



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Rockland County

School Garden Network

*Cultivate Socially, Physically and Emotionally Healthy
Children & Youth through the Garden Experience*



10 Patriot Hills Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980 • Phone: (845) 429-7085 • Fax: (845) 429-8667 • Web: www.rocklandcce.org

March/April 2010

Welcome to the School Garden Network/From the editor

Spring is in the Air!

Now that the daffodils are blooming and tree buds are swelling, the time has come to get outside and start our gardening projects. If you are new to gardening or a real pro, CCE is here to answer all your garden questions. You can contact me, your “Master School Gardener” consultant, or call our Diagnostic Lab, at (845) 429-7085, option 3. Starting in April, the lab will be open Monday through Thursday, 9AM-2PM. There’s a wealth of information from “Beginning Vegetable Gardening” to “How to Build a Rain Barrel” and more. If you’re thinking of asking the Master Gardeners to do an initial or follow-up site visit to your school, I’d recommend you call us before we’re all booked up. We do get very busy this time of year! Why not stop in and join one of our free Master Gardener demonstration tours, the last Sunday of every month, April through October. We have 8 stunning gardens that are meticulously maintained by the Master Gardener volunteers, and children are always welcome. We’ll have garden-based learning activities for them to do while you enjoy the garden tour. From all of the Master Gardeners, keep growing and have a glorious spring season.

~ Donna Alese Cooke, Community Horticulture Educator



Hillcrest Elementary School

Student “Master Gardeners” Learn How to Grow Their School Gardens

When the teachers at Hillcrest Elementary in New City had their Seed to Salad School Garden “Kick Off” last month, students were asked if they would like to become a student “master gardener” and represent their classroom. To become a student “Master Gardener”, children were asked to write an essay about why they wanted to be involved, along with an application and letter of recommendation. What’s extraordinary about these students is that they are true leaders, taking what they’ve learned through their school garden experience and bringing that back to their classroom.

On March 17, the CCE Master Gardeners visited Hillcrest Elementary School. Over 33 students, grades 4-6 were on hand, to listen to the experts on how to get their school garden started. The committee consists of two students from each class in their school, and they are responsible for planning and bringing the garden experience to fellow students. This month, they will create a schedule of tasks to be done in the garden during the school day, and then bring students from their class outside to plant and work in the garden after spring break.

For more information about Cornell’s Seed to Salad curriculum, visit:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/get-activities/signature-projects/seed-to-salad/>



Starting A Community Garden

By Mary Lukens, Piermont Master Gardener

Community gardens are becoming more popular, sprouting up at schools, churches, corporate and town parks and residential developments, as many communities have discovered the benefits on improving their communities' aesthetic and connecting with neighbors.

If you're thinking of starting a garden, first determine if there's enough local interest. Check with officials for the land, donations and volunteers, and consider the kind of garden — vegetable, flowers, herb, trees, or a combination.

Finding sponsors and in-kind supporters is essential to contribute land, tools, lumber, walkways, fencing, soil improvements or money. Some community gardens function through membership fees, fundraisers or grants.

Once the site is secured, check if a lease or agreement from the owner and insurance is required. Make sure the site receives at least 6 full hours of daily sunlight; trees may need to be removed. Water availability is essential, whether on site, another source nearby or, perhaps rain barrels. Soil testing for contamination and nutrient composition is recommended.

Determine eligibility for membership, funding structure and how the money be used. Garden beds can be equal or variable, based on various criteria such as family size, residency, or group such as children, seniors or the needy. Like a business, you'll need to seek leaders for ongoing management through committee support to accomplish tasks, manage funds and enforce rules.

The basic design plan should consider walkways, bins for compost, equipment and storage. Flower or shrub beds around the visible perimeter will promote goodwill with neighbors, passersby and municipal authorities. Fencing is needed to protect from animals and vandals, and signage with the garden name is inviting.

A community garden is a cooperative investment, as members share decisions, tasks and benefits. It is estimated a 10x10 plot can provide over \$500 in seasonal produce. Besides the savings, other pluses of growing local are nutritious food, reducing truck transportation and conserving resources. And, the socialization, exercise and therapeutic value are the essence of this shared experience.



Master Gardener, Kit Meenan, talking about vermi-composting

Announcement!

\$1,000 grants available for Safe Routes to School initiatives.

Applications now being accepted through April 7, 2010

Eligible applicants include:

Faculty, staff, or parent volunteers at elementary or middle schools;
Adult-supervised elementary or middle school groups or clubs;
Adult-supervised high school groups/clubs that wish to partner with a nearby elementary or middle school;
Local governments;
Tribal governments;
and/or Community-based or private non-profit organizations engaged in improving safety for and increasing the number of children who safely walk or ride a bicycle to school.

Learn more at this link:
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/minigrants/index.cfm

**Join the
Junior Master
Gardener program
this summer!**

4-H, Community Horticulture and the Master Gardeners are offering two week-long sessions for children in grades 4 and 5 (August 2-6) and in grades 2 and 3 (August 9-13).

The program will meet each morning from 9:30AM-12:00PM at the Extension Education Center in Stony Point.

The Junior Master Gardener program is a 4-H Youth Development program developed by Texas A&M and is modeled after the highly popular Master Gardener program. Children will participate in “hands-on” learning experiences in horticulture and environmental science education.

Program fee is \$75.00 per child and includes all program materials and a nutritious morning snack.

**Please contact
Pat Hubbard at
845-429-7085, ext. 103
for more information
and to register.**

New...After School Jr. Master Gardener Clubs, Vegetable Garden & Wildlife Gardener Clubs for Grades 3-5

If you're looking to start an after school gardening club, then the Jr. Master Gardener Program (JMG) may be the answer. The Jr. Master Gardener program is an international youth gardening program of the University Extension network. The **JMG Mission:** To grow good kids by igniting a passion for learning, success and service through a unique gardening education.

Club members can earn certification from the JMG Headquarters:

- Jr. Master Gardener- requires a year-long program.
- Wildlife Gardener – can be a 10 week or year -long program *
- Growing A Vegetable Garden - 10 week program
- Health & Nutrition from the Garden –can be a 10 week or year-long program
- Literature from the Garden -10 week program

**Wildlife Gardener Clubs can work on building a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Certified Schoolyard Habitat at your school.*

After School Jr. Master Gardener Clubs, Vegetable Garden & Wildlife Gardener Clubs for Grades 3-5, and JMG Clubs for Grades 6-8



Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Rockland can help you get started! We will:

- assist teacher/leader in scheduling and planning your 10 week (spring or fall) or year-long (Sept-June) program, and provide a teacher/leader guide.
- register your group so students can become “Certified Jr. Master Gardeners.”
- have expert Master Gardener volunteers periodically visit your club.

CCE fee is based on a 10 week or year-long (Sept-June) program.

For more information, or to get your club started, contact Donna Alese Cooke, Community Horticulture Educator, at 845-429-7085 ext. 108 or email dmc72@cornell.edu

Growing Herbs in Pots & Containers

By Kathleen Boothby Sestak, Nyack Master Gardener

Container gardening is a great way to discover the joys of fresh herbs. A variety of herbs will grow well in most any type of container. Only a few basic requirements are necessary: a sunny location, (6-8 hours of full sun per day), good garden soil and good drainage. Once established, herbs do not require a lot of watering. Fertilization is usually not necessary except for heavily harvested herbs such as Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*); Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) and Parsley, (*Petroselinum crispum*). Too much water and fertilizer will produce lush foliage but low oil content. The essential oils, which account for flavor and fragrance, are produced in greatest quantities when planted in full sun.

Choose herbs that you like to cook with or ones in which you enjoy the fragrance. Good culinary choices for herbs could include: Dill (*Anethum graveolens*), Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), Sage (*Salvia officinalis*), Summer Savory (*Satureja Hortensis*) and Common Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*). True Lavendar (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and Pepper Mint (*Mentha x piperita*) are examples of herbs which are prized for their fragrance.

Place three or four plants in a large pot outside your kitchen door. In no time they will be readily available to add to grilled salmon or fresh tomato sauce or whatever you're cooking. Once you have your container herb garden growing, you are never far from the fresh smells and tastes of herbs.

Good Bugs, Bad Bugs & Herbs

By Tamika Adjemian-Hanchrow, New City Master Gardener

The use of herbs as pest deterrents in home gardens has been around for centuries and is an example of the practice of companion planting. There are hundreds of examples of combinations from history to present, and evidence from scientific studies and experiments by gardeners has given credence to the effectiveness of some of these. Herbs can repel by producing odors that either confuse pests or mask the smell of the desired plant. They can serve as trap crops drawing the pests away from plants and most importantly, they act as nurseries and food for beneficial insects, who in turn keep the detrimental pest population down by eating or killing them. Herbs that are strong smelling such as *Mentha* spp. (all varieties of mint), *Nepeta catania* (catmint), *Rosmarinus* spp. (all varieties of Rosemary), *Allium* spp. (Garlic chives, chives, garlic, onions) are good at repelling moths, aphids, Japanese beetles and cabbage pests. Herbs in the Apiceae or Umbel family, *Petroselinum crispum* (Parsley), *Carum carvi* (caraway), *Coriandrum sativum* (Cilantro/Coriander), *Anethum graveolens* (Dill), can help control certain beetles and aphids. Their flowers are shallow, fragrant and attract beneficial bugs such as tachinid flies, parasitic wasps, lady beetles and bees that pollinate. Planting *Ocimum* spp. (the Basil family) deters flies, tomato horn worms, asparagus beetles. Plant all herbs except mint throughout the vegetable garden, near plants that are susceptible allowing some to flower. Mint is invasive and does well in pots placed throughout the beds, or given freedom to roam outside the borders of the garden. Plants have a symbiotic relationship to insects and soil, we can help that balance by paying attention to what's going on in our gardens and learning the good from the bad with bugs and plants.

When Houseplant Lose Control

By Cynthia Weiss, Nanuet Master Gardener

Like children, plants require nutrition, a good environment, grooming, and lots of patience. Though plants can be forgiving at times, consistent care is much preferred. Most houseplant problems are caused by inconsistencies in watering/feeding, inappropriate potting medium, wrong environmental conditions and pests.

The first step in assessing why a plant is not thriving is to check for bugs and/or disease. Look closely under leaves, on stems, and on soil for telltale signs (webs, brown or white spots) and either treat accordingly or discard the plant. Make sure to check neighboring plants as well.

Too much water can result in "wet feet" and eventually root rot; too little water stresses the plant and deprives it of nutrition. Before watering, insert a finger 1-2 inches into the soil; if it comes out clean, the plant needs watering. Pour tepid water around it; empty excess from saucer if not absorbed after 20 minutes. Maintain a regular schedule, adjusting it to the season and temperature.

Use fertilizer sparingly during the growing season. Most houseplants prefer filtered light rather than bright, direct sun. Cool temperatures are preferable to a hot, dry environment; avoid drafts.

Many plants need to be groomed through careful pruning. Single stem plants should be cut, on an angle, approximately 2 inches above the soil line. Put the cutting in a water-filled container in a light location, changing the water weekly. After developing a good root system (about 3 months), the

continued on page 5...

Nature Speak

*an environmentally education
experience for youth*



*In order to hear the voice of nature
one must first learn its language.*

Nature Speak is a program of natural linguistics, a kind of eco-speak, which requires a kind of eco-listen. This program encourages the natural tendencies of youth to explore the sights, the sounds, the voice of nature long believed to be a competitive voice (How red the tooth and claw?) as opposed to the indigenous dialogue of kinship (Father Sun, Grandfather Beaver, Spider Woman).

This course involves three classes (two hours each) that take the students along the flora/fauna footpath within the region of suburbia, the places of development where nature has been most impacted. Environmental Educators Chuck Stead and Ed Bieber join in this venture to encourage through story and experience a human/nature collaboration within the local ecosystem.

For more information, contact:
Chuck Stead
429-7085, x125
wgs42@cornell.edu

continued from page 4 sidebar...

cutting can be transplanted. Use a good quality potting mix and do not fertilize until the plant is well established. Meanwhile, the mother-plant will send out new shoots. A totally rejuvenated plant will be the best reward for your patience.

Learn to “read” your plants; like children, they will always show you when something is wrong.

More Great Resources from Cornell

Gardening Resources

Your portal to gardening information at Cornell



**Cornell University
Department of
Horticulture**

www.gardening.cornell.edu

Visit the Cornell Garden-Based Learning website
for these classroom activities and more at:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/get-activities/activities/>

Where have all the ladybugs gone?

by [Marcia Eames-Sheavly](#), Cornell University

Over the past twenty years several native ladybugs that were once very common have become extremely rare! At the same time, ladybugs from other places have greatly increased their numbers and range. This is happening very quickly and scientists don't know how, or why, or what impact it will have on ladybug diversity or the role that ladybugs play in keeping plant-feeding insect populations low. They want you to join them in finding out where all the ladybugs have gone so they can try to prevent more native species from becoming so rare. We encourage you to join in on the important (and fun) Check the [Lost Ladybug Project](#) at <http://www.lostladybug.org/>



Programs at CCE Rockland in Stony Point

- April 22, 12:30-3:30PM -Growing Annuals & Perennials \$35 pp
- April 25, 1:00-4:00PM -Gardening Clinic and Garden Tour - **FREE**
- April 27, 7:30PM- How to Grow Crops in Pots (Container Vegetables) \$35pp
- May 13, 9:30-11:30AM- Gardening with Native Plants, \$35pp
- May 20, 10:30am-12:30PM- Rain Gardens, \$35pp
- June 10, 7:30PM- Grow Anything in Containers, \$35pp



Become a Rockland County “Green Gardener”



The Green Gardener Certificate Program is a non-credit adult education program offered to gardening enthusiasts, professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs. Students have the option to earn certification over the course of one or two terms.

The Green Gardener Certificate Program is based on the latest research-based information from Cornell University, providing students with a practical approach to environmental stewardship. Taught by Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators, Master Gardeners and local horticultural experts, this series of lecture presentations, interactive workshops and outdoor gardening practicum offers an in-depth experience of environmentally sound landscape gardening.

Classes and workshops listed below are held at the Education Center in Stony Point, can be counted toward though the Green Gardener Certificate program or can be taken just for fun.

Contact Donna Alese Cooke for upcoming 2010 Spring classes.



It's not too late to join the School Garden Network

For a yearly enrollment fee (per school), you will receive:

- An onsite evaluation to sponsoring school/garden, with ongoing gardening advice from extension educators and CCE Master “School” Gardeners.
- Three educational workshops for professional development, featuring prominent leaders in the field of garden-based learning. Workshops are free for teachers, staff, parents and volunteers from each registered school, and include NYS Learning Standards-based lessons and classroom activities.
- Bimonthly e-newsletters with the latest gardening information and resources, garden-based learning updates from Cornell University and other land-grant institutions, with links to school garden grants and more.
- Information for teachers to transform their garden and classroom into living laboratories of learning.



To register for any of these programs, please call Caryn Singer at 845-429-7085 ext 117.

For more information, contact Donna Alese Cooke at 845-429-7085 ext 108, or dmc72@cornell.edu.

Wild Edibles

The Wild Edibles workshops educates youth of grades 3-12. Each workshop has a maximum capacity of 30 students and is customized to the specific age group, location, and time of year. Workshops include 'interviewing' plants, scavenger hunts, drawing plants, leaf transformation studies, and collecting/comparing leaves, flowers, and plants.

For more information contact Chuck Stead at (845) 429-7085, ext. 125.



Garden Writers Association Foundation
www.gardenwriters.org
 Call Toll Free: (877) 492-2727

Plant a Row is a people-helping-people program to help feed the hungry in local neighborhoods and communities. Launched in 1995 by the Garden Writers Association (GWA), Plant A Row (PAR) encourages gardeners to grow a little extra and donate the produce to local soup kitchens and food pantries serving the homeless and hungry. PAR's mission is to provide an avenue through which individuals, corporations and over 84 million gardening households in the U.S. can help America's most vulnerable citizens and the food agencies serving them.

Join your friends and neighbors of Rockland County and donate your produce for the hungry.

The Master Gardener Volunteers at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Rockland County have started a PAR campaign for Rockland County. This committee will assist you in getting started and getting your extra produce to those in need within Rockland County.

Take the pledge and donate whatever you can. It's easier than you think!!

Sign up today!

(845)429-7085, ext. 108

dmc72@cornell.edu

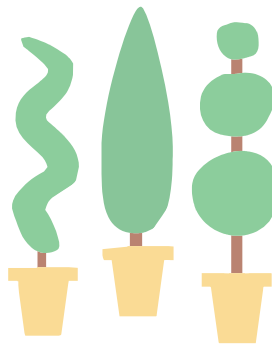
or fax a request to

(845)429-8667

School Garden, Garden-Based Learning & Horticultural Resources



- **Cornell University's Garden Based Learning:** <http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/>
- **Cornell's Gardening Resources:** www.gardening.cornell.edu/
- **NY Agriculture in the Classroom:** Resources for students, educators, school gardens and more. www.nyaged.org/aitc/
- **Junior Master Gardener program:** www.jmgkids.us



- **NYS 4-H Resource Directory:** Learn about how 4-H connects kids to Cornell, 4-H funding, how to join and program resources. www.cerp.cornell.edu/4h/
- **Art of Horticulture:** Cornell Department of Horticulture courses explore plants as the subject of art as well as plants as media for creating art. www.hort.cornell.edu/art
- **Cornell Farm to School Program:** Develops strategies and disseminates information to increase the amount of locally grown food served in New York's schools, colleges and universities. <http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu>

- **American Horticultural Society:** www.ahs.org/youth_gardening
- **National Gardening Association:** www.kidsgardening.com
- **Friends of Burlington Gardens & the Vermont Community Garden Network:** Creating, enhancing, and preserving community gardens for all: www.burlingtongardens.org/gardenorganizer.html



Ask a Master Gardener

By Vivienne Dieckmann, Sloatsburg Master Gardener

Q. While preparing the vegetable garden for spring planting, I found a bird's nest with three tiny, blue eggs. My husband warned me not to touch it because the parents will not return to a nest or to a baby bird handled by humans. Was he correct?

A. One of the great birding myths concerns humans interfering with fallen nests or "orphaned" fledglings. With a few considerations, people can help care for needy feathered friends.

First, if an entire nest falls to the ground and the eggs or baby birds are still in it, just secure the nest to a place as close as possible to its original location. Most likely, the parents will continue to act and to care for their babies as if the nest had always been there.

Second, sometimes a nestling (infant bird) gets out of its nest before it is old enough to fly. Gently place the baby bird back in its nest as soon as possible. Since birds have a poor sense of smell, the parents most likely will continue to care for it.

Third, at times, a fledgling is found alone on the ground, hopping around, flapping its wings, and begging for food. Even though the parents aren't in sight, they are aware of their youngster's plight. Many times fledglings are kept in "safe" locations and are fed by the parents on the ground. Even when they begin to fly, the baby birds follow their parents around begging for food.

An injured or sick bird is another matter. Only someone knowledgeable in wildlife nutrition and veterinary medicine should interfere with the course of nature. Treatment of ill animals by those with good intentions but little knowledge usually puts the animal in too much stress. Rather leave it alone and call a wildlife rehabilitation center or the local human society.

If you have a question
for our Master Gardener Volunteers,
please call or email Donna Alese Cooke at
(845)429-7085, ext. 108 or
dmc72@cornell.edu.

Demonstration Gardens are open all year!



2010

FREE GARDEN TOUR

Take a guided tour the last Sunday of each month from April through October or explore the gardens anytime at your own pace. Each Sunday tour is approximately an hour long and starts at 1PM.

April 25 • May 30
June 27 • July 25 • August 29
September 26 • October 31

Learn about the ever-changing display of plants native to our region; perennials, ornamental grasses, annuals, herbs, ferns, and more.

Children will enjoy activities hosted by our Master Gardeners.

Directions:

East off Exit 14 on Palisades Parkway to the first traffic light. Turn left on Patriot Hills Drive.

Master Gardeners of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland County plan and maintain the Demonstration Gardens, trying out new and different plants to determine their suitability for our area. Some of the plants are selected for drought tolerance or deer resistance. Others for size, blooming time, or winter interest. Maintenance follows Cornell's Integrated Pest Management (IPM). This approach encourages the minimal use of toxic pesticides.