

Camden City Garden Club, Inc.
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The Community Gardener

Volume 2 Issue 1

www.CamdenChildrensGarden.org

January 2010



** The Children's Garden is closed to the public from January 4th to March 20th, 2010. The Garden offices are open all year round. **

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Newly-Formed Community Gardening Councils Get Ready for Next Season

In December of 2009 two new groups met at the Camden Children's Garden: The Community Gardening Leadership Council and the Faith-Based Community Gardening Leadership Council. The purpose of these groups is for the community gardeners to meet and share their triumphs and trials in the garden and brainstorm ideas for the future of the Camden City Garden Club's Community Garden Program.

Gardeners from thirteen different community gardens and faith-based community gardens met on December 11th and 12th at the Camden Children's Garden. The gardeners enjoyed snacks as they talked about the past season and the future of the program, including new ways in which to share their harvest with the community, avoid vandalism, and

the possibility of erecting shade structures, signage, and benches in some locations. The Faith-Based group proposed establishing a new community garden at Antioch Manor, a senior housing residence in Centerville, and several gardeners also offered the use of their bus to take club members on educational field trips. The Community Gardening Leadership Council members brainstormed ways to get more community members involved in their gardens, and expressed interest in a garden tour and other social events in each other's gardens. Everyone in attendance said that they enjoyed being a part of the Camden City Garden Club and they are excited to help direct the Community Garden Program in the future.



The Community Gardening Leadership Council



The Faith-Based Community Gardening Leadership Council

NEXT GARDEN CLUB MEETING: MONDAY, March 15, 2010 @ 5:30 pm!

The 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show

"Soup & Salad: From Camden to the World"

Feb. 28th to March 7th, 2010



The Camden Children's Garden's 2010

Flower Show exhibit, "Soup & Salad: From Camden to the World," represents a children's vegetable garden that will promote nutrition. The exhibit focuses on the kinds of vegetables that are harvested in Camden's community gardens - many of which can be grown easily in urban gardens in our region. A larger-than-life sculpted soup bowl and salad plate will serve as fanciful containers for the plants that will become the nutritious ingredients often found in soup and salad. Blended throughout the display will be plump tomatoes, spicy peppers, mineral-laden potatoes, vitamin-rich lettuce, carrots, Swiss chard and other high-fiber plants such as broccoli and cabbage. This productive children's vegetable garden features savory herbs such as purple basil, oregano, rosemary and sage. Garden-fresh herbs are not only flavor enhancers, but also rich sources of antioxidants, and they allow chefs to create delicious, low-calorie and sodium-light dishes. This exhibit will represent the beauty and practicality of vegetable gardening in urban settings, in addition to promoting healthy eating for children.

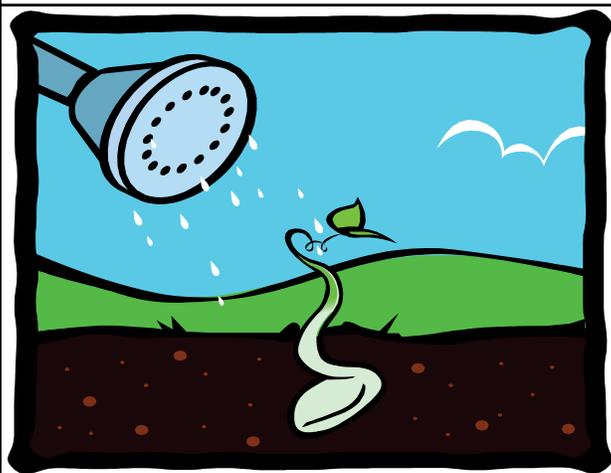
To enhance the whimsy of this children's exhibit, the garden will also include flowers such as tall mallow, snapdragons, astilbe, Persian shield, clematis, impatiens, and a children's favorite, lamb's ear. Throughout the exhibit will be educational signage to teach visitors about the nutritional value of plants.

The exhibit also represents Camden, N.J. The iconic Campbell's soup factory and soup-can water tower signify the rich industrial history of this struggling city. The windmill with the Camden Children's Garden logo symbolizes the old-fashioned farm machine's revival as a great way to reduce our carbon footprint. Once used on farms and in factories for pumping water or milling grain, windmills are now utilized around the globe as a *green* source of energy generation.

After the Flower Show, much of the exhibit will return to the Campbell Soup Headquarters in Camden. The Soup Factory shed will go to the Camden Children's Garden, where it will be used as a refrigerator to store fresh produce.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

The Camden Children's Garden depends on the help of volunteers to make this exhibit possible. We use this opportunity to meet people who may have an interest in public gardens in the hopes that we can encourage them to visit the Camden Children's Garden. Your job at the exhibit is to help us with that goal. A volunteer shift is four hours long, and you get free admission to the Flower Show for the day of your shift. If you are interested in volunteering with us at the Flower Show, contact Frank at fschmidt@camdenchildrensgarden.org or (856) 365 8733.



Next Club Meeting in March!

The Camden City Garden Club will take a winter meeting hiatus in the months of January and February, 2010. The offices are still open, so please feel free to call the Children's Garden with any questions you have about your garden. And be sure to mark your calendars for the first meeting of 2010, which will take place on Monday, March 15, 2010, at 5:30pm. The topic of discussion will be preparing your garden for cool spring planting and there will be veggie transplants available to take home! (The Camden City Garden Club meets on the 3rd Monday of the month from March to December.)

Reflections On My First Community Garden Plot

by Josh Dupuis

(Josh is a gardener at the Clare House of the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry at St. Anthony and at the St. Anthony of Padua Community Garden in Cramer Hill.)

I arrived in Camden around mid-August of last year. I was beginning a year of service for the Franciscans at Saint Anthony of Padua in Cramer Hill. I was soon informed about the creation of a community garden across the street from the church and joined in as soon as I could. It was my first experience with gardening, but I was quite excited to start my first season of fall vegetables.

As the season progressed, my Swiss chard, romaine, and spinach flourished. My plots grew such an abundance of greens I was able to give back to neighbors and members of the community. I was able to regularly supply an HIV/AIDS support ministry known as Francis House twice a week

with fresh salads. Often times, people would walk by and slow down as they passed the garden with looks of curiosity. I was able to speak with them about what we were hoping to accomplish with the community garden and share some of the benefits.

Yet, all good things must come to an end, as did my first season of growing. In December, there was a particularly cold night and the morning after I noticed ice on the curb. I went to the garden and picked some spinach and the stems had been frozen. I gathered some bags and harvested all the remaining greens of Swiss chard and spinach. As this was my first season, I don't think I realized how tightly the vegetables had grown in on themselves. I had two big black bags of greens weighing several pounds. It was more than I could handle for a side salad at dinner that night. But luckily, there was a soup

kitchen in the area that was able to use every bit. I donated the produce to the kitchen, which has been serving meals to around 350 people a day for 30 years.

I truly enjoyed my first community garden experience, and I am anxious for the spring. I look forward to cultivating more green around the City of Camden, and using gifts of the earth to help those in the surrounding communities.



Josh shows off the ten pounds of spinach and Swiss chard he picked from his community garden plot at St. Anthony's Community Garden and donated to a soup kitchen.



PepsiCo's employee-run vegetable garden

(<http://jukebox.lohud.com/photos/refers/index.php?gallery=PEPSICO%20ORGANIC>)

Workplace Gardens Are a Growing Trend

Business owners across the country have started to realize the benefits of gardening and many companies have started employee-run community gardens. These gardens boost staff morale, promote healthy eating, complement a company's health and wellness program, provide employees with free produce, and give employees an

exciting reason to come to work. Some companies have even started donating the produce they grow to local food banks! Many small companies have gardens, but large ones are joining the ranks as well, including PepsiCo, which grows 25 different vegetables and 30 different herbs in its 58-plot organic garden in New York state.

Use some of your stored sweet potatoes along with fresh leeks and Swiss chard to make this delicious soup. Leeks are a milder tasting cousin of onions and garlic and have a very long growing season. They can be harvested throughout the year (until New Year's if properly mulched!), but should reach their largest size in September. Eat this soup with crusty bread for a hearty winter meal!



Sweet Potato and White Bean Soup

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- ◆ 2 cups leek, thinly sliced
- ◆ 3 cups chicken broth
- ◆ 1 cup water
- ◆ 2 cups sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- ◆ 4 cups chopped Swiss chard
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ 1 (15 or 19 oz) can cannellini or great northern beans, rinsed and drained
- ◆ 2 Tbsp. lemon juice

(Picture and recipe from <http://straightfromthefarm.net/2007/10/08/a-taste-of-autumn/>)

Clean the sliced leeks by swishing them in a large bowl of cold water, then let sit for 15 minutes. Scoop out the leeks and dry slightly on a kitchen towel. To prepare the soup, heat a soup pot over medium heat. Add the olive oil (or coat the pan with cooking spray). Add leek to pan; cook 8 minutes or until tender, stirring frequently. Stir in broth and 1 cup water; bring to a boil. Add potato; cook 10 minutes or until potato is tender. Stir in chard, pepper, salt, and beans; cook 3 minutes or until chard wilts. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice.

If you have an announcement, anecdote, recipe or story that you want to share with other gardeners, please feel free to call or email the garden (easmith@camdenchildrensgarden.org) and we will include it in next month's newsletter!

Support for this newsletter was provided by grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the William Penn Foundation.

"The Community Gardener" is a publication of the Camden City Garden Club, a 501 (c)(3) private, non-profit organization, registered in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Camden City Garden Club is the operator of the Camden Children's Garden on the Camden Waterfront.



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Come Outside And Play!