

Brooklyn Gardener

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THE NEWSLETTER OF BROOKLYN GREENBRIDGE • BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

GreenBridge Launches New Workshops on Community Gardening

Did you ever wonder how to get involved in a community garden in Brooklyn? Are you a leader of a community garden who wants new skills to recruit members, organize committees, and create new outreach programs? To celebrate the tenth anniversary of GreenBridge, we are launching a new component of our popular Registered Garden Program. We now have over a hundred gardens registered in Brooklyn GreenBridge, the community horticulture program of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Participants in GreenBridge Registered Gardens are encouraged to attend a GreenBridge workshop at least once a year (see workshops listing). Additionally, we suggest that novice community gardeners register for our new workshop, **Community Gardening 101: How to Grow Your Community Garden**, which will be held Tuesday, November 18, 2003. A second workshop, **Community Gardening 102: How to Revitalize Your Community Garden**, will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2004, for more experienced gardeners or those who attended Community Gardening 101. Leaders for both workshops will be GreenBridge staff, Ellen Kirby and Robin Simmen.

We will utilize a curriculum, sponsored by the American Community Gardening Association, called Growing Communities Curriculum: Community Building and Organizational Development through Community Gardening. Each participant will receive a copy to use in the workshop and will also be able to purchase one to take home at a reduced price. (If anyone wants to order a copy of the curriculum directly from ACCGA, you can order it on-line at www.communitygarden.com).

This workshop has three goals:

- to revitalize community gardens in Brooklyn
- to share information about the latest resources and techniques in community gardening
- to build and strengthen leadership in community gardens.

For new community gardeners, we hope you will become better acquainted with the vast horticultural resources here at Brooklyn Botanic Garden and throughout the city. For experienced community-garden leaders, we hope you will learn some new techniques for developing new leaders in your community garden. To register for any Brooklyn GreenBridge workshop, call the BBG Registration Office at (718) 623-7220.

—Ellen Kirby, Director



Spotlight on... Designing a Garden with Native Plants

Would you like more birds and butterflies in your garden? Designing a naturalistic garden is a wonderful project for fall and winter months. First, analyze your site to determine its soil type, normal moisture, and sun/shade patterns. Then research the plant communities native to North America that are best suited to those conditions. For example, if your garden space is hot, dry, and sunny, choose drought-tolerant plants like black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), aromatic asters (*Aster oblongifolius*), and butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), all of which naturally inhabit dry open fields and produce beautiful summer flowers.

A partially shaded, moister area is a good place to grow woodland species. How about planting a small flowering tree or two—such as an Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), a dogwood (*Cornus florida*), or an Allegheny serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*)—to recreate a forest habitat? Woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), foam-flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and many ferns are at home beneath a shady tree.

Half the fun of designing a garden for native plants is learning about them. For inspiration about plant communities native to Brooklyn and Long Island, take a walk through the Native Flora Garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. It is open April through November, Tuesday through Sunday.

—Robin Simmen, Community Horticulture Program Manager

PLEASE POST!



GreenBridge Workshops

Pre-registration is required at least one week in advance for these workshops; call 718-623-7220 to register. Free, but space is limited.

Street Tree Pit Gardening Tuesday, September 16 • 6-8 pm

Gardening with Children and Youth Thursday, September 25 • 10 am-12 pm
OR Wednesday, January 7 • 1-3 pm

Bulbs for Public Spaces Wednesday, October 15 • 6-7:30 pm

Mulches and Compost Wednesday, October 29 • 6-8 pm

Community Gardening 101 Tuesday, November 18 • 6-7:30 pm.

Rainwater Harvesting Tuesday, January 13 • 6-7:30 pm

Community Gardening 102 Saturday, January 31 • 1-4 pm

Harvest Fair
2003

Children's activities, music & dancing, country crafts and urban garden harvest tips. September 13, 11 am-5 pm at BBG.

Save the Date!
Making Brooklyn
Bloom
2004

SATURDAY, MARCH 13

10 AM-3:30 PM

Palm House, Brooklyn Botanic Garden

Kick off the garden season with free workshops, exhibits and tours.

Free, but you must register at 10 am on the day of the event.

From the Heap... Winter Mulch Protects Plants and Trees

Last winter was so cold, you may have lost perennials to soil heave, which uproots new plants. Or perhaps your evergreens were dehydrated because the soil was frozen solid. You can protect perennials and trees by mulching around them to control soil temperature. In the woods, autumn spreads a blanket of leaves that insulates plant roots and nourishes the soil with minerals that plants need. Here are some winter mulches we can use to help nature in the city:

- **Autumn leaves** are plentiful and free. Chop or shred leaves to make them permeable to rain, then moisten and spread them around your plants and trees, up to 3 inches deep.
- **Compost** is excellent feeding mulch. Consider mixing it with leaf mulch and applying it up to 3 inches deep.
- **Wood chips** decompose slowly, don't rob soil of its nitrogen, and are attractive. Spread them 2-4 inches thick. Here in Brooklyn you can get them free at Green-Wood Cemetery! (See below.)
- **Evergreen boughs** provide protection for perennials in windy spots and are good for erosion control in the winter. The branches should be removed in the spring.

Don't spread mulch around your perennials until they are completely dormant and temperatures have dropped below freezing. Otherwise, winter mulch can smother plants and breed disease. Mulch wide and not deep. Too much mulch is not a good thing. Avoid creating "mulch volcanoes" around tree trunks and plants, which can rot and kill them.

Besides feeding and insulating the soil, mulch adds visual appeal to your winter garden. So this year, give it a new winter coat, and your plants will thank you in the spring.

—RS

Free Wood Chips at Green-Wood Cemetery

Green-Wood Cemetery keeps a pile of free wood chips for the public to pick up inside its main gate at Fifth Avenue and 25th Street in Brooklyn. The security guard will show you where to go. After Labor Day, the gate is open to the public from 8 am to 5 pm. Call (718) 768-7300 for more information.

Congratulations to the 2003 Winners of the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest!



MacDonough Street

Honorable Mentions:

- Barbey St. Block Assoc. for Barbey St. between Dumont and Livonia (East New York)
- Citizens for a Better Community for East 39th St. between Foster and Farragut (East Flatbush)
- Fuller Place Block Assoc. for Fuller Place between Prospect and Windsor Place (Windsor Terrace)
- Vanderveer Place Block Assoc. for Vanderveer Place between Flatbush and East 23rd (Flatbush)
- Vermont St. Block Assoc for Vermont St. between Blake and Sutter (East New York)
- 8th St. Block Assoc. for 8th St. between 7th and 8th Aves (Park Slope)

Business Block Winner:

Metrotech Business Improvement District for Bridge St. between Willoughby & Fulton (Downtown)

Second Place (Tie): Mid-Atlantic Block Assoc. for Atlantic Avenue between Bond and Nevins (Boerum Hill); Washington Ave. Merchants Assoc. for Washington Ave. between Prospect Place and St. Marks (Crown Heights)

Residential Block Winner:

MacDonough-Macon-Stuyvesant-Lewis Association for MacDonough St. between Stuyvesant and Lewis (Bedford-Stuyvesant)

Second Place: State St. Cathedral Block Assoc. for State St. between Hoyt and Bond (Boerum Hill)

Third Place: 300 East 25th St. Block Assoc. for East 25th St. between Clarendon and Foster (East Flatbush)

Fourth Place: Lincoln Place Block Assoc. for Lincoln Place between Utica and Rochester (Crown Heights)



Bridge Street

GREENBRIDGE STAFF


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Hello and Welcome to Robin Simmen!

With great pleasure, we welcomed our new staff Manager of Community Horticulture, Robin Simmen, on March 3, 2003. A graduate of Cornell University and the Conway School of Landscape Design, Robin recently worked as a land-use planner in western Massachusetts. A long-time Brooklyn resident, she knows Brooklyn and BBG well, having worked as a children's garden instructor in our BCAP program and in a community garden. Now that she has the full slate of spring and summer events at GreenBridge under her belt, she is starting to feel right at home and loves her new job. She can be reached at (718) 623-7209 or at robinsimmen@bbg.org.

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