

Brooklyn Gardener



FALL 01–WINTER 02

Your Neighbors—Street Trees

As the days get shorter and the evenings feel crisper, our eyes lift to enjoy the vibrant shades of green leaves turning yellow, copper and red. Autumn turns our attention to street trees, the biggest and closest plants to us. Not only do they give us beauty, they also give us the most important contribution to our organic recycling activities—their fallen leaves. Street trees need our special concern.

Street trees are part of the 2.5 million trees that make up the urban forest of NYC. Often growing in poor conditions, trees can't pick up and move to greener pastures, so they must adapt to their surroundings or die. With renewed education and commitment, we can help improve conditions for street trees.



Judges roaming Brooklyn streets to review over 160 blocks that entered last summer's "Greenest Block in Brooklyn" Contest commented on a significant increase in citizen care of street trees. Evidence of street tree gardening—cleaning and mulching the tree pit, appropriate guards and plantings—gave blocks much-valued extra points, and showed judges how neighbors come together to care for these communal areas. Join these neighbors—be an advocate for street trees:

- Campaign for street trees through New York ReLeaf: (718) 522-1130
- Request new street trees where there are none by contacting your community board
- Organize your block association to care for street trees
- Adopt a street tree and get free tools and training from the NY Tree Trust: (212) 360-TREE. Also contact the Tree Trust's "Tree Rescue" program for street trees damaged by constricting tree guards, grates and sidewalks.
- Report tree damage—call Brooklyn Forestry for tree emergencies: (718) 768-0223.

The city owns street trees, but we walk by them and live beside them every day. For all their benefits, they deserve our help.

—Ellen Kirby, Director

Congratulations to the VERMONT AVENUE Block Association: 2001 Winner of the "Greenest Block in Brooklyn" Contest

Located in East New York between Sutter and Blake Avenues, the VERMONT AVENUE Block Association is an exuberant, colorful, and carefully tended block. Treat yourself and take a look.

OTHER WINNERS INCLUDE:

Second Place. TIE: Fuller Place (Windsor Terrace), State Street Cathedral (Boerum Hill), Vanderveer Place (East Flatbush)

Third Place. TIE: Fulton Street in Atlantic Village (Fort Greene), Fourteenth Street (Park Slope)

Honorable Mentions. MacDonough Street between Ralph and Howard, MacDonough Street between Lewis and Stuyvesant (both in Bedford-Stuyvesant), Lincoln Road, and Lamont Place (both in Crown Heights)

NEW! GREENEST BUSINESS BLOCK WINNERS:

First Place: Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corporation

Second Place: Washington Avenue Merchants Association

For directions to these beautiful blocks, call (718) 623-7250.

PLEASE POST!

GreenBridge Workshops

Pre-registration is required at least one week in advance for these workshops. Call (718) 623-7220. Free unless noted. Call (718) 623-7250 for class descriptions.

Indoor Worm Composting

Thursday, October 11, 6–8 pm (\$10 fee for NYC residents; \$28 for others)

Worm Composting for the Classroom

Saturday, October 13, 10 am–1 pm OR
Sunday, November 4, 12–3 pm (\$10 fee for NYC teachers; \$28 fee for others)

Composting in the City

Wednesday, October 24, 3–5 pm OR
Saturday, November 17, 10 am–12 pm

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FOR INFORMATION, CALL (718) 623-7250 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.



September 16 Harvest Fair at BBG, 12–5 pm (Note Date Change).

Saturdays until November 17

East NY Farms! Community Market, every Saturday, 10 am–3 pm at New Lots Avenue and Barbey Street. Now accepting WIC Farmer's Market checks. Call (718) 649-7979 x 14.

October 12 Deadline to sign up for the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway Walking Tour on October 19, 7 pm. Call (718) 852-1420 or email <mailto:ihpetong@bjmccormick.com>.

October 14 Chili Pepper Fiesta at BBG, 11 am–5:30 pm. Call (718) 623-7263 for details.

October 21 FREE COMPOST! And bins for \$20! 11 am–4 pm. For NYC residents. First come, first served. Sunset Park, South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, 29th St. and 2nd Ave.

October 21 Harvest Festival and Canine Costume Contest, 12–6 pm at the Narrows Botanical Gardens, Bay Ridge. Call (718) 748-9848.

October 28 Ghouls and Gourds at BBG, 12–4 pm. Call (718) 623-7263 for details.

November 2 Compost Bin Blowout deadline for ordering. Pick-up is November 17, 2–5 pm. Call (718) 623-7290.

November 3 Pumpkin Smash at Prospect Heights Community Farm. Call (718) 638-2615.

January 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Concert at BBG. Call (718) 623-7263.

Note: To list your garden's public events in the March–May Community Calendar, call (718) 623-7209 with details by January 7.



Introduction to Horticultural Therapy

Tuesday, October 25, 6–7:30 pm

Cool Season Gardening Ideas

Saturday, November 17, 11 am–1 pm

Street Tree Pit Care

Sunday, January 27, 1–3 pm.

Gardening with Children and Youth: For Adult Leaders

Thursday, October 18, 10 am–12 pm, OR
Thursday, January 17, 10 am–12 pm

CALLING ALL GARDENERS!

Check out the American Community Gardening Association website: www.communitygarden.org



Seasonal Tips

FALL

- Collect seeds from mature plants and store in a glass jar in the refrigerator until spring;
- Plant, divide, or move perennials, trees, and shrubs;
- Take cuttings from annuals (like coleus, geraniums) to propagate inside over the winter;
- Plant bulbs (including garlic!)—remember to water after planting;
- Plant cover crops or lay down a fresh layer of mulch (shredded fall leaves are great);
- Have soil tested (call us for more information or to decipher lab results).



WINTER

- Compost dead plant material (don't compost diseased plants);
- Clean up – put away tomato cages, clean tools and clay containers and bring inside;
- Set up a cold frame to keep gardening all winter;
- Plan your dream garden for 2002—call the Gardener's Help Line at BBG with garden questions: (718) 623-7270;
- Order catalogues for seeds and plants;
- Refill bird feeders regularly;
- Use sand instead of salt on sidewalks—salt leaches into tree pit soil and causes tree damage.



—Julie Warsowe
Manager of Community Horticulture

Brooklyn Botanic Garden gratefully acknowledges support for these programs from the Altman Foundation, Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Con Edison, The Dime Foundation, EAB, Greentree Foundation, The Independence Community Foundation, The New York City Environmental Fund, The Leonard and Claire Tow Charitable Trust, Inc., The Joseph LeRoy and Ann C. Warner Fund, United States Environmental Protection Agency/Environmental Education Grant, The New York City Department of Sanitation, Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden, the Brooklyn Delegation of the New York State Assembly and Senate, and State Senator Martin Connor.



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From the Heap...

Urban trees have it hard—hard and trampled soil, that is. The irony is that every year, trees shower us with a reminder that they provide their own answer to packed, lean soil—autumn leaves. What a shame that we often rake away this natural remedy, high in fiber and "pound for pound... twice the mineral content of manure" (*The Rodale Book of Composting*, 1992). As leaves decompose, they nourish the soil. It's only fair to let the trees get some of their investment back. Make mulch *from* trees for trees! Here's how:

Shred large leaves to make the mulch stay put. Big leaves, like oak and sycamore, crumble pretty easily when dry – stomp on a bag-full or scrunch with your hands.

Put leaves on top of the soil up to 3 inches thick—just remember to keep leaves a few inches away from the tree trunk to prevent bark from decaying.

Moisten the leaves when you first make your mulch; the water helps weigh down the mulch a bit and keeps it from blowing away.



Spotlight on...GIVE TREES A CHANCE!

They're in front of your community garden. They're outside your home. They're in front of the school down the street, or standing at the curb when you walk by. They're everywhere.

No, they're not tee-shirt hawkers or dog-walkers—they're street trees! Brooklyn is home to over 100,000 street trees, so there's probably one near you. It's tough to be a tree that grows in Brooklyn:

Temperatures in the city are higher than in trees' natural home, the forest

Surrounded by concrete and asphalt, it's harder for water and air to reach roots

Urban soil is compacted—water and oxygen can't percolate through, and roots can't grow into packed soil

Bicycles, trucks, and car doors smash into trees causing wounds or hanging branches

Support wires or badly designed guards strangle trees over time

Harmful materials leach into the soil—salt, dog waste, bleach, motor oil

Yet healthy street trees are so valuable. Trees cool our streets. They add beauty and raise property values. They cut down

Save up some leaves from the fall harvest (in bags or piles) to replenish the mulch as it breaks down.

A reminder for those of you with too many leaves (and for others who might be on the prowl for pre-bagged leaves):

The NYC Department of Sanitation will offer fall leaf recycling pick-up services for certain community boards (in Brooklyn—CBs 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18). Look in the mail in October for details from DOS. To find out what board you live in, call the Brooklyn Borough President's Action Center at (718) 802-3777. Also stay posted for the Parks Department Christmas Tree "Mulchfest." Other places to turn for information: the Sanitation Action Center at (212) 219-8090 and our BBG Compost Help Line (718) 623-7290.

—Patricia Jasaitis,
Urban Composting Project Coordinator

on wind and noise. They give oxygen and reduce air pollution. They absorb storm water run-off to prevent flooding. Trees connect us to the natural world.

TO HELP, TRY THESE W'S:

Water... Trees benefit from 10 to 20 gallons of water a week, especially young trees. Water slowly, so that water seeps into compacted soil.

Weed... Keep the soil free of weeds and trash. Add a layer of mulch to stop weed growth, conserve moisture, and add organic matter.

Watch... Watch over your tree to prevent vandalism. Ask dog-walkers to avoid your tree. Protect your tree with a guard—call (718) 623-7209 for a tip sheet.

Call Brooklyn GreenBridge at (718) 623-7209 for more information on street tree care—like widening the pit and planting flowers safely—and the Asian Longhorned Beetle. Call Trees NY for their in-depth "Citizen Pruner" course: (212) 227-1887.

—JW

DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE POST

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