

Volunteering at the St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners Community Garden in New Richmond, Wisconsin

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What is this Community Garden about?

The St Croix Valley Master Gardeners Community Garden provides fresh vegetables to senior housing, food shelves, public health programs, and meal centers in our area. This Master Gardener project is in dire need of volunteers to help over the summer to assure the vegetables are planted, cared for and harvested to take around the county. It only works with your help.



Who should volunteer?

All ages and skill levels are welcome! If you're an experienced vegetable gardener, we can use your help and guidance, especially on service days with youth groups. If you're a beginning vegetable gardener, this is a great opportunity to get some hands-on experience with growing a variety of seasonal produce! We especially need ongoing help with weeding, watering, and plant care throughout the summer growing months.

Where is the Garden?

The garden is located at 2050 Hwy 65, 1.5 miles north of New Richmond. Garden Expression's green houses will mark the spot, but you can see our Community Garden and Trial Garden signs, too.

Where should I park?

There is a single-lane dirt road on the south end of the garden for entry to the garden; park at the end of this road in back by the corn field – there is space to turn around there, also. If conditions are too muddy or there are already a large number of cars parked, enter through the Garden Expressions driveway, then park at the north end of their lot. You are welcome to enjoy their garden store and greenhouses during your visit to the Community Garden.



What should I bring?

Dress comfortably and appropriately for the weather. Here are some additional suggestions:

For Work

- Hand tools (trowel, clippers, your favorite weeding tool)
- Gardening gloves
- Kneeling pad

For Comfort

- Water bottle
- Sun screen (daytime)
- Insect repellent (morning/evening)
- Hat or sunglasses

Special tools (shovels, rakes, pitchforks, etc.) may be requested for work days. A lawn or camping chair would be handy if you might be there a long time and will want to take a rest.

What if I need to... ?

There is a restroom on site, in the pump house. From the Community Garden walk towards Garden Expressions on the back side of the greenhouses (away from the highway); it is between the northernmost greenhouse and the Garden Expressions store.



What happens at the Garden?



photo credit Barb Nelson

In March, tomato, pepper, eggplant, broccoli, cabbage, and other summer and long-season vegetable seeds are started indoors (offsite). Onion starts are ordered. The garden layout is planned, taking vegetable rotations into account.

In May, the garden beds are tractor-tilled in preparation for planting. Huge bales of corn stalks are delivered to the garden to be used as mulch for the season. Fertilizer (nitrogen) is spread over the whole area with a lawn spreader. In mid May to early June, we plant and get growing!



photo credit Barb Nelson

When can I volunteer?

Anytime during the growing season! A small but dedicated group works weekly on the garden's ongoing tasks; they meet most Tuesday mornings, Thursday evenings, and Saturday mornings, and would love to have your company. Just think – by dedicating only 2-4 hours per week for the summer, you'll have your volunteer hours done in no time!



photo credit Barb Nelson

There are also several important work days when a larger group of volunteers is needed. The calendar dates for these events vary from year to year, as they are dependent on actual weather conditions and school schedules. Watch for announcements in the Sprinklings Newsletter, on the SCVMGA website and Facebook page, during monthly MGV meetings, and in your email inbox.

MGV Spring Work Day

On this day in mid-May, MGVs meet to map out the general garden areas, check the hoses and row-marking supplies, and make a plan for directing the students who will come to help in a few days.



photo credits Suzy Naschansky

New Richmond Service Day

On the third Friday in May, 20-30 New Richmond High School Students come for half a day to help us prepare and plant those vegetables that we can. Trenches are dug, plastic sheeting is installed for tomatoes and vine crops, fence posts are set, and the corn stalk bales are broken down and spread around the garden. Row markers are put into place, drip-hoses are laid out and connected, and the early vegetables (usually beans and onions) are planted. The kids do most of the work! Their assistance is so important in getting the garden started, but we do need some leaders to work with and organize the students. This is a great opportunity to get some youth education volunteer hours that Diana likes to see. There is usually a potluck lunch for MGVs after the students leave.



photo credits Kali Kocmoud 2015



photo credits Barb Nelson 2014

Tomato Tie-Up Day

Once the tomatoes are growing good, a day in mid-July is scheduled to tie them up. We use the Florida weave method for trellising, essentially constructing a string fence three strands high to keep the tomatoes off the ground and up where we can pick them more easily.



photo credits Suzy Naschansky

Summer Stretch Days

About once a month during the summer, area students come to give us a hand. They usually do a second planting of beans and other tasks. They need help and guidance, and this is another great opportunity to get some youth education hours on your volunteer time sheet.

MGV Fall Work Day

Usually in September, this is the time to disconnect and put away the drip hoses, take down the row markers, batten down the garden shed, and do other end-of-season cleanup.



photo credits Barb Nelson

What should I do when I get there?

If you're not part of a work day or other group that's providing some direction, and aren't sure where to start, here are some suggestions:

- Look for areas that need to be watered. There are three standpipes with faucets for watering located at the east end of each main access walkway. Hoses are attached for hand watering, and the drip hoses are also connected to these. If you go to the garden and determine that some section seems dry, turn the drip hoses on while you work on another section. Please remember to turn the water off before you leave!
- Look for areas that need to be weeded. Dump the weeds onto the giant compost pile at the back edge of the garden when you're finished. Make a note in the Notebook about which areas you worked on.
- Look for areas that need to be picked. Grab some plastic bags or containers and the scale from the garden shed, weigh the produce and record your harvest in The Notebook; then deliver it to your favorite organization.

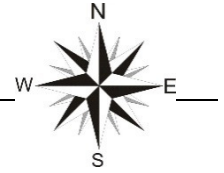


Please remember to write down your name and time spent at the garden in The Notebook before you leave.



What's growing in the Garden?

Here is the 2015 garden layout (as planned):



Approx 10 ft wide area between greenhouse to north and garden edge

leave a 2 ft margin of corn mulch around whole garden

< 80 ft total >

Standpipe
(water source)

<p>D</p> <p>Cole crops</p> <p>3 ft between single rows Stagger plants down row</p> <p>3 rows broccoli 2 rows cabbage 2 row Brussels sprouts</p> <p>Corn stalk mulch between rows</p>	<p>E</p> <p>Beets, radishes, spinach</p> <p>3 ft between single rows</p> <p>1 rows beets - 2 if seed 1 row spinach - 2 if seed Radishes - intersperse in rows</p> <p>Corn stalk mulch between rows if enough</p>	<p>F</p> <p>Onions</p> <p>Onion bulbs were planted in 3 rows because sets didn't grow</p> <p>Corn stalk mulch between rows</p>
<p>10' between sections for access</p>		<p>Standpipe (water source)</p>
<p>G</p> <p>Beans</p> <p>3 ft between single rows</p> <p>3 rows tendergreen 2 rows yellow 1 row blue lake</p> <p>Corn stalk mulch between rows</p>	<p>H</p> <p>Second crop beans, peppers, eggplants</p>	<p>I</p> <p>Tomatoes</p> <p>5 rows - 5 ft on center 2 ft apart in row (approx 25 plants per row)</p> <p>Put plastic down, Put in stakes</p> <p>Corn stalk mulch between rows</p>
<p>10' between sections for access</p>		<p>Standpipe (water source)</p>
<p>J</p> <p>Corn stalks for spreading</p> <p>Parking</p>	<p>K</p> <p>Peppers, Eggplant</p> <p>2.5 to 3 ft between rows 18" between plants Single rows</p> <p>4 rows regular peppers 2 rows hot peppers 2 rows eggplant</p>	<p>L</p> <p>Vine crops 4-5 ft on center 2 ft apart in row</p> <p>Put plastic down, anchor with dirt, tomato cages, boards</p> <p>2 rows cukes 2 summer medley squash 2 winter squash</p>

Edge of access road to south

What's in the garden shed?

The garden shed in the southwest corner of the Community Garden area is owned by SCVMGA, and is used for storing a few important items you should know about:

The Notebook

There is a spiral notebook kept in the scale on the shelves inside the garden shed. When you come to the Community Garden, please write down your name, the time you were there, and a basic description of what you did. This is also where you record any harvests you make, or any notes or observations you'd like to pass along to other members.



The Scale

The produce scale is on the shelves inside the garden shed. The Notebook is kept inside the scale basket. There is a yellow Shepard's hook in the garden area to hang the scale for weighing harvested produce.

Plastic bags and other produce containers

Save plastic bags & clamshell containers (the kind you might buy strawberries or other small fruits in) for use in collecting and distributing produce. Store them in the big blue tub on the floor of the garden shed, and take them when you need them.



Lawnmower and Rototiller

There is a lawn mower (donated by past MGV Pauline Goerdt) used to mow paths between garden sections, as needed. Peg Wastell donated a rototiller for our use, as well. Gas for these is kept in a small gas can just outside the garden shed.

I picked some produce! Now what?

Take the scale, some plastic bags, and The Notebook from the garden shed. There is a yellow Shepard's hook in the main access pathway area nearest the south end of the garden, to hang the scale. Rinse the produce at the water spigot, if necessary, then weigh it and divide it into the plastic bags (depends on the number of delivery places planned for the produce). Record the date, vegetable type, and weight in The Notebook. Please return the scale and The Notebook to the shed when you are finished.

Where do I take the produce I harvested?

Take it to your favorite senior center, public nutrition program, or food shelf. Most food shelves will take vegetables, but call to be sure they are open, or that someone will be there to receive the vegetables.



Here are some area organizations that accept donations.

Food Pantries in St Croix Co.	Address	Best Days / Times or Special Instr.
The senior meal centers in most villages will take vegetables and are open from 9 or 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.		
New Richmond		
Five Loaves Food Shelf / New Richmond Senior Nutrition Program	421 S. Green Ave New Richmond, WI 54017 (Community Commons)	(715) 243-7491 Generally produce can be dropped off in the mornings from 9 a.m. to noon, but call first. Enter off Arch Street into parking lot - Door #9.
Somerset		
Somerset Community Food Pantry (old Grace Place)	203 Church Hill Rd Somerset WI 54025 (behind St. Anne's)	(715) 247-2945 somersetfoodpantry@gmail.com Hours: Mon 9 - 11 a.m. & 4 - 6 p.m. Thurs 4- 6 p.m.
St. Anne's Catholic Church	139 Church Hill Rd Somerset, WI 54025	(715) 247-2945 Call for hours or appt First weekend each month

Food Pantries (cont.)	Address	Best Days / Times or Special Instr.
Hudson		
St. Patrick's Church	1500 Vine St Hudson, WI 54016	(715) 338-0332 Hours: Mon - Thurs 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. July – Sept: place produce in refrigerator outside lower level door anytime Will take produce on Mondays by 8:30 a.m. for food distribution at 9 a.m.
United Methodist Church	1401 Laurel Ave Hudson, WI 54016	(715) 386-3921 Will take produce on Wednesdays by 8:30 a.m. for food distribution at 9 a.m.
First Baptist Church	309 Vine St Hudson, WI 54016	(715) 386-9589 Will take produce on Fridays by 8:30 a.m. for food distribution at 9 a.m.
Mt. Zion Lutheran Church	505 13th St Hudson, WI 54016	(715) 386-5409 Will take produce on Fridays by 8:30 a.m. for food distribution at 9 a.m.
River Falls		
River Falls Community Food Pantry	222 North Main, Suite C River Falls WI 54022 (behind BoJon's Flowers)	(715) 425-6880 Hours: Mon 10 a.m. to noon & 6:30 - 8 p.m. Wed 1-5 p.m. Thurs 6:30 - 8 p.m. Fri 10 a.m. - noon; Sat 10 a.m.-noon
Roberts		
United Church of Christ	1001 Birch Drive Roberts WI 54023	(715) 749-3478 Hours: Tues 9-11:30 a.m. Wed 6:30 - 8 p.m. Thurs 9-11:30 a.m.
Baldwin, Hammond, Woodville		
Baldwin Community Food Pantry	920 6th Ave Baldwin, WI 54002	(715) 688-3844 Call for hours or appt
Zion Lutheran Church	221 Lockwood St Woodville WI 54028	(715) 698-2707 By appointment only
Glenwood City		
WestCAP	525 2nd St Glenwood City WI 54013	(715) 265-4271 or (800) 606-9227 x1329 Hours: Mon - Fri 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

WIC Nutrition Sites – 2015 Schedule:

Baldwin Ag Services & Education Center 960 8th Ave	1st Wednesdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with noon break	August 5	September 2	October 7
Hudson First Presbyterian Church 1901 Vine St	4th Mondays 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with noon break	July 27	August 24	September 28
New Richmond St Croix HHS 1752 Dorset Ln (across from Walmart)	Weekly Clinic	At front desk, ask for Sharon Reyzer, Deb Lindemann or Intake nurse. If a clinic is not scheduled, they will leave the vegetables for other clients.		

Is there anything else I should know?



SCVMGA Plant Trials group plants and maintains a Plant Trials plot separate from but immediately adjacent to the Community Garden. Produce from this garden is also picked, weighed and recorded, and distributed to local food organizations along with Community Garden produce. The Plant Trials plot is well marked, and is east of the main Community Garden areas (nearest the highway).

Other plots in the garden that are not the Community Garden nor the Plant Trials garden are rental plots. Please do not take produce from these. Should you want to get one for your own use, this can be arranged by speaking with Jonna or Dick Klucas at Garden Expressions.

If you have extra produce harvested from your own home garden, you are encouraged to include it with any items donated from the Community Garden. Please weigh and record the amounts in The Notebook, to be included in the year-end totals of food donated by SCVMGA members. In 2014, we donated about 1700 pounds of produce!

What if I still have questions?

Contact Carolyn Barrette at tbarrett@pressenter.com or 715-549-6438.

*Have corrections, additions or suggestions for this document?
Send them to Suzy Naschansky (suzy@naschansky.com), St. Croix County MG*