

GARDEN NOTES

WHATS UP, DOC ?

Overwintering crops include Garlic, Asparagus, Raspberries, Strawberries, Blueberries and various Herbs. Seeds are started and we have some ornamentals to plant when the soil warms a bit(see photos below). Cleanup, Soil prep and amendments are underway, getting ready for planting.

2026 DONATION GOAL - push production total from last year's 2694 lbs to 2T (4000 lbs). Volunteers - we are always on the lookout for more folks who like to play in the dirt and grow things. Grab a raised bed, grow your own, share a little with the food bank - you'll be amazed at how good it feels to help, or if that options doesn't work for you, come and help tend the garden with us and take something home for the family from time to time - a squash or a few tomatoes, some strawberries for desert.

Boxes available - we have 23 of the 30 raised box growing beds available for very modest rental cost if you, a friend or neighbor are interested...if we don't rent them, they are planted as part of our pipeline to Aware Food Bank...

CRITTERS and PESTS and SUCH ...

Not much here - Winter has them hibernating or nesting except for the Squirrels! Linda had a remedy to keep them at bay using squirt bottles of Apple Cider Vinegar and Chili Powder (this should be fun!). We've not seen a pest problem the past couple of years, possibly due to rotating crops, complimentary planting techniques and hand picking a few.

The weeds are our biggest issue. We've experimented with a few different methods and products and seem to have found a very workable organic option. We will keep experimenting as time goes by and engage in the use of the best possible option(s) available. Our Weed Warden will keep abating them and letting me know which options are working best (so we don't work her into the ground)!

PROJECTS

Now (2026 season)

Lots of busy work, bed prep and laying down the weed control fabric (knee and back saver!).

Seed Starting - getting a jump on plants into the ground

GARDEN NOTES

Reengaging with the Key Club at WHS - discussions are underway.

Kiwanis Club Chip Spread - distributing bulk chips with the new tractor, manually raking out the piles,

Headstart Farm - we're dedicating two raised beds for the kids to grow in.

Garden Sign - adding some color to the Garden entry sign, stencils, paint, colored glass applied to brighten it up.

Future (2027 and beyond)

Walkabout - in April with Session to look at "Wish List" items that have been around for several years and work on prioritization and advancing them including but not limited to the following:

Infrastructure - tied to Woodburn Construction and their new project (start date imminent/TBD) and its benefits to the Garden including electrical power and harvesting rainwater

Updated Irrigation - automated controls and use of pipe vs garden hose water distribution.

PICTURES and CO-CONSPIRATORS



This is Me - Andy

GARDEN NOTES

Just an old, grumpy (sometimes) guy who walked into the church one day looking to rent a garden box and wound up running a small farm. Ever since I was a kid, I've liked to grow things and garden, but not quite on this scale or of being able to benefit to the community as this Garden allows!

It's been a wonderful journey in getting the garden back up and running again and to be able to fulfill the vision of it's original benefactor and creator. I've made a lot of friend and met some very helpful people through the Garden experience and look forward to more of the same. How does that old saying go, something about "you reap what you sow"...



TEAM GREEN - My wife **Heather** on the right and our dear friend (and sister) **Xuan-Xuan (Shin-Shin) Villeneuve** on the left, two Queens of The Garden / Princesses of The Produce! When they get together it's a great blend of Playtime and Show and Tell.

Heather is always planning, experimenting and planting - produce, flowers, ornamentals looking for color combinations, ways to attract pollinators and beneficial insects, ways to keep the

GARDEN NOTES

preschooler's engaged. Then come the Spinner Gourds, Peppers and Potatoes - just a sampling of many favorites!

Xuan Xuan is our Energizer Bunny! Give her seeds or plants and an area to put them in then stand back and watch poetry in motion. Our first year in the Garden, she donated all of the tomatoes we grew - from plants she grew in her yard! She also brings us seeds of various oriental plant varieties along with Butternut Squash and trees to add even more variety to our report card. All this in addition to caring for her son Aaron and her own home garden in Monmouth.



Margaret McGregor

Our Weed Warden - she hunts them down, pulls them out by the roots and hauls them away - day after day, week after week - as her body allows. Always with a smile, such a joy to have working with us! Margaret initially came to us through the Kiwanis Club on a Chip Spread Day and she is currently working on another one for this year.

Justin Shaw

Justin came with the garden as a raised bed "renter" and has proven to be yet another asset in pulling weeds. Justin's passion is the Strawberries, which he keeps weed free during growing

GARDEN NOTES

season. He branched out last year and cleared weeds from Block 4 over the course of a week and as such, he was granted use of a larger bed / row in Block 2 which ended up planted with Hot Peppers and Tomatos. Justin and his family are also donating a Pear Tree from their backyard to add to our "Orchard" this year.



Daisy

Saved the best for last - our ever-faithful companion, always at our sides. She watches over us when we are working, guides us as we drive for supplies and naps when the sun warms her back and belly. Not one to chase the squirrels though (either for play or to keep them out of the Garden), darn it. FYI, she is always open to the idea of treats, just in case you stop by for a visit.

GARDEN NOTES



On the left, our *Garage "Nursery"* with 1152 seed starts underway. *Grow lights and heat mats help overcome the current wintery conditions. We will do this a few more times throughout the growing season*

On the right, *The Greenhouse* - some over-wintering *Ornamentals and trees for planting*, otherwise its waiting for the seed starts to mature, be transferred here for "hardening off" prior to planting.



GARDEN NOTES

Blocks 1, 2, 3 are on the right, looking West and prepped for Winter with silage tarps to eliminate weed starts

Blocks 4, 5, 6 are on the left, looking East with Garlic, Asparagus over-wintering beneath a blanket of straw for weed control and frost protection and the rest prepped for Winter weed control.



"The Orchard" looking North - varieties of Apple, Pear, Fig, Peach, Paw-Paw and a long row of Blueberries at the end. Additionally, we maintain a row of Grapes, two rows of Raspberries and 2 rows of Strawberries in and around the various production growing areas.

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

2 - GROUND HOG DAY (Blew in like a Lion, we get 6 more weeks of Winter)

8 - BOY SCOUTS DAY (beats the SUPER BOWL this year!)

14 - VALENTINES DAY

16 - PRESIDENTS DAY

17 - FAT TUESDAY (MARDI GRAS - my favorite!)

Best Fishing Days - 26, 27

GARDEN NOTES

MARCH

8 - DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

12 - GIRL SCOUTS DAY

17 - ST PATRICKS DAY (my favorite!)

20 - FIRST DAY OF SPRING

Best Fishing Days - 6, 25, 26

THANKS ALL!

Heather, Andy and Daisy Brophy

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