

WTCGG

Washington  
Township  
Community  
Garden

## NEWSLETTER: How Does Your Garden Grow?

**T**HIS YEAR, I am really looking forward to gardening! Yes, last year I had Plot #30...and still do... but those of you who came by to see my plot might have been disappointed. It did not look like I spent any time on my own plot. And you would have been right. Don't get me wrong... I did manage to grow some green beans, lettuce and a few tomatoes but the rest was a big disappointment. I had been reading about gardening and collecting books at yard sales for years. But did I really know anything about gardening?

**W**hen I went to the garden, there was always something else to take care of. My poor plot was the last thing I had time for. How was the water...was there enough in the tank? Where were the tools? My garden cart was RIP with a broken wheel! How many plots were left? How was I to make sure I did not assign the same plot twice? (I managed) Do we need cardboard? More chips? We need a shed! PNC! I could go on but you get it.

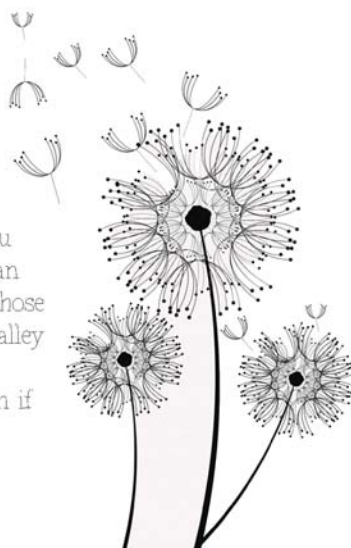
**W**ell, It WAS a busy year!. We—all of us—got a lot done, learned a lot (I hope) and the result is the garden is looking great! There are still some little projects that I won't be able to resist doing, but my little plot will see a lot more of me this year. I PROMISE! - Diane Muenzen

## Get weedy for the needy!

Show of hands: Who enjoys weeding their garden? Nobody? Well, you're in luck, because the Washington Township Community Garden is teaming up with LocalShare's food rescue project to benefit hungry families in our area while getting rid of your weeds for you!

LocalShare volunteers will weed your garden plot in exchange for a small donation of the produce you grow. If you're going on vacation or grow more than you need, let us know and we'll make good use of those veggies! All produce collected will go to the Long Valley Food Pantry, which has a high need for donations. Contact Kate Munning at [kate.munning@gmail.com](mailto:kate.munning@gmail.com) if you're interested in participating.

[localsharenj.org](http://localsharenj.org)



### Garden Chores For June 2014

- From the North Country  
Maturing Gardener website.

*Plant your window boxes.*

*Thin seedlings.*

*Use balanced, organic fertilizers  
around flowers.*

*Stake tall perennials and  
tomatoes.*

*Use a pine needle mulch for  
blueberries.*

*After the iris are done blooming  
they can be divided.*

*Gladiolus corms can be planted.*

*Dead-head (prune off) spent  
flowers from plants and shrubs.*

*You may still plant container  
grown shrubs.*

*Plant broccoli seed for fall  
harvest.*

*House plants can soon be moved  
outside to a shady, protected  
spot.*

*These same houseplants can  
be lightly fed with half strength  
fertilizer.*

*Mulch perennials and roses to  
keep down weeds and conserve  
moisture.*

*Any annuals can be safely set out  
now.*

*If you have an amaryllis, now would  
be the time to move it outside.*

*Pinch the leading stems of your  
chrysanthemum's to encourage  
them to be bushier and have more  
blossoms. Continue doing this  
every 6 inches or so, as they grow.*

## June Gardening Chores in The Vegetable Garden

By Margaret Roach

**CONTINUE SOWING** carrots, beets, radishes, lettuce, dill. With salad greens, select heat-resistant varieties now for best results, and sow small amounts every 10 days. The shadier side of a tomato row or your pole beans, for instance, is nice for lettuce right now...not baking sun.

**DIRECT-SOW A SHORT ROW OF BUSH BEANS** every two weeks, and also sow pole beans for an even later crop if you didn't yet. Did summer and winter squash, cucumbers, melons go in? It's time.

**SWEET POTATOES**, despite their heat-loving nature, can grow in all 50 states, and late spring is the perfect planting time.

**DID YOU HILL UP** your white potatoes?

**YOU HAVEN'T MISSED** tomato time. These ambitious creatures will catch up and bear even if they go in July 4th in my area (but Memorial Day or early June is best). Plant deep, and use heavy cages. Eggplants and peppers should be in the ground early this month, too, and too-small tomato cages can be recycled to hold these guys up.



*When the world wearies, and society ceases to satisfy, there is always the garden.  
~ Minnie Aumonier*

## OUR Ultimate COMPOST BIN

We've had our eyes on this compost bin design since we began our community garden. We found the design at [OrganicGardening.com](http://OrganicGardening.com) and thanks to three of our gardeners (Tom Kietrys, Peter Cooper & Chip Autry) and talented handyman, Mike Lineburg, it has been built. Tom says it took about 2 1/2 hours most of which was installing the chicken wire.

**\*\*\*Our old compost area will be disassembled in the next few weeks. Please!!! Do not put any more materials in it. You are free to add to the new compost bin on the FAR LEFT only. Please add only material that will reasonably and safely decompose. If you are new to the concept of composting, this would include leaves, plant material, coffee grounds, vegetable scraps from home, and exclude thick branches, pieces of lumber, diseased plant material, weeds that have gone to seed, plastic wrappers, rocks, etc. May seem obvious, but I have already seen lumber in the new bin!**

**WE WILL BE USING THE COLD COMPOST METHOD SO NOBODY NEEDS TO TURN THE PILE.**

**\*\*\*Please read the composting article on the next page so you know what to do if you want to use the compost bins.**



# How To Compost:

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## HOT & COLD METHODS

From: *The Old Farmer's Almanac website*

Did you know that there are “hot” and “cold” methods of composting? Read on to learn more.

Composting is a method of recycling naturally decomposing matter. Ingredients, size of the pile, local weather conditions, and your maintenance habits will affect the outcome. Note that shredded leaves, chipped wood, and chopped food scraps generally decompose more quickly than whole or large pieces.

### Hot, or Active Composting

The quickest way to produce rich garden humus is to create a hot, or active, compost pile. It is called “hot” because it can reach an internal temperature of 160°F (140°F is best) and “active” because it destroys, essentially by cooking, weed seeds and disease-causing organisms. The size of the pile, the ingredients, and their arrangements in layers are key to reaching that desired outcome.

**Size:** A hot compost pile should be a 3-foot cube, at minimum; a 4-foot cube is preferred. The pile will shrink as the ingredients decompose.

**Ingredients:**

- One part high-carbon materials (shredded, dry plant matter such as leaves, twigs, woody stems, corn cobs, shredded newspaper.)
- One part high-nitrogen green plant matter (green plant and vegetable refuse, grass clippings, weeds, trimmings, kitchen scraps—but avoid meat, dairy, and fat) and good-quality soil.
- Pile the ingredients like a layer cake, with 2 to 4 carbon materials on the bottom. Next, add a layer of soil. Add 2 to 4 inches of nitrogen-based materials, followed by soil. Repeat until the pile reaches 2 to 3 feet high.
- Soak the pile at its start and water periodically; its consistency should be that of a damp sponge.
- Add air to the interior of the pile by punching holes in its sides or by pushing 1- to 2-foot lengths of pipe into it.
- Check the temperature of the pile with a compost thermometer or an old kitchen thermometer. A temperature of 110°F to 140°F is desirable. If you have no heat or insufficient heat, add nitrogen in the form of soft green ingredients or organic fertilizer. If a foul odor emanates from the pile, flip the compost to introduce more air. And consider: Did you add meat or dairy products? Remove and discard them, if possible.
- Once a week, or as soon as the center starts to cool down, turn the pile. Move materials from the center of the pile to the outside. (For usable compost in 1 to 3 months, turn it every other week; for finished compost within a month, turn it every couple of days.)

### US! >>>> Cold, or Passive Composting <<<<<<

Cold, or passive, composting uses many of the same type of ingredients as hot composting and requires less effort from the gardener, yet the decomposition takes substantially longer—a year or more.

To cold compost, pile organic materials (leaves, grass clippings, soil, manures—but avoid dog, cat, and human waste) as you find or accumulate them. Bury kitchen scraps in the center of the pile to deter insects and animals. Avoid adding meat, dairy, and fat. Also avoid weeds; cold compost piles do not reach high temperatures and do not kill weed seeds. (In fact, weeds may germinate in a cold pile.)

## Did You Know?

The early leaves and curling tendrils of the pea plant are edible and make a pretty addition to salads and stir-fries. Take a taste to be sure the stems aren't too tough; if so, just use the tender leaves, which have a faint pea flavor.

Young garlic that's harvested before the garlic bulb develops underground is called green garlic and is a spring-time delicacy. From a distance, green garlic looks just like scallions, but get a little closer and there's no mistaking that familiar garlic scent. The mild flavor means you can put a lot in a dish without fear of overdoing it; green garlic is exceptionally delicious in a pureed soup.

Some people report feeling a dry, chalky sensation on the teeth and on the roof of the mouth when eating spinach. Agricultural scientists say that this comes from the leaf's high concentration of oxalic acid.

The word mesclun comes from the Latin word mescluma, which means mixture. The hallmark of mesclun is a balance of colors, textures and flavors that range from sweet and tender to the bitter and crisp to peppery and pungent.



Traditional mesclun is foraged from the wild and includes tender shoots, leaves and flowers of edible plants and herbs that grow on the sunny side of the Mediterranean climate. Some gourmet mixes contain as many as 30 different plants. These mixes need the simplest dressing to make a good salad. *Source: Fine cooking in season: your guide to choosing and preparing the season's best/editors and contributors of Fine Cooking. The Taunton Press 2011.*



## Dressing To Showcase Fresh Lettuces and Greens

RECIPE:

### Spicy ginger-lime-garlic vinaigrette

Makes ½ cup

1 teaspoon finely minced fresh ginger

½ teaspoon finely grated lime zest

½ teaspoon minced garlic

¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard

¼ teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon sugar

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice

1 teaspoon white-wine vinegar

6 drops hot sauce, like Tabasco, plus more to taste

¼ cup grapeseed oil or other neutral-flavored oil



In a small bowl, whisk the ginger, lime zest, garlic, mustard, salt, sugar, lime juice, vinegar, and hot sauce. Slowly whisk in the oil until the dressing is creamy and blended. Taste and adjust the seasonings. Store in a bottle or jar in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

# Dirty Dirty

## The Dirty Dozen

Every year, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) publishes a list of the 12 conventionally raised fruits and vegetables with the highest amount of pesticides. The list is trademarked as the 'Dirty Dozen'. The EWG ranks 48 popular fruits and vegetables and publishes a Shopper's Guide to help people find products with low concentration of pesticide residues. About 65% of the produce tested positive for pesticides. That's bad news for a few reasons: Pesticides have been linked to developmental problems in children, and may act as carcinogens or throw off the endocrine system, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



**Topping the list** just published in April was *apples*. Almost every sample (about 99%) tested positive. *Strawberries* came in second, followed by *grapes, celery, peaches, spinach, sweet bell peppers, imported nectarines, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, potatoes, and imported snap peas*.

The report also includes a list of the "cleanest" produce, featuring avocados at the top, with only 1 percent of samples tested showing any detectable pesticides.

**A few specific findings in the EWG report include:**

- Every sample of imported nectarines tested positive for at least one pesticide residue.
- The average potato had more pesticides by weight than any other food.
- A single grape tested positive for 15 pesticides. Single samples of celery, cherry tomatoes, imported snap peas and strawberries tested positive for 13 different pesticides apiece.
- Some 89 percent of pineapples, 82 percent of kiwi, 80 percent of papayas, 88 percent of mango and 61 percent of cantaloupe had no residues.
- No single fruit sample from the "Clean Fifteen" list tested positive for more than four types of pesticides.

The results are somewhat controversial as EWG tested unwashed produce, something that falls short from good practice. However, it raises awareness to what we might be consuming on a daily basis.

Community Gardens such as ours become a safe haven if properly and responsibly managed since organic practices limit the use of pesticides.

To learn more about EWG and their findings and test methods go to <http://www.ewg.org/foodnews>



# MAY gallery



# the summer solstice

...Saturday JUNE 21...

SAVE THE DATE!

Cristina is planning a celebration for us.

Details to come...

## thoughts In The Garden

Sharing my learning on spinach planting and harvesting.

By Cristina Niciporciukas

Although spinach is one of the most cold tolerant vegetable plants, I lost mine to the insane winter we had. I couldn't wait until the township gave us access to our community garden to get started again. I am harvesting my first spinach (ever!) this week and thought I could share a little bit of what I learned.

- Direct sow spinach as soon as the soil is workable. Growing them indoors is not worth it as the seedlings are very fragile to transplant.
- Spinach is a fast growing plant and in most areas you can get multiple harvests from a single plant.
- When to pick spinach is an important consideration in order to get the best tasting leaves and prevent bolting. Spinach is a cool season crop that will bolt (=flower) when the days are long (14 hours a day of sun-light) and temperatures are warm. Most varieties can be harvested as soon as it is a rosette with five or six leaves. Baby spinach leaves have a sweeter flavor and more tender texture.
- Harvest by removing only the outer leaves and allowing the center leaves to grow larger; this will allow the plant to keep producing. Small spinach leaves can be harvested with scissors by simply cutting the leaves at the stem. Picking the outer leaves also gives the advantage of briefly delaying bolting.
- You can also just cut the whole plant off at the base. Harvesting spinach by this method will often allow it to re-sprout and give you another partial harvest.
- When plants are about to bolt, pull the entire plant at once to enjoy the leaves before they become bitter.
- Spinach will not do well during the summer months.
- Spinach is an especially popular crop for fall too, when days are short and cool. Plant them late August.
- I will try overwintering again this year and hopefully have a more positive experience. Some gardeners plant spinach in a cold frame or cover plants with hay and leave them all winter; they'll be first to produce a very early spring harvest. Plants tolerate temperatures as cold as the teens to low 20s once they are well established.

One of the gardens listed is an organic vegetable garden.

**SAVE THE DATE**

Announcing an Upcoming Event  
 "Through The Garden Gate ..... "  
 A delightful tour of 7 unique,  
 local private gardens in June.

**Garden Tour**  
**Chester & Long Valley**

**June 7 2014**  
 Seven Gardens  
 \$30 per Ticket - Includes Lunch  
 Hours 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For Tickets or more information call: 908-832 -5075



The Garden Club of Long Valley

## good **tomato** hygiene

- Growing tomatoes on black plastic landscape fabric increases soil heat, provides weed control and help with soil-splash control—keeping some of those soil-borne spores from getting up onto the plant by creating a barrier.
- Strip the lower leaves from the plants to eliminate the “ladder” for spores splashing up from the soil as well.
- Trellis and stake tomatoes, and prune them to get rid of suckers.
- Focus on air circulation this way, too: Place tomatoes on the edge of a bed, not the middle, and never do a teepee or other too-close tangle of tomatoes.
- With staked tomatoes, 18 inches between plants within a row is a good distance. Leave at least 4 feet between rows; more is better.
- Overfertilized, too-fast-growing plants are a target for trouble, and more inviting to disease; don't overfeed.







## Our Sponsorship Program

Because we have a few needs that are pressing we've started a sponsorship program so those who want to help, can. We need to: help fund scout projects that are costly, buy some tools & supplies and build a couple sturdy long lasting compost bins. There are many people in our community who would like to help give the garden support. Please reach out to your family, friends & local businesses and share our website page where a sponsorship application may be downloaded. <http://wtcommunitygarden.jimdo.com/sponsorship/>

### Business & Personal Sponsorships

With your help we will be able to have the basics every garden needs.

For your sponsorship we will plant bulbs, place pavers & stepping stones or plant a fruit tree in your name.

 <p><b>Fruit Tree</b></p> <p>Large logo featured on website. A Fruit Tree planted in WTCG with dedication plaque.</p> <p><b>\$500 +</b></p>	<p>Sponsored by <b>Luigi's Pizza Joe &amp; Maria</b></p> <p><b>Stepping Stone</b></p> <p>Medium logo featured on website. Engraved Bluestone Stepping Stone placed in WTCG.</p> <p><b>\$250 - \$499</b></p>	<p><b>Joe &amp; Maria Santos</b></p> <p><b>Brick Paver</b></p> <p>Small logo featured on website. Engraved Paver placed in WTCG.</p> <p><b>\$100 - \$249</b></p>	 <p><b>1 Doz. Bulbs</b></p> <p>Name featured on website. One dozen bulbs planted in WTCG.</p> <p><b>\$50</b></p>
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