

The Express

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ISSUE III

Summer 2009

Our Mission

The mission of the Olympus Garden Club is to promote and support the love of gardening, floral arranging, landscape design, horticulture, plant research and environmental improvement by providing education, resources, networking and leadership opportunities to our members and the community.

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Oasis

I have walked miles
Endless miles
Forms rise up in the distance
And hope starts to hammer
In the corners of my mind

Is that a tree I see?
Is that light shimmering off of water?
It is a mirage, YES

My steps falter and come to a stop
As I try to clear my tired aching eyes
I begin to see
But it can't, it can't be
I must, be hallucinating again

My feet begin to walk again and
The forms take shape
Hallucinations, NO

Those are trees
Then, a spot of yellow ap-

More Garden Stories: Tree Beds

We have now been publishing this newsletter for more than five years and we always enjoy telling you about our experiences as we help to create gardens in New York City.

Amelia Estrada is a massage therapist, a raw fooder and a passionate supporter of trees and the environment. She ate collard greens regularly and never saw it growing in a garden before joining us. Before Brooklyn had places to drop off your food scraps for composting, she rode her bicycle to the 14th Street Green Market in Manhattan weekly to take hers. Now she has several options in Brooklyn but she still goes to 14th Street from time to

pears
I get closer,
And the water, the water is no mirage

I step through the opening
And again my feet falter
Faltering this time because
I find myself surrounded by color
And shapes
And fragrance
And water

Life again and I rejoice
I have found the oasis in the desert and
Hope remains supreme

S. Stephens

time. She has lived in her neighborhood, in the same apartment for more than forty years.

Since Amelia joined us, we have been having these conversations about the two trees in front of her building.

From the dog poop to the limbs on the tree dying and all things in between, she has been determined to stop the constant abuse of these two trees. She was not satisfied with any of the recipes and other sug-

gestions we gave her. She watered the trees, mulched them with leaves, removed dog poop daily and wanted that to stop. I have to tell you that this was a major problem for her and she would not or could not let it go.

Last fall she took a tree 'pit' gardening class and after that she continuously corrected us about our use of the word "pit". Since the word pit implied that trees are 'pit stops' for dogs, a more tree

friendly term was adopted and tree pit became tree bed. So, we learned to say tree bed. During our planning meetings early this year, she suggested that we beautify tree beds near where we live and put signs hoping that this would help with the dog problem. Later on in the year she decided to take the Citizen Pruner course.



A few of our members are Citizen Pruners. Citizen Pruners take a six week course on tree care here in New York City and by the end of the sessions they learn how to take care of the street trees on their block. The first thing she did after completion was remove dead tree limbs from her trees. She had taken ownership of these trees long ago and now she knew that she was on her way to helping them.

(Continued on page 4)

President's Message

In spite of some erratic weather, Olympus Garden Club members were busily engaged in a host of activities in different parts of Brooklyn this spring.

Robert RAYSOR has been heading a Brooklyn Public Library after-school program that will continue through to summer and fall using containers to grow vegetables and flowers right outside the children's entrance of the main branch library at Grand Army Plaza. The children involved vary in age but are all primary school students and they all seem to be enjoying the experience while working with several of our members.

Also in May, club members participated in a planting at the now two year old Hands and Hearts community garden in East New York. The objective was to plant ornamentals to attract pollinators while helping to

beautify around the existing garden plots. A wonderful group of teens from the East New York Farms youth program helped with the planting, digging enthusiastically in often difficult terrain. We were quite impressed with the hard work and good cheer shown by these young people and agreed that the experience made us feel that the trip there and all of the work was very much worthwhile.

In order to continue our community work, we depend on other sources for plant material. During May, we picked up plants from Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Brooklyn GreenBridge and from Green Thumb's (Parks Dept.) vegetable transplant distribution. These plants found homes in community gardens, backyard gardens, and in tree beds (three tree beds in two different Brooklyn

neighborhoods) throughout Brooklyn.

Some of us were also present at the "Just Food" seasonal kick-off party where we were treated to great food, entertainment and wonderful teen led tours of the United Community Center Garden in East New York. Like so many of the young people we've met this year, the teenage tour guides were full of knowledge and enthusiasm.

We worked again with the seniors from Quincy Senior Residence in Bedford Stuyvesant, while giving them tips we helped with their window box planting.

At this writing we are looking forward to putting in some shade plants that we got donated for the Hattie Carthan Children's Garden and leading a few workshops. After a very wet spring, we are looking forward to the warmth of summer and a successful growing season.

Robert Florin, President



Olympus Word Scramble - Tools

Aerator	H	S	L	N	V	P	Z	X	T	V	T	X	P	I	N	L	M
Shoes	C	O	Z	S	R	A	E	H	S	S	C	X	R	R	J	W	
Composter	C	C	R	X	X	N	K	W	S	T	L	L	R	D	D	H	S
Hoe	C	C	R	X	X	N	K	W	S	T	L	L	R	D	D	H	S
Leaf blower	G	G	E	F	G	H	A	S	F	F	N	V	Q	Q	S	T	M
Mower	H	Z	W	A	T	E	R	I	N	G	C	A	N	P	P	K	J
Pitchfork	P	Z	O	V	H	P	J	J	Q	Q	O	C	X	P	I	L	L
Rake	P	Z	O	V	H	P	J	J	Q	Q	O	C	X	P	I	L	L
Shears	L	Y	L	P	L	P	J	J	Z	D	M	H	K	S	T	F	E
Shovel	S	Z	B	W	L	L	J	S	S	X	P	N	R	L	C	O	L
Spade	S	Z	F	Q	E	D	Z	P	T	T	O	S	E	S	H	B	H
Tiller	S	Z	A	Z	V	X	X	D	P	S	S	T	W	T	F	B	X
Trimmer	L	Q	A	Z	V	X	X	D	P	S	S	T	W	T	F	B	X
Trowel	N	L	E	W	O	R	T	D	F	K	T	V	O	N	O	C	D
Watering Can	N	V	L	R	H	T	I	L	R	R	E	M	M	I	R	T	S
	F	G	L	Q	S	L	L	D	F	F	R	R	L	G	K	K	R
	R	G	G	P	H	R	L	V	H	L	I	M	P	C	N	K	L
	N	L	A	N	S	B	E	L	J	K	K	L	G	C	K	K	P
	T	D	B	L	A	E	R	A	T	O	R	S	H	O	E	S	P
	E	J	V	J	H	R	F	V	R	T	T	S	L	S	L	P	G
	X	L	S	J	L	M	G	N	T	G	G	J	R	X	S	J	X
	X	B	B	Z	T	C	Q	H	L	P	G	P	N	S	T	D	N



Attracting Wildlife to the Garden

Unless you are very fortunate, other than some foraging squirrels, occasional birds, annoying mosquitoes and stray cats, there are few other visible members of the animal kingdom in your garden. Making the attempt to attract more desirable creatures is possible, it isn't difficult to do and the results are rewarding.

The first thing to realize is that many birds, butterflies and amphibians do not like neat environments. A well-manicured garden sends a signal that most animals find uninviting. In nature swept paths and mowed lawns do not exist. Although we probably wouldn't consider a complete return to nature, we can make certain modifications to our gardens that wildlife might easily accept.

All creatures need at a minimum three things – food, water, and shelter. Different animals need different types of these accommodations and there are certain things that will help you to provide a good variety of these elements.

A pond is perhaps the best single thing that you can put in your garden to attract wildlife. Installing a pond will benefit countless species. A pond should have

both shallow and deep areas with sloping sides to let critters climb in and out. It's also good to include plenty of aquatic plants in and around the pond.

Shrubs and hedges also make excellent shelter for animals, protecting against predators and the elements. Many insects use this shelter to overwinter and shrubs that bear berries are a valuable food source.

Compost heaps are good sources of food and shelter for small creatures. Countless insects and invertebrates will be found there living on rotting vegetation.

Rotting wood is common in nature but rare in gardens. Such wood attracts many forms of insect and invertebrate life. I've used pieces of tree limbs in my own gardens to delineate borders. This kind of use keeps wood out of the landfill and left to rot it will support insects for years to come.

Dry stonewalls and piles of rock can give larger species shelter. Frogs and toads particularly like this sort of living space. You would be surprised to know that toads in particular can take resi-

dence even in an urban garden with a little help from us.

Many insects are attracted to flower nectar but most modern garden plants have been bred mainly for size and color. Planting nectar rich flowers such as native species plants helps to attract moths and butterflies, birds and bees.

Regular feeding of birds in winter will bring much wildlife to the garden at a dull time of the year. Hopefully birds attracted by winter feeding will stay around for the warmer months if you also provide bird boxes. There are boxes for most species of birds and even special boxes for bats.

Butterflies and moths require particular plants, especially when they are in their larval stage. Growing these plants will encourage a good supply of butterflies in your garden.

Don't spray! Pesticides and herbicides should be avoided in the garden for many reasons. Try to find alternative methods of pest and disease control. By practicing a system of integrated pest management you can achieve a more lasting, benign and natural control without chemicals.

R. Florin



Leave some of your lettuce to flower so that you could attract more beneficial insects.

Do you have Fennel, Tansy, Queen Anne's Lace, Dill, Lemon Balm or Parsley growing in your garden? They attract ladybugs, lacewings, wasps, and hoverflies. These are beneficial insects. Ladybugs and hoverflies eat aphids, parasitic wasps eat larvae, lacewings eat mites and aphids.

If you have a really troublesome aphid, whitefly or beetle problem try using a mixture of one teaspoon of dishwashing liquid, one teaspoon of cayenne pepper, and one quart of water in a spray bottle. Keep in mind that even though this is a natural remedy, it will kill both good and bad insects, including your pollinators.

You can buy beneficial insects to release in your garden for natural pest control.

Sprinkling wood ash helps to discourage

Tip Time



cutworms, slugs, and snails. Use it with a light hand because it raises the pH of your soil.

Be careful if you use pheromone traps. A lot of the time they attract an excessive amount of the insects you want to get rid of.

Ants won't crawl over cayenne pepper, coffee grounds, or citrus oil. Sprinkle these powders and oils around to create a barrier.

**'Use it with
a light hand'**

Sprinkle cornmeal around ant nests. It cannot be digested by ants when they eat it and they will die off quickly.

Slugs will drown in beer. Set out a saucer. We have had a slug fest this year with all the cold and rain. Yikes!

Reflective CD's hanging from your fruit trees will help to deter birds. Do the same with aluminum pans. Hanging netting or building wire cages over the fruit

tree can serve as another deterrent.

Picking insects off by hand is one of the least toxic methods to remove pests like worms, caterpillars, slugs, and beetles from your plants.

A strong spray with the hose will wash off aphids, remember they are born pregnant, so even though you wash them off, some eggs might still be left on the plant. You might have to hose them off a few times.

Remember that you will have to repeat everything you do after it rains because everything gets washed off.

Keeping all the above in mind, none of it will be effective if you do not maintain a regular schedule.

Please continue to be alert and aware to the changes in your environment. Continue to identify, monitor, and most of all continue to be tolerant.

(More Garden Stories - Continued from page 1)
We picked up plants from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and got ready for the tree bed planting after May 15th, our frost free date



Before

for New York City. We decided to start the planting on a Monday afternoon before our meeting. You would never guess the site that greeted us after unloading. Take a look at the picture above.

Along with the plants, I brought a large garbage bag filled with compost to improve the soil. I had



**Removing
Brick**

filled several bags at an April community event in Von King Park in preparation for the planting. We decided to remove large, much too heavy blocks and reset them as a border, prepared the soil with the compost and then we



**Setting
bricks for
border**

planted. While we worked, planting marigolds, dusty miller, sweet potato vine, coleus, pansies, and bugleweed, several of our four legged friends continued to visit the other tree.

We finished the planting in that bed, watered the transplants, placed wire



Adding compost

fencing around the brick as an additional barrier and went to our meeting filled with satisfaction because we had created a thing of beauty.

Between plantings, Amelia reported that she did not have to remove dog poop from our newly planted bed. So, the prognosis was good.

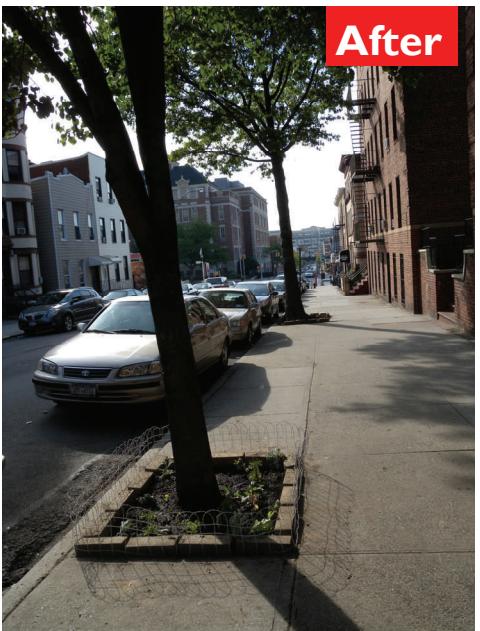


Planting

We did not have enough brick to complete the border for the larger tree. We left the extra brick in



the other bed and asked Robert, our president, to drop off some of the extra brick from his community



After

garden and repeated the process another afternoon.

A thunder storm was threatening, normal for our spring this year, and we were hoping to avoid it. We went to work arranging the brick in

(More Garden Stories -Continued from page 4)

a pattern that was pleasing to us since we now had two different



Before

kinds of brick. We unloaded a larger bag of compost this time because this was a larger bed and repeated the process. Just when



Planted



After

She was very adamant about our getting signs indicating that we did the beautification, especially after a neighbor thought that it was done by the community board. We got



the signs done and I gave it to her at our last meeting.

I continue to say working with the earth is a transformational experience. Amelia has lived in New York City all her life and this was the first time she was able to put her hand in the soil in her own neighborhood. Words cannot describe her sense of fulfillment.

we were doing the final touches the rain came. Amelia got us rain ponchos and we continued working. It became a deluge and a four inch high river started running down hill. We were at the mercy of the weather. We stood and watched as the soil washed away and the plants started floating away from one corner of the bed. Thankfully it was brief.

We were hoping to avoid the rain but as we watched the river flow down the street, almost taking our plants with it, we realized that we needed to be there to see it happen so that we could shore up the weak areas in the brick border for both beds. Amelia had bought bags of compost for her containers and we replaced the

soil and replanted. We made the adjustments in the border, secured the wire fencing and we finished up by taking pictures. I even got one of Amelia attempting to hug the tree.

She reports that she no longer has to clean up dog poop, that neighbors continue to express appreciation, that in spite of minor instances of vandalism which I told her is normal for new public plantings, the beds persevere. She found a resolution to one of her long time environmental concerns by taking action. She is happy and the trees are now happier.



Sylvia's tree bed with the sign

In another neighborhood, I dropped off plants for the third tree bed we planted this year. By the time I returned to do the planting with her, Sylvia had already done it. In her front yard she had containers planted with flowers and vines and she wanted the tree done also.

In addition to the marigolds, dusty miller, and bugleweed, Sylvia added lirope, and begonias and she decided to surround the entire bed with the same type of fencing.

I had the sign with me that day so we put it in the garden.

As we find more people willing to take care of their tree bed gardens we will plant more.

S. Stephens

Olympus Gardeners Love Children Gardeners

Olympus Gardeners love children gardeners. That is why some of us have volunteered to work with Growing Connection, the gardening club at Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch at Grand Army Plaza this season.

On a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon as you pass by you might notice us planting out there. You really can't miss us because the first thing you will see is the bright pink and blue containers as you walk by on Eastern Parkway..

The children want to plant a salad!

So they started seeds in bio-degradable egg cartons; lettuce mix, Cherry tomatoes, radishes, and leeks. One of the librarians took our list of vegetables and shopped for the seeds. Then we met at

Brooklyn Botanic Garden's plant sale; we found some ornamentals that will tolerate dry shady conditions. Plants like Hostas, Periwinkle, Coleus, and Ferns.



Planting

This is a learning experience for them. We did not cover our seeds and they dried out, the next batch will be placed in a clear plastic bag until they sprout to keep them from drying out again.

There are other library gardening projects going on in Brooklyn. One of them had too many plants and donated some Jalapeños,

Marigolds, more tomatoes and a basil plant. I do not know which kind they are going to be; we will see when we harvest them.

In the garden, at the children's entrance to the library on Eastern Parkway there are a few issues we will need to deal with. The problems with the small space, as every gardener in the neighborhood knows, is that it is very dark, with the large trees hanging from the park above,



Journaling

tion from OGC, a roll of wire border fence. Thank you, this should slow down the traffic through the garden.

R. Raynor



Digging

Our 2009 Monthly Meeting Schedule

July 27, 2009

Activity - Making a Birdbath

August 24, 2009

Video - Healing Herbs

September 28, 2009

Discussion

October 26, 2009

Activity - Holiday Craft

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

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Word Scramble Answer

H	S	L	N	V	P	Z	X	T	V	T	X	P	I	N	L	M
C	O	Z	S	R	A	E	H	S	S	C	X	R	R	J	W	
C	C	R	X	X	N	K	W	S	T	L	L	R	D	H	S	
G	G	R	F	G	H	A	S	F	F	N	V	Q	S	T	M	
H	Z	W	A	I	E	R	I	N	G	C	A	N	P	P	K	
P	Z	W	O	V	H	P	J	Q	Q	O	X	X	P	I	J	
L	Y	B	P	L	P	J	J	Z	D	C	H	K	S	T	L	
S	Z	B	W	L	L	J	S	X	T	P	O	S	T	C	H	
S	Z	B	W	L	L	J	S	S	S	T	S	L	T	B	L	
L	Q	A	Q	Z	E	V	X	Z	P	O	W	R	S	H	X	
N	N	L	F	A	E	W	O	R	T	S	O	T	N	F	D	
N	N	V	G	L	W	R	H	T	P	K	R	M	G	K	S	
F	R	R	G	G	P	S	L	L	F	R	F	L	P	K	R	
R	T	T	D	D	B	H	R	H	T	K	I	M	C	K	L	
H	J	L	X	L	S	J	L	M	P	O	R	G	C	E	P	
X	L	S	B	B	Z	T	C	Q	G	S	S	H	S	J	G	
X	B	B	Z	T	C	Q	H	L	P	G	P	N	S	T	N	

and the ground is packed from pedestrians stepping into the garden to take a shortcut, saving a step or two as they enter or leave the library. Plus the ground is either too wet when water flows from the park above or too dry.

We are going to put the food in large pots, our attempt at raised beds. The ornamentals can go into the soil. In order to discourage the people from walking on the wild flower seed we received another dona-

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