



fenway victory gardens

The Richard D. Parker Memorial Victory Gardens

America's Oldest Victory Gardens, est. 1942



Spring Cleanup Boasts Over 70 Volunteers



More than 70 volunteers braved the raw weather on Sunday, April 6 and made a huge improvement to the Back Bay Fens' cleanliness.

Cleaning up after winter, volunteers worked raking, picking up trash, chipping, paths, and turning the compost area, donating over 210 combined man-hours of work.

"At Massachusetts' value of \$19/hour for donated effort, that totals almost \$4000 in value," said Joe Axelrod, VP of the Park.

"We have no paid staff to

do things, and we have some unique challenges being in a public park which often leads to a need for this type of clean up," Axelrod said.

Some of the challenges not addressed in the clean ups are still in need of attention.

The FGS is looking for volunteers to help form and run a compost committee to effectively manage the rich compost that is generated.

"Compost management has come a long way in the last few years," said Victoria Stock, Sr. VP of Administration for the park who is now coordinating the compost committee. "In the past we have paid hazardous waste rates to just remove the dumped debris because of the diverse contents of the

piles. Now that we have organized areas and signage, we need to institute professional management so we can all benefit from rich, locally produced compost."

Please contact an FGS Board Member to volunteer for the Compost Committee or any other tasks. The next park clean up is set for June 7, 2008.



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Record Breaking Donations for 2008 Season



Half of all renewing gardeners made a cash contribution to the FGS with their renewal application this year, raising a record sum of \$5,405.

The average donation was approximately \$50 per participating gardener. A complete listing of the donors appears online at the FGS website.

Please see: fenwayvictorygardens.com.

The FGS is reserving funds raised from these donations for two major projects:

1. Replacing the aging perimeter fencing.
2. Overhauling the current irrigation system.

Joe Axelrod, VP of the Park said, "The strong gardener donation participation rate, and amount raised also has an indirect benefits.

Foundations often use the

participation rate and amount raised as a sign that a non-profit applying for funds is supported by the community and are more likely to grant fund requests from such community-supported not-for-profits.

"Many potential funders also look to the value of contributed effort as one way of assessing a not-for-profit's appeal to its community and worthiness of support," said Axelrod.

All-Garden Meeting May 4



NOTICE:

The Spring 2008 general meeting is scheduled for 11 a.m. At Morville House, May 4, 2008.

All gardeners, as well as the public, are welcome.

Tree Problem is a BIG Issue –Garden Society’s Future at Stake

Tree height is not just a problem that eats thousands of dollars of the FGS annual budget, but an issue threatening to jeopardize the very existence of the Victory Gardens.

The Back Bay Fens is designated a historic landmark, and the Victory Gardens operate within this historic park. Because part of the operating regulations state that tree height must be below 5 feet, the Victory Gardens as a whole is considered non-compliant and in violation of its own regulations.

Gardeners that have a tree or shrub problem have been notified, and while some have trimmed their trees, there are still dozens of violators that must bring their gardens into compliance immediately.



Avoid planting all Arborvitae and “Christmas Trees” A Douglas Fir can quickly reach 100 feet, well beyond the level of maintenance for most gardeners. If you have any tree, it

must be capped or removed at once.

Fast growing Weeping or Curly Willows, Sugar Maples, or other tall and fast growing trees must also be avoided. Also, be sure to promptly remove any Chinese Trees of Heaven as these grow very tall very quickly, and will reproduce prolifically.

Peach trees, Magnolia, Apple, Chinese Dogwood, Plum, False Cypress, Crab Apple, and Oriental Cherry trees will all grow to 10 feet or taller. Gardeners with existing such trees can either cut them down, dig them up and remove them, or plan to dwarf them and submit an official compliance plan to the Board.

Trees should be pruned after blossoming if you plan to dwarf them. Functional pruning should remove suckers at the base, emphasize the desired shape, remove dead or diseased wood, or clipping of the terminal (top main) stem to emphasize lateral rather than vertical growth.

A New Approach to Garden Selection

This season, the FGS received over three dozen new gardener applications and has granted plots to over one third of new applicants so far, using a new self-selection process.

The new process is designed to build gardener commitment to the plot by letting them select the plot. This is the new process:

- 1) identifying which gardens are vacant (not a trivial task!)
- 2) giving the prospective new gardeners information about the sections and a plot plan showing which gardens are vacant, and
- 3) letting them “self tour” and identify their top choices.

FGS then lines up the top choices breaking ties by letting the applicant with the earlier application submission have preference.

This new process is why you may have been seeing people wandering the rows maps in hand. The FGS is kicking off the second round of plot selections now, so you should be seeing more—please welcome them.

Please Welcome New Gardeners: [Name / New Plot #]

Boylston Section -

Stephanie Canty (B17)
Dennis Fiori (A19)
Esi Lamouse (E4)
Paul McConoghy (C3)
Eileen Nalley (D30)
Jules Opton-Himmel (D23)
Fern Ritchie (D4)
Michael Sanchez (B2)

Park Section -

Adrienne Allen (O7)
Matthew Altman (O8)
Geoffrey Tanner (O24)

Center South -

Natasha Bates (U6)
Stephen Merrigan (U5)
Fred Cobey (T9)
Heather Silverberg (T10)

Center North -

Andrew Bolton (Z21)
Donna Frissell (Y22)
Kathryn Larsen (Y32)
Jason Walcutt (Z1)



Heavy pruning on top causes leaves and branches to grow, whereas root trimming will reduce leafy growth but increase production of flowers and fruit.

Cutting tips of new growth prompts lateral branching. If two branches rub, cut the smaller of the two. Take note that branch position does not change as the tree grows. A branch at 3 feet now will remain at the same height as the tree ages.

There are many tree experts available at the gardens. For help with your tree, please contact any Board Member.

Plant Nursery Undergoing 2-Ton Makeover

Led by FGS stalwarts Marie Fukuda and Tim Horn, the plant nursery, is getting a complete makeover. The effort includes building 4 new 12' x 3' beds and adding at least 2 tons of soil.

The nursery is located on the V Row across from the wheel barrows. Its purpose is to provide a venue for FGS gardeners to exchange plants.

Often through natural propagation, gardeners' plants spread beyond gardeners' space. Having a nurs-

ery makes it possible for those gardeners to divide the plant and to put the excess into the nursery for some gardener needing plants.

Note that this is a free exchange. Additionally, some common plants aren't welcome. For example, the indestructible Day Lilies that are now found in so many plots and that spread energetically aren't needed. Of course, no one should put invasive species e.g., Purple Loosetrife into the nursery.



Nursery located next to the wheelbarrow area.

Bulk Orders

Some of you may have noticed the bulk delivery order forms sent out last month. For those who wish to purchase fencing, mulch, manure, or other bulky garden items, the VP of the park is arranging bulk order delivery. To take advantage of this be sure to complete and return the bulk order forms, or Contact Joe Axelrod to Make arrangements.

ID Cards

Please find your FGS plot assignment and ID card in this newsletter doubling as the mailing address label. You may cut this out and keep it with you. It has your plot number and entitles you to discounts listed on the FGS website.

Plot Numbers

It has been recommended by the Parks Department and the Police that all gardeners number their gates. Everyone has a garden row letter, and a plot number (like A18) which identifies the plot. To assist in plot ID and safety, please post small metal markers, stencils, or other such label at least one inch high.

Water

The water crew has begun the annual Spring water and leaky pipe repair. When you visit your garden, be sure that your water nozzle is OFF.

Plumbing experience or not, the water



crew would love your help. Duties include digging, fetching pipes, fitting pipes, and testing for leaks. To join up, or to report water leaks in your area, contact Arthur Rose, or Richard Dunshiee.

Parking

If you MUST drive into the garden momentarily to load or unload, never drive on the to grass, or anywhere that is not unpaved.

Drivers that stray beyond the paved path are the biggest source of pipe breakage.

JOES COMPOST CORNER

-By Joe Axelrod

I was thinking about "improving the gardening experience," recently as we are experimenting with a number of initiatives designed to make gardening at The Fens more fun. You can find news of them sprinkled throughout this issue of the newsletter. Among them are included:

- Making it easier to get heavy, bulky materials such as soil and lumber through bulk purchases
- Involving new gardeners more in the selection of their plots
- Testing building gates and fences for gardeners to see what it takes
- Communicating more, and making the VP of the Park accessible
- Encouraging volunteerism
- Clarifying the rules and applying them fairly i.e., to everyone

Why do we call these efforts experiments? Because we are still in the process of trying things, seeing what works (what FGS gardeners want) and what doesn't. Thus, there is an important role for all of us in being willing to experiment, being tolerant of the mistakes that will inevitably occur as we try new things, and giving feedback on how well it worked. The long and the short of it - Let us know what you're thinking!

Joe Axelrod
VP of the Park

Boston Natural Areas Network [BNAN] Gives FGS "Hall of Fame Award"



Ed Debortoli, (left) accepted the award from Mayor Thomas Menino, at the BNAN Annual Gardener's Gathering.

**Fenway Garden Society
Spring Newsletter 2008**

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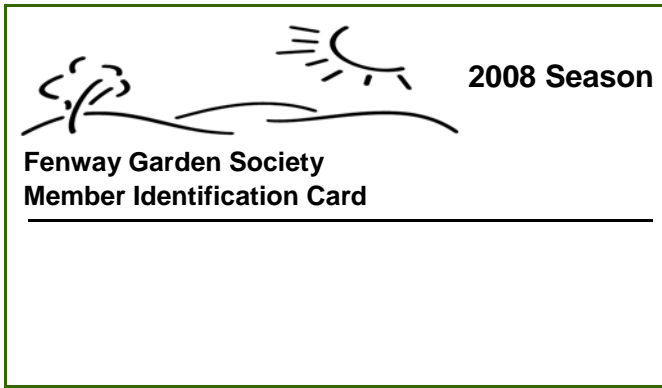
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Timothy Horn

Senior VP of Administration:
Victoria Stock

VP of Communications and
Development: Richard Rogers

Treasurer:
Andrew (Skip) Naumnik

Vice President of the Park:
Joe Axelrod



Deliver

TO:



The FGS **Membership Identification Card** not only lists your plot number(s), but also entitles you to discounts at local garden retailers and hardware stores. All affiliations are listed at the website. We are currently seeking new sponsors for the member discount program and welcome any gardeners who have a relationship with local businesses to contact Richard Rogers to set up a discount program.

On the web at <http://fenwayvictorygardens.com>

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April

- 1—New Garden Assignments begin.
- 20-(Week of) Soil Delivery
- 23-Spring Newsletter
- Last Week-Garden Inspections

May

- 4-All Garden Meeting**
- 20 Garden Judging
- 22 Board Meeting
- Last Week-Garden Inspections

June

- 7—All Garden Clean-up #2
- 20-Garden Judging
- 21—Summer Newsletter
- 26— Board Meeting
- 29-Fens Fest Planning Meeting
- Last Week-Garden Inspections

July

- 20-Garden Judging
- 26-Fens Fest Planning Meeting
- 24—Board Meeting
- Last Week-Garden Inspections

August

- 10—All Garden Clean-up #3
- 20-Garden Judging
- 21— Board Meeting
- 23-Fens Fest Planning Meeting
- 31—Fall Newsletter

September

- 20-Fens Fest** (Rain Date 21)
- 21—Garden Inspections
- 25— Board Meeting

October

- 11— All Garden Clean-up #4
- 12—Final Garden Inspections
- 23—Board Meeting

November

- 20— Board Meeting

December

- 6—All Garden Meeting**

NOTE: All Fens Fest Planning Meetings are scheduled for 10:30 a.m.

The Fenway Garden Society is a non-profit organization that oversees the Fenway Victory Gardens. We are located on 7 acres in the part of the Emerald Necklace Known as the Fens. We have approximately 300 members gardening 500 garden plots, and are the oldest remaining Victory Garden in the country. The Fenway Victory Garden Newsletter is aimed to keep our garden community up to date on the latest happenings at The Fenway Garden Society and surrounding community.

Please send comments, suggestions or submissions c/o Richard Rogers : richard@richard-rogers.com