

Fox Point

COMMUNITY
GARDEN

The Garden's fox sculpture, constructed by garden member Norma Anderson, has watched over the garden and kept away would-be intruders since the garden's inception in 2006.



Summer 2007

State of the Garden Report

Continuing the success of last year, the garden was again filled to capacity this year with all 103 plots being tended by one or more persons. 49 of these were returning plot holders, and 46 were new plot holders (the difference between the number of total plot and plot holders being accounted for by persons holding 2 plots from last year). Among those 46, 18 occupied newly installed plots along the west fence. These new plots appear to be doing well and have experienced no out of the ordinary run-off issues to date.

In addition to these privately held plots in the garden annex, a children's garden area was founded directly south of the terrace along the west fence. This area encompasses two plots, the Pizza Garden and the Three Sisters Garden. The former includes fruiting plants and herbs commonly found on pizza and the latter: two of the Three Sisters (a squash plant being absent from the triumvirate) of Native American lore in addition to sorghum, also known as broom straw. This garden also features a living tepee, up which are growing Scarlet Emperor Beans, Purple Runner Beans, Morning Glories, and Cardinal Climber. A more permanent and visually appealing children's garden sign is currently being constructed by a volunteer artist and should be installed soon.

In other communal plot news, a new common space was established this year in Plot 8 for gardeners who wished to grow vegetables too large for their own plots. This new system has proved successful,

with prospecting gardeners fully cultivating the area with melons as well as summer and winter squash.

Once again, the terrace is in full bloom this year with its bounty of summer squash being donated to the Camp St Ministry and the newly established Providence branch of Food Not Bombs. The terrace was also sewn with herbs, cutting flowers, sunflowers, and amaranth this year, and is home to several volunteers from last year's compost as well. Moreover, a communal watering schedule was adopted this year for the terrace and the two children's gardens and is available for viewing on the new community board.

The community board was built by garden wonder woman Norma Anderson, who is also responsible for the two watering can trees at the central and southern spigot, which laid to rest the "watering can graveyards" of last year. In addition, Norma along with Thom Mitchell, planted currant, rhubarb, blackberry, and raspberry bushes outside the northern gate. Alongside these new installations, cement blocks were placed and climbing flowers and vegetables planted inside in order to accent our much lauded Steelyard panel art. The garden is also hoping to add fruit trees in the coming years to our expanding perimeter urban orchard. Other infrastructure improvements of note include new compost bins, which are adjacent to the northern gate, and a new roof on the shed. A shade structure and benches (now in place!) in the new seating area are also on slate for this year.

Regarding this year's organizational highlights, after completion of our by-laws and a trip down to City Hall the Garden was officially

Garden History And Mission

The Fox Point Community Garden was established in 2006 with bond money from then serving Ward 1 City Councilman David Segal as a community space where city gardeners could come together, grow fresh food, and share knowledge. We believe that community gardens not only serve to green the urban landscape but build strong, vibrant, and socially aware communities by putting community members back into dialogue with their neighbors and their environment. It is our goal that all members of the Fox Point community are provided a space to garden, grow, and be merry!

incorporated this year as local non-profit with Fox Point Neighborhood Association acting as our fiscal agent. The signatory Garden board members included: Sheri Griffin, Norma Anderson, Angel Dean, Thom Mitchell, and James Crowley. New board members can be added with the annual renewal of incorporation with the City (available to all garden members by request and approval by the sitting board), and interested members should contact Nina. A garden website is pending but very near completion and the yahoo group expanding in membership and frequency of use.

In financial news, after this years expenditures and staff costs the garden is expecting a \$158.51 shortfall. In order to make-up this deficit and raise funds to pay next year's garden manager's (the search continues for a replacement but has made good progress) first month's salary, the Garden is in the planning stages of a yet to-be-determined fundraiser with a fund raising goal of \$750. More information on these efforts to come.

Finally in an effort to garner more concrete numbers of how many people the garden serves, the Garden is planning an end of the season census via the yahoo group. Also, the garden will be immortalized in a photograph on a placard being put together by the RI Preservation Society with historical and current information about the Fox Point neighborhood which will be placed on the entrance to Fox Point via the 195 bridge.

September/October

Watering Schedule

Remember to pitch in watering the terrace and children's gardens during your following assigned week.

September 16-22

A-C

September 23-29

D-H

September 30-October 6

I-M

October 7-13

N-R

October 14-21

S-Z

Which Tomato Doesn't Belong

Can you spot the plastic imposter?



Roasted Peppers and Tomatoes Baked with Herbs and Capers

4 big bell peppers, red, orange, and yellow
1 large beefsteak tomato
2 smaller yellow tomatoes
6 flat leaf parsley sprigs
12 large basil leaves
1 garlic clove
2 tbs capers, rinsed
12 olives, pitted
3 tbs olive oil
sea salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Roast the peppers until charred. Drop them into a bowl, cover, and set them aside while you prepare everything else. Then wipe off the blackened skin, pull out the seeds, and core and cut into wide strips. Trim off any ragged ends and set them aside for another use.

2. Score the ends of the tomatoes, then drop them into boiling water for 10 secs. Remove the skins, halve them crosswise, and gently squeeze out the seeds. Cut the walls into wide pieces. Reserve the cores for a soup or sauce.

3. Pluck the leaves off the parsley stems. You should have about 1/2 cup. Chop them finely with the basil and garlic, then put in a bowl with the capers, olives and oil. Season with 3/4 tsp salt and pepper.

4. Preheat the oven to 400F. Lightly oil small gratin dish. Add the tomatoes, peppers, and sauce and gently toss with your hands. Cover and bake for 20 mins.

From Local Flavors by Deborah Madison

Chocolate Zucchini Cake

2 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup cocoa powder
2 1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
3/4 cup butter or margarine
2 cup dry sweetener
3 eggs or egg equivalent
2 cups grated and dried zucchini
2 tsp vanilla
1 cup milk, cow, soy, or rice
1 cup nut/seeds

1. Combine dry ingredients and set aside. Cream together butter and sugar until smooth.

2. Add eggs and beat well. Add zucchini and vanilla to wet stuff, blend well.

3. Add dry stuff and milk alternatively to the wet mixture, stir in nuts.

4. Pour into 9 x 13 pan and bake about 350F for 50-60 mins. Remove and allow to cool.

From Vegan on a Shoestring by the People's Potato Collective



Five Fun Facts About Tomatoes

1. Almost all cultivated tomatoes belong to the same species, *Lycopersicon esculentum*. The exception is the curant tomato, which is more closely related to the wild tomatoes of Central and South America.

2. *L. cheesmanii*, a small, seedy orange-red tomato that is endemic to the Galapagos, is dependent upon giant turtles for its propagation. It is only as its seeds move through the turtles' digestive tract that the inhibitors to germination are removed.

3. In 1883, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the tomato should be classified as a vegetable rather than a fruit. However, botanists classify tomatoes as a fruit because they form from the flower of the plant.

4. Tomatoes were first cultivated by the Aztecs and Incas in the 8th century. It was only later introduced to Europeans in the 16th century via Spanish explorers, and it wasn't until 1850 that its reached mass popularity.

5. The Green Zebra tomato, commonly considered an heirloom variety by growers, was bred by Tom Wagner in the 1980s, a fact causing some tomato experts to question its categorization as a true heirloom variety.

Ratatouille

4 small zucchini, sliced
2 yellow onions, sliced
2 green bell peppers, seeded and chopped
3 cloves garlic
6 tbs olive oil
3 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
3 small eggplants, cubed salt
2 tbs chopped fresh parsley
1 tbs chopped fresh basil
1 tsp dried oregano

1. In a large, heavy skillet over medium-high heat saute the zucchini, onions, peppers, and garlic in 4 tbs of oil until soft, about 5 mins. Add the tomatoes and heat thoroughly to help evaporate the liquid. Transfer to a 3-quart casserole dish.

2. Meanwhile, sweat the eggplants by tossing the cubes with 1/2 tsp of salt in a large bowl. Let rest for 30 mins. Drain the cubes well.

3. Saute the eggplant with the remaining oil in ht skillet over medium-high heat until well browned and tender, about 5 mins.

4. Add the eggplant to the onion mixture and stir well. Add the parsley, basil, and oregano and stir to distribute evenly. Let cool. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

From Big Book of Preserving the Harvest by Carol Costenbader



James pruning back his tomatoes to stimulate greater fruit production.

James and his Giant Tomatoes

At the time of year when most of us are still hunkering down in our underheated hovels and trudging about in wool blankets, Gardener James Crowley is sowing next year's crop of *Lycopersicon esculentum* in the hull of his East Side home. It seems while February means little more than the monotony of root vegetables, with a brief reprieve for candy hearts and kisses, to the common soil shoveler, visions of heirloom tomatoes are already dancing in James' head.

For James, the gardening season begins in late February, when he flips on his home-cobbled growlight, whose sum parts include a wooden board, 2 standard florescent light bulbs, and a chain with which he is able to adjust the hang of the light as his plants mature, and gingerly places his carefully saved seeds from last year's crop into a mossy, green starter mix.

James sows he seeds early because New England's short summers necessitate that gardeners start long season vegetables from seedlings rather than direct seeding following the last spring frost, but also because in the chilly confines of his basement, his seedlings accelerate to creep on days when they feel as if they have somewhere to go. Traditional gardening guides will tell you that tomato seeds germinate best in temperature ranges of 70-80F. However, James puts his seedlings through this horticultural boot camp in order to weed out any weak seedlings that wont pass snuff once out in the rough and tumble real world. It may take his seeds twice as long to germinate and perhaps come April

only about half of them have, but his method, he explains, capitalizes on the lessons of Darwinian evolution and the special capabilities of "the fittest".

Once germinated James keeps his lights close to the plants, adjusting their chain so they perpetually hover no more than 2-3 inches above the most apical stem for 16 hours each day. In addition, he ensures the plants are always moist and therefore developing strong roots by placing them in a shallow tray of standing water.

By the time winter finally breaks and gardeners' minds begin to turn to local plant sales and nursery visits, James, with the assistance of mother nature, has already selected his elite, go-to team of heirloom and cherry tomatoes. Among this troop, Brandywines are always at the fore, and this year James is also field testing Fourth of July as a possible replacement for his discontinued large cherry tomato standby, which he uses for making the perfect sundried tomato.

After properly hardening off his squad, perched upon the ledge of an open window in his house, James readies his plants for their first foray out into the sun. First, however, James prepares his soil with compost and manure in order to replenish the nutrients removed by last year's crop. Then in late May, he releases his young seedlings into the wild, transplanting them into his meticulously prepped plot and then covering them with truncated milk jugs in order to protect them from the wind and harsh afternoon sun as they adjust to the outside world.

A few weeks after removing their protective covering and a few inches in vertical growth later, James prunes up his plants in order to isolate the leaves from any diseases that may lay latent in the soil from last year's crops. In addition, he removes any suckers, auxiliary growth that develops in the crotch of the primary stems, in order to focus the plants energy on existing growth and flower development. Finally, just before his plants are about to fruit, he indulges his plants with a shot of fish emulsion with a cow manure chaser and then waits for the impending explosion of crimson, pleated globes.

Last year James took home over 120 lbs of tomatoes from his 80 square feet of gardening space, quite a haul by any standard. So if you happen to run into James around the garden this year and you want to shake his hand for his exceptional commitment to the cultivation of *L. esculentum*, be warned that you might just end up with an armful of ripe tomatoes.

Gardening Corner:

1. Continually harvest the apical most leaves on your basil plants to stimulate lateral growth and prevent them from going to seed. This will also lead to heartier more productive plants throughout the season.

2. Top dress your garden with some compost midseason. The compost acts as a mulch, keeping moisture in your soil, while supplying your plants with a healthy shot of nutrients.

3. It is better to give your plants a deep watering every 2-3 days rather than a light watering everyday in order to develop healthy root growth.

4. Sugar snap peas become dry and starchy once the weather turns hot. Pull them as well as any greens that have bolted and sew a second crop, such as spinach, beets, radishes, or carrots, for a fall harvest.

5. Harvest tomatoes just as their color is starting to turn and then store them inside for 4-5 days at 59-70F for a perfectly ripened and delectable tomato.



Community Victory Gardens

Each year the Garden donates produce from commonly tended plots to local food banks in the Providence area. This year, we have already delivered 95lbs of organic produce as part of a larger effort by local growers to win the war on hunger here in Providence. If you would like to donate produce from your own plot, please leave it in the Rubbermaid container by the community board.