

Brooklyn Gardener

THE NEWSLETTER OF BROOKLYN GREENBRIDGE • Brooklyn Botanic Garden • FALL 2004/WINTER 2005

Tales of a Greener City

How does our GreenBridge network connect folks throughout Brooklyn neighborhoods? It works through the efforts of countless green thumbs like you: people who plant, water, weed, and weave their blocks into a greener city for us all. Here are some of your stories from the field:

“Last September I took your Street Tree Pit workshop,” says **Nina Browne**. “Learning that raised soil could kill a tree motivated me to form a Street Tree & Garden committee of our **Rutland One Block Association**. At our next block clean-up day, we did a very visible tree pit remediation, removing raised soil, altering the tree guard, watering and mulching. Since then, four households have asked for assistance in getting the Parks Department to fill their empty tree pits. Trees really do bring people together!”

Residents of the YWCA in downtown Brooklyn attended a GreenBridge gardening workshop and planted a garden on top of their building, using containers donated by Lexington Gardens. “Bringing this rooftop garden to life has been a very empowering experience,” says **Rolinda Ordonez**, the Residence Director. Resident **Sonia Pais** adds, “In the evening, the garden is really gorgeous! I water and pinch back the plants. We have a good team of women working together, and it’s so satisfying.”

For three years, the **Washington Avenue Merchants Association** won second place in the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest commercial category. **Leroy Gaines**, Executive Director of WAMA, says “Since first entering the contest, we’ve planted over 100 trees and installed about 150 sidewalk containers and window boxes. We’ve received recognition from visitors, politicians, and plant lovers for the work GreenBridge has inspired us to do.” **Douglas Williamson**, a local

“Doing gardening, you meet your neighbors!”

business owner, agrees that “Vandalism hasn’t stopped us. We’ve replanted again and again, and now the kids say, “Hey, the neighborhood looks nice.”

Hazel Foster graduated from the first Master Composter class in 1999 and has attended almost every GreenBridge composting event since then. In addition, she has entered the **East 25th Street Block Association** in the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest for the last 9 years. “Doing gardening, you meet your neighbors,” Hazel says. “As a master composter, I’ve been able to educate the block at large, and many of my neighbors now have compost bins.”

So keep up the good work Brooklyn! We hope to see you in some of the free classes we’re offering this fall and winter (see list of workshops below). And thank you for all you do to make our city a greener place to live.

—Robin Simmen, Community Horticulture Program Manager



Jedidiah Harris and Ann Todd at the YWCA

From the Heap . . . Compost Comeback!

The popular GreenBridge **Urban Composting Project** is returning this September, thanks to renewed funding by the NYC Department of Sanitation, Bureau of Recycling. Composting, a method of turning organic waste into rich humus, is a win-win practice that benefits the environment, saves money, and encourages urban greening.

This fall, our top priority will be educating Brooklyn residents about the resumed leaf collection. As we work to encourage residents to “turn in their leaves” for collection by the NYC Department of Sanitation, we will help reduce NYC solid waste and create black gold for our gardens next spring.

Biodegradable paper bags will be available for sale at large hardware stores. BBG Master Composters will be actively involved in promoting this effort and will be visibly on hand to answer your questions at composting events and in neighborhood workshops. We will also participate in the Christmas Tree Recycling program and are offering more composting workshops for beginners and advanced learners. Other popular programs that may be revived in the spring include compost givebacks and compost-bin sales.

If you have questions or ideas about composting or about these programs or if you would like to assist in these efforts, call the Brooklyn GreenBridge COMPOST HELP LINE at (718) 623-7290.

—Ellen Kirby, Director

Harvest Fair

2004

Children’s activities, music & dancing, country crafts and urban gardening workshops and harvest tips.

September 12, 12pm-5 pm at BBG.

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 in classes is limited.

Gardening with Children and Youth

Thursday, September 16 * 10 am-12 pm

Mulches and Compost

Tuesday, September 28 * 6-8 pm

Drip Irrigation

Tuesday, October 19 * 6-8 pm

Community Gardening 101

Tuesday, November 9 * 6-8 pm

Greening Up Your Storefront

Tuesday, January 11 * 6-8 pm

Composting in the City

Wednesday, January 19 * 6-8 pm

SAVE THE DATE

Making Brooklyn Bloom

2005

Saturday, March 12, 10am-3:30 pm

Palm House, Brooklyn Botanic Garden
Kick off the gardening season with free workshops, exhibits and tours.

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

Spotlight on . . . Horticulture Therapy

For children in the city, exploring the outdoors is a challenge, and for those born with developmental disabilities, connecting with nature can be even more difficult. As part of the worldwide movement in horticulture therapy, GreenBridge is helping to design and implement a horticulture program for the Brooklyn Children's Program at United Cerebral Palsy School of New York City. The children here, who have various physical challenges, have responded extremely well to the sensory, cognitive, and motor stimulation in our soil and planting activities. Although these kids have few opportunities to play in the dirt, most of them enjoy getting their hands dirty, planting, and watering flowers.

Nashamaya is a preschooler with cerebral palsy who is very sensitive to touch. He never wants to put his hands in the soil. One day after our usual indoor planting activity, the class went outdoors to a rock garden. We helped some of the children get out of their wheelchairs so they could lean over and experience it. As the kids touched the textured rocks and the fuzzy, prickly, alpine plants, many smiled and laughed and looked at us curiously. I passed a rock around for the kids who were still in their chairs to touch, and as I placed it in front of Nashamaya, he lifted his hand and rubbed it. I was amazed to see his interest and response. Touching soil may be unpleasant for him, but now we know he is responsive to other textures, like rocks and flowers; discovering this is part of the horticulture therapy process.

We are also working with a garden program of the Brooklyn Public Library, Flatlands Branch, called the "Child's Place for Children with Special Needs" Garden Program, and with the Paradise Garden of P.S. 4K. **GreenBridge is once again hosting a Horticulture Therapy Network for Brooklyn teachers, professionals, and volunteers who are involved in the field of horticulture therapy.** If you are interested in attending the next meeting, please contact me at (718) 623-7290, or email emilyneustrom@bbg.org.

—Emily Neustrom, Horticulture Therapy and Community Outreach Intern

Congratulations to the 2004 Winners of the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest!

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest. For inspiration on how to green up your block, visit any of the stunning winners listed below!



East 25th Street

Residential Block Winner:

E. 25th Street Block Assoc. for E. 25th St. between Clarendon and Avenue D (Flatbush)

Second Place: Lincoln Road R&B Block Assoc. for Lincoln Rd. between Rogers and Bedford (Lefferts Gardens)

Third Place (Tie): Bridge Plaza Beautification Civic Assoc. for Concord St. between Duffield Place and Gold St. (Bridge Plaza); Vanderveer Place Block Assoc. for Vanderveer Place between Flatbush and E. 23rd St. (Flatbush)

Honorable Mentions:

- 8th St. between 7th and 8th Aves (Park Slope) • 102nd St. between Aves. L and M (Canarsie)
- E. 49th St. between Lenox and Linden (East Flatbush) • Barbey St. between Livonia and Dumont (East NY) • Bliss Terrace between 68th and 69th Sts. (Bay Ridge) • Fenimore St. between Rogers and Bedford (Lefferts Gardens) • Fuller Place between Prospect and Windsor Place (Windsor Terrace) • Macon St. between Stuyvesant and Lewis (Bedford Stuyvesant) • Prospect Park SW between 11th Ave. and 16th St. (Windsor Terrace) • Schenectady Ave. between Ave. D and Foster (East Flatbush)
- State St. between Hoyt and Bond (Boerum Hill)
- Vermont St. between Blake and Sutter (East New York)

Business Block Winner:

AaNT Association of the Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corporation for Atlantic Ave. between Nevins and Third Ave., North Side (Boerum Hill)

Second Place : Mid-Atlantic Block Association for Atlantic Ave. between Bond and Nevins St., North Side (Boerum Hill)

Third Place: Washington Avenue Merchants Association for Washington Ave. between Prospect Place and St. Marks Ave., East Side (Crown Heights)

Honorable Mention: Hoyt Street between Atlantic Ave. and State St, East Side (Boerum Hill)



Atlantic Avenue

GOT QUESTIONS? GET HELP!

About plant care, gardening, and much more.
Call the BBG Gardener's Help Line at
718-623-7270, Tuesday-Thursday,
10:30AM-12:30PM,
and 2-4PM.

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. The gate is open to the public from 8 am to 5 pm. Call Green-Wood Cemetery at (718) 768-7300 for more information.

GREENBRIDGE STAFF

Ellen Kirby, *Director* | Robin Simmen, *Community Horticulture Program Manager & Newsletter Editor* | Emily Neustrom, *Horticulture Therapy and Community Outreach Intern*

Brooklyn Botanic Garden • 1000 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225 • (718) 623-7250 or 623-7209

Brooklyn Botanic Garden gratefully acknowledges past and present support for these programs from the John N. and Gillett A. Gilbert Family Fund, Independence Community Foundation, The Joseph LeRoy and Ann C. Warner Fund, Inc., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education Grant, and Brooklyn Members of the New York State Assembly and Senate.

Printed on recycled paper