 9 a.m. to work a couple hours and then take a break at 11 a.m. for the Q & A gathering.

We will meet at the picnic tables near the yellow tool shed. If you have any questions, contact Jill Schneider at 241-1821 or [schneiderjill@charter.net](mailto:schneiderjill@charter.net).

## Olbrich's Schumacher Library

This a great resource for gardening related books and magazines. If you are a member of Olbrich Botanical Society, you can check out items for free. Members and non-members may use the resources daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons during June, July and August gardeners can call, email or stop in with their questions. Volunteers and staff can help answer questions using the resources available at the library.

Phone 608-246-5805 or email [ljacobson@cityofmadison](mailto:ljacobson@cityofmadison) or stop in during these times if you have a question. Olbrich Gardens is located at 3330 Atwood Avenue on Madison's east side.

## Madison Area Community Gardeners Email Listserv

This listserv was created a couple years ago for the purpose of sharing community garden related information and to serve as a question and answer

forum. Though there isn't a lot of activity on the listserv, if more of us join it and start asking questions, it might turn into a great way to share gardening advice with many more gardeners.

To join the listserv visit <http://groups.google.com/group/madison-area-community-gardeners>.

## Fellow Gardeners

And, lastly, don't forget your plot neighbors. Chances are someone near you has been gardening for years and would be happy to chat about the lessons they've learned. Say hello to them the next time you are at the Gardens. You might even get to know them well enough to ask them to water your plot when you go on vacation!

## A few more reminders . . .

### No Mint at Gardens

Mint is a very invasive plant if not kept in containers, and with the warmer spring weather this year, it has spread unabated in many areas of the Gardens.

Whether you planted it or not, if your plot has mint in it, please dig it out as soon as possible and dispose of it off site.

### Use of Grills at the Gardens

Recently, gardeners have been taking advantage of the beautiful weather to get their gardening done and at the same time grilling out in their plots. The Steering/Leadership Committee, in conjunction with Community GroundWorks staff, decided it was time to set guidelines regarding the use of grills at the Gardens. The following guidelines have been established for the use of grills on the property:

1) Grills can be used at the Gardens but only on open grassy areas and not within plots where there may be dry hay

and other combustibles; 2) Grills and lighter fluid, if used, must be taken home and not left in plots due to potential vandalism; and 3) Hot or cold coals should not be disposed of anywhere on the property or within trash or recycling bins. Coals should be removed from the property with the grills.

### Do Not Drive Onto the Property

Gardeners should not drive personal cars or trucks onto the property, including via the access road through the woodlands on the west edge of the land. This road is for Community GroundWorks vehicles and delivery vehicles for compost, leaves and hay.

### Respect Your Gardening Neighbors

As a courtesy to other gardeners, please do not enter plots that do not belong to you. If you would like to report an issue with a fellow gardener's plot such as banned plants, weeds, tall plants shading your plot or a disease/pest prob-

lem, please notify the Plot Monitoring Subcommittee by emailing [plotmonitoring@gmail.com](mailto:plotmonitoring@gmail.com) or putting a note in the mailbox on the north side of the yellow garden shed. If the issue is urgent, please contact the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409, and the concern will be passed on to the appropriate Gardens volunteer.

### Use of Wood Chips Not Allowed

The piles of wood chips located on the property are not for gardeners' use. In fact, the rules state that wood chips are not allowed, and this rule exists for two reasons: 1) wood chips that get incorporated into the soil tend to deplete nitrogen from the soil; 2) wood chips may not be wanted by a gardener who inherits your plot in the future.

If you have a plot with wood chips, you will not be asked to remove them; just don't add to them. Hay can be used for paths and the delivered compost makes an excellent soil amendment.

**\$\$\$ Plant Sale on May 30 Raises \$765 for Community Gardens \$\$\$**

**Leftover plants were donated to Food Pantry Gardens. Great job Plant Sale Subcommittee!**

## Olbrich's Home Garden Tour to Include Troy Gardens

Experience a world of garden wonders on Olbrich's Home Garden Tour. Tour private home gardens in northeast Madison neighborhoods and collect ideas for your own garden on **Friday, July 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, July 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Many of the gardens on this year's tour creatively include edible plants. Some gardeners chose to plant a large vegetable garden, while others have simply chosen to add vegetables or herbs in containers. Also see creative patios, soothing water features, and bold, attention-grabbing plants; wander through intimate, shady backyards or stroll through sunny areas dotted with vegetables.

During the tour, enjoy a stop at Troy Community Gardens to see first-hand how gardening can be a community effort. Wander through the community gardens, prairie, edible landscapes, maple woodlands, and the organic Community Supported Agriculture farm. Pastries and sandwiches will be available for purchase onsite from Manna Café during the tour.

Pre-tour tickets are \$10 for Olbrich Botanical Society members and \$12 for the general public. Tickets the day of the tour are \$14 for members and \$16 for the general public.

Olbrich's Home Garden Tour is sponsored by the Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association; Jung Garden Center; K2 Graniteworks; Klein's Floral & Greenhouses; Landscape Designs, Inc. Steve Lesch; Madison Area Master Gardeners Association, Inc.; and ZDA. Sponsors will be on-site to answer questions at some gardens on the tour.

Tickets are available at the Greeter Desk at Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Fellys Flowers, and Jung Garden Centers. For more information and ticket outlet locations visit [www.olbrich.org](http://www.olbrich.org) or call 608-246-4550.

*If you are interested in volunteering at Troy Gardens during the tour, please contact Christie Ralston at 240-0409 or [christie@troygardens.org](mailto:christie@troygardens.org). We need people*

*to serve as docents answering questions and directing visitors to different places and/or features at Troy Gardens. Background knowledge of Troy Gardens is helpful, but for those without it, there will likely be a short training session the week before the event. Time spent volunteering can be applied to your 3 hour/plot volunteer time commitment.*



Photo by Louella Turvey

## Your Gardening Body Work Shop held May 15

About 20 gardeners gathered in the quiet prairie on a beautiful spring morning to attend the Your Gardening Body Work Shop taught by Anne Asher. Attendees came away with a better awareness of their body mechanics and how to use this new awareness while performing routine gardening tasks. Anne was even able to provide some one-on-one time after the work shop to address individual gardener's situations and questions.

Community GroundWorks would like thank Anne for generously donating her time to teach this work shop and the session for the Troy Community Farm interns in early June.

Anne Asher is a body worker and movement therapist. She created the Your Gardening Body work shop to help empower people as they sustain the earth. She blogs at Your Gardening Body: <http://www.yourgardeningbody.com>.



## Olbrich Botanical Society to Host Art Exhibit Featuring Troy Community Gardens

July 4 - September 26

Artists from the north side will be displaying works of art in various mediums inspired by Troy Gardens, including the community gardens, woodlands, prairie and hiking paths. The exhibit can be seen in the Evjue Commons at Olbrich Botanical Gardens on Sundays 11 am to 5 pm. Admission is free. A public opening reception will be held Thursday, July 8 from 5 pm to 7 pm. Olbrich is located at 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison.



## Upcoming Events

### Community Gardens Work Day

Sat., Jun. 19, 9 am - 12 noon

### Gardener Q & A Event

Sat., Jun. 19, 11 am - 12 noon (see details on Page 2)

### Opening Reception for Art Exhibit at Olbrich

Thurs., Jul. 8, 5 - 7 pm (see details above)

### Olbrich's Home Garden Tour (including Troy!)

Fri. & Sat., Jul. 9 & 10 (see details on Page 3)

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, contact Christie Ralston (see Page 3).

### Community Gardens Work Day

Sat., Jul. 17, 9 am - 12 noon

### Savor the Summer Festival (save the date)

Sat., Aug. 7 (Details will be in July newsletter)

### Outstanding in the Field Event at Troy Gardens

Mon., Aug. 9, 4 pm (Details will be in July newsletter. See <http://outstandinginthefield.com> to learn more about Outstanding in the Field.)

For details about these events, please call the Community GroundWorks office at 240-0409.

## Use of New Hose Hangers

You may have noticed the installation of new hose hangers adjacent to Sections B and C. Please take care when hanging the hoses up, so the loops of hose are put up one next to another. When the hose is removed by the next person, it is less likely to be tangled.

If you have feedback regarding these new hose hangers and their use, please contact Kurt Schneider at 237-8024 or [kschneider@badgercab.com](mailto:kschneider@badgercab.com).

## Aluminum Can Collection Total



Since we've started collecting aluminum cans, we've raised nearly \$600! Keep 'em coming. You can bring your cans to each Saturday work day (3rd Saturday of the month) or place them on the north side of the yellow shed in a sealed plastic garbage bag. Much of the money raised is spent on fuel and parts for the power equipment used at work days.