



Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

August 2015

Vol. 23, No. 7

Laughing Dog Farm promises joyful tour August 20

If you've never been to Laughing Dog Farm in Gill, if you haven't yet met farmer Daniel Botkin, you definitely will want to attend this month's program on Thursday, August 20. Our tour begins at 6:00 p.m. Carpoolers will meet at Cherry Rum Plaza with a prompt departure at 5:40.

Danny will lead our private tour of his inspiring 3+ acre, permaculture-inspired gardens, orchard and homestead. We'll learn about his low-till, organic, hand-driven growing methods which use large amounts of organic sheet mulch under which biologically healthy soil is ever-improving. He grows a wide variety of annual, perennial, and tree crops and stretches the harvest season to all twelve months using low-tech, un-heated tunnels and hoop-houses.

Don't expect to see neatly tailored walkways or delicate rose arbors, but do expect to be impressed by the number of vegetables, flowers, and fruits growing in a fertile jumble of color and texture. Bodkin calls his method "micro-intensive food farming." He harvests an astonishing amount of food throughout the year, including the wintertime.

We'll also meet the farm's dairy goats and rabbits raised by Danny and his wife, Divya.

Even if you don't have a vegetable garden, you will learn and be inspired by Danny. He's an eloquent, exuberant spokesman for organic methods, healthy soil, delicious food, seed-saving, and our deep human connection to helping plants grow.

Laughing Dog Farm, 398 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354

Directions from Greenfield: Go east on Rt 2 to the light in Gill (Mobil Station), turn left on Main Rd. Go 3.9 miles to Renaissance Community Road. Go right up hill to fork (200 yards). Veer left at fork up hill 1/4 mile. Pass large brown house and barn to dead-end. Park beyond the "Laughing Dog" sign by the house.

What's growing at Laughing Dog Farm

In the gardens and hoop-houses: mesclun, peas, carrots, lettuce, spinach, chard, Asian greens, asparagus, collards, beets (seven varieties), carrots, leeks, onions, garlic, basil, dill, thyme, cabbage, parsnips, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale, kohlrabi, turnips, squash (winter and summer), pole beans, bush beans, edamame soybeans, potatoes, peppers (sweet and hot), tomatillos, cucumbers, corn, pumpkins, raspberries, heirloom tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, watermelons, muskmelons and cantaloupes. Plus many flowers

In the orchard: chestnuts, gingko, peaches, pears, kiwis, cherries, plums, Asian pears

Community Meal seeks your gifts of food, flowers on August 12

from *Laura Schlaikjer, President*

Our Club will be providing the Community Meal on Wednesday, August 12, to be served at the Second Congregational Church, 16 Court Square, in Greenfield. This dinner, which is free and open to all, typically serves 80 to 90 people.

Our Club needs three kinds of help:

- Every member to bring food.
- At least 7 people to arrive by 5:15 to serve and clean up.
- Members with abundant flower gardens to bring bouquets.

Contact me (Laura Schlaikjer) to tell me how you will help: greenfield-gardenclub@yahoo.com or leave a message at 413-774-4594.

Now for the DETAILS . . .

Here's our summertime menu:

- potato salad
- three-bean salad (preferably including green beans)
- deviled eggs
- chicken drumsticks/thighs (baked in BBQ sauce to give it a cookout flavor)
- watermelon (seedless) to be cut into wedges for dessert

Which of these items can you provide? Would you bring enough for 20 people? for 40?

Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner is served promptly at 5:30, so food needs to arrive by 4:30. (You can still help if you can't make that drop-off time, by bringing

your contribution to another member's home for delivery to the dinner.)

Our tradition is to bring flowers for the tables. Bouquets should be in containers you don't need returned: we'll give them to our dinner guests to enjoy at home.

It's no small task to make dinner for nearly a hundred people. Franklin County Community Meals Program tells us that late summer is an especially tough time for families in need because the summer free meals for kids end mid-August and school meals don't begin until September.

As many of us enjoy this summertime of abundance, let's join together to share with people in our community who cannot afford food.



Club to create Monet's garden at Franklin County Fair

The Franklin County Fair is coming! September 10–13 to be exact. The Fair – attended by 42,000 people last year – is a wonderful opportunity to advertise our Club and keep our presence active in front of the good people of Franklin County.

Our Club's tradition is to create a garden-themed display at the Fair, and we are fortunate to hold a high-traffic spot at the back entrance to the Roundhouse. We have a fine track record of blue ribbons, and this year we hope to earn \$150 for first-place status, a boost to our treasury.

This year's booth will create a bit of Monet's garden, complete with water feature and unfinished painting. We will be looking for plants, moss, water garden form/basin, rocks, chair, canvas, paints & brush, easel, straw hat. A water lily in bloom would be awesome! Under the easel could be slate, pavers or mulch.

Any other ideas? On Thursday, August 27, everyone interested in our Fair display (you?) will meet at 6:00 p.m. at Jean Wall's home at 40 High St in Greenfield. We'll formally make our plan and start a list of supplies.

If you can't make the August 27 meeting but would like to help, please tell us via email (greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com) or call Laura at 774-4594.

Set-up times are Tuesday, September 8 from 6–9 p.m., and Wednesday, September 9 from 3–9 p.m.

Last year our Club's bee-themed display won a blue ribbon and the coveted Best of Show ribbon and educated thousands of visitors to the importance of pollinator-friendly gardening. And we had a lot of fun creating the display, too. We look forward to working with you all at this year's booth!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Garden Club programs are the third Thursday of each month.

Wednesday, August 12. Community Meal, 5:00–6:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, Court Square, Greenfield.

Thursday, August 20, 6:00 p.m. **Tour of Laughing Dog Farm** in Gill, with owner Daniel Botkin. laughingdogfarm.com

Thursday, August 27, 6:00 p.m., joint steering committee meeting/fair booth meeting, at home of Jean Wall, 40 High St, Greenfield.

Tuesday, September 8, 6–9 p.m., and **Wednesday, September 9,** 3–9 p.m. Set up booth at Franklin County Fair.

Thursday, September 17, 6:00 p.m. **Food Fermentation Workshop** with Angela Roell, co-owner of Yard Birds Farm in Williamsburg, MA. Location TBA.

*"I perhaps owe having
become a painter to flowers."
- Claude Monet*

Officers 2015

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Have you discovered *A Way to Garden*, Margaret Roach's website? She offers useful late-season planting advice: <http://awaytogarden.com/what-to-plant-now-for-a-fall-vegetable-garden/>. If you are not familiar with her site, make haste and check it out for great advice, recipes, and much more.

Roach's gardens are on the Garden Conservancy's Open House tour on August 15. The day includes Ken Druse speaking on shade gardens, a plant sale, and tours of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Steepletop* and a private garden. Details here: <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/events/all-events/columbia-county-ny-open-day-5> Pack a picnic and head out with friends. Just be sure you leave enough room in the car for plant purchases!

Garden chores for August

Harvest vegetables such as tomatoes and beans regularly to encourage plants to keep bearing.

Prune summer-blooming shrubs (such as hydrangea, clethra, caryopteris) after flowers finish.

Divide and transplant bearded iris.

Rake up and remove mulch, leaves and debris beneath your roses. You'll also be removing insects and disease organisms that would otherwise overwinter and attack your rose plants next spring.

Bare areas in your vegetable garden? Plant a cover crop of oats in August through early September. Oats are an annual grass that will be killed by frost. The roots will help hold your soil in the winter. Next spring, the brown, dried oat grass can be pulled and composted or dug under to add organic matter to your soil.

Catalogs and farm-store displays are enticing us now to buy next year's colorful dreams. Order peonies and bulbs for fall planting.

If your perennial beds are heading into fall without much interest, consider adding ornamental grasses; Sternbergia, colchicum and other fall-blooming bulbs; heaths and heathers. The University of Vermont suggests these fall bloomers:

<http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/fallbloom.html>

Tend your compost pile. Your soil-building friends the decomposers (bacteria, fungi, earthworms, sowbugs and their ilk) need oxygen (so turn your pile frequently) and adequate moisture (if a week passes without rain, water your pile). Some gardeners use compost starter to jump-start the decomposition process.

It's not too late to plant seeds of cool-season vegetables. Johnny's Seeds offers a useful "when to plant" calculator: <http://www.johnnyseeds.com/v-45-recommended-summer-planting-for-fall-harvest.aspx> Crops to consider include beets, Chinese cabbage, Swiss chard, lettuce, radishes, spinach, turnips, kohlrabi, and cilantro.

Pour a glass of iced tea, put your favorite lawn chair in a shady spot, and admire your garden. Yes, there are weeds to pull and deadheads to snip, but relax for a while and feel grateful for all you and Mother Nature have created!

Seeds of Solidarity soil workshop, tour

One of the highlights of our Club's 2014 monthly programs was our visit to Seeds of Solidarity in Orange, home of the "Grow Food Everywhere" program and creator of the regionally famous Garlic and Arts Festival ("the festival that stinks"). You can look forward to the 17th annual Garlic and Arts festival Sept. 26-27, and during August can visit the farm for a tour or a workshop.

Solidarity Tour: Saturday, Aug. 8, 10 a.m.

Experience the farm, home and education center that integrate solar greenhouses, energy efficient buildings, abundant market gardens, solar electric and hot water systems. Free tour, no pre-registration. Donations to support youth and community programs appreciated. If you wish, bring a potluck dish for lunch to share.

Life & Spirit of Soil: Saturday, Aug. 8, 1-4 p.m.

Seeds of Solidarity founder and 3-decade farmer Ricky Baruc teaches his ways of building soil and nourishing soil life for low maintenance, highly productive gardens. Ricky is one of eleven farmers across the nation participating in advising research and practice in sustainable no-till methods. Sliding scale workshop fee of \$20-\$30, pre-registration recommended to reserve your spot:

solidarity@seedsofsolidarity.org

Treasurer's Report

Jean Wall

Balance as of July 31, 2015.....\$5,836.16

Income (July) \$ 827.12

Dues, Interest, Tour, Extravaganza Donations, Programs

Expenses (July) \$ 15.09

Newsletter

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to Jean Wall:

413-773-9069

40 High Street, Greenfield MA 01301



Greenfield Garden Club

PO Box 309
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MEMBER DISCOUNTS

These vendors have agreed to provide the listed discounts for members who show their membership card when making a purchase. We appreciate their support! Please respect their offers by remembering these generous discounts are for club members only and only when your card is presented.

Backyard Birds – 15 Strong Ave., Northampton
10% off regularly priced items except thistle birdseed

Baystate Perennial Farm
36 State Road (Route 5/10), Whately
10% off regular priced plants

Chapley Gardens
397 Greenfield Road (Route 5/10), Deerfield
10% off regular priced plants and pond supplies

Five Acre Farm – 110 Hinsdale Rd., Northfield
10% off regular priced plants

Glenbrook Gardens
56 Glenbrook Drive, Greenfield
10% off regular priced plants and products

Greenfield Farmers' Cooperative (Agway)
269 High Street, Greenfield
10% anything garden related

LaSalle Florists
23 LaSalle Drive (Route 5/10), Whately
10% off regular priced plants

O'Brien Nurserymen – 40 Wells Road, Granby, CT
10% off plants

Silver Garden Daylilies – 23 Picket Lane, Greenfield
10% off daylilies

Sugarloaf Nursery – 25 Amherst Road, Sunderland
10% off regular priced plants

Warm Colors Apiary
2 South Mill River Road, South Deerfield
10% off

Wilder Hill Gardens
351 South Shirkshire Road, Conway
10% off plants and consultations

Any vendors interested in offering our gardeners a discount, please contact the Steering Committee.