

CHINQUAPIN GARDENS NEWS

Newsletter of the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board • Alexandria, Va. • www.chinquapingardens.org • Summer 2008

GARDENS CONTINUE TO GROW, FLOURISH

CHINQUAPIN GARDENS is off and running this season. The gardens look great and the weather has been with us for the most part. This year promises to be a new year. The City of Alexandria has added 28 new plots, bringing the total of plots to 164. You may also have noticed the piles of dirt along the road, which will be landscaped with fruit trees and serve as a frame for the gardens as viewed from the north. This can be used for cover crop planting in the

meantime, but please don't remove the dirt from the piles.



Even with the new plots, we still have

many people on the waiting list who want to try out their green thumbs. We will be monitoring gardens to make sure that the gardens are used effectively and to release those not used to those on the waiting list. The next monitoring team is scheduled for Aug. 16. Contact Michele Late (michelelate@yahoo.com) or Tony Mauro (Tonymauro@aol.com), the team leaders, if you have some time and can help out.

New this year, we have welcomed students from T.C. Williams High School to Chinquapin Gardens, realizing a long-sought dream. The students are part of Alexandria's Project Discovery Program. (Now they know that produce comes with sweat equity, not just from the supermarket!) For details, see the article on Page 2. Stop by one of their Wednesday evening parties.

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YOU'RE INVITED TO THE 10TH ANNUAL CHINQUAPIN GARDENS POTLUCK PICNIC!

MAKE PLANS TO attend this year's Chinquapin Gardens Potluck Picnic, which is sponsored by the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board.

Join your fellow Chinquapin gardeners at the 10th annual event, which will be held **Saturday, Aug. 2, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.** at the Chinquapin Park Pavilion.



Gardeners are invited to bring a potluck dish and share their harvest with their fellow Chinquapin gardeners. (Because of City of Alexandria health regulations, please do not bring meat-based dishes and use care when preparing foods with eggs or mayonnaise.) If you have a recipe you would like to share, bring a copy with you to the picnic. Grilled hot dogs and fixings will be available free for picnic attendees. Friends and families of gardeners are welcome!

Awards, Tomato Taste-Off also on the agenda

The 10th annual picnic will also feature presentations of this year's Outstanding Garden Awards. Certificates will be awarded at the picnic to some of the gardeners who have some of the best plots at Chinquapin. A special awards selection team will be going out into the gardens sometime in the next few weeks to select the outstanding gardens, so be sure your garden looks its best!

Gardeners are invited to bring their best Chinquapin-grown tomato for the annual **Tomato Taste-Off**. Awards will be given for the biggest, best-tasting and most appealing tomatoes. New this year will be an award for smallest ripe tomato. We will also be giving an award for weirdest tomato, so if your tomatoes are more ugly than appealing, you can still enter the competition!



The picnic pavilion is covered, so the event will be held rain or shine. Join us for good food and good company on **Saturday, Aug. 2.**

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The Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board has given the go-ahead to gardener Maura Burns to serve as the organizer for the Giving Gardeners program, whereby excess produce will be taken to those in need rather than go to waste. (See right.)

Can you believe it is our 10th Annual Chinquapin Gardens Potluck Picnic? We will be featuring Project Discovery and Giving Gardeners.



We trust you are already working on that special recipe prepared from your produce. We expect to have some very special winning tomatoes as well in our annual Tomato Taste-Off. We will be inviting Alexandria City officials to the picnic to share in the wonderful food prepared from the garden. The board has set up a fund with volunteer donations to cover some of the cost of the picnic and we will be passing the hat for contributions.

The Chinquapin Gardens Advisory

Board has been actively planning and working with the city for improved communication and services. Please join the board, which meets monthly, and help shape your gardens. We are trying to get consistent dates each month for the board meeting. These dates are tied to available space. With the new portions of T.C. Williams now open, it is quite possible that we will be able to meet there regularly. Watch the bulletin board or our Web site, www.chinquapin-gardens.org. If you'd like to be notified when there are meetings and receive the agenda, e-mail Marlin.

Thanks to gardener Amber Kim Dewey, we have held two work days that resulted in many lateral paths covered with wood chips. We encourage all gardeners to continue the work on the longer paths. We would appreciate more of you stepping forward to volunteer for the future work days. A "community" garden is more fun when we're a community!

*Marlin G. Lord, chair, mglai@aol.com
Kathryn A. Brown, vice chair*

GIVING GARDENERS: HELP THOSE IN NEED

HAVE you ever come from your garden with so many vegetables you know there is no way you can eat them all? Or your neighbors who have faithfully received your "extra" tomatoes or beans won't answer their door or return phone calls from you? Or you have exhausted every recipe you can think of using zucchini? Well, the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board has a solution.

We are pleased to announce that the board has started a volunteer program where extra produce can be donated to an Alexandria food bank. ALIVE! (ALexandrians InVolved Ecumenically) accepts fresh produce for distribution to the needy. According to ALIVE!, there is a 40 percent increase this year for food requests.



How can you help? Every last Saturday of the month (except November and December) ALIVE! distributes nonperishable food and fresh produce to low-income families throughout Alexandria.

If you'd like to contribute to this worthy cause, please leave your bagged produce at the benches near the entrance to the gardens either by **8 p.m. on the last Friday of the month or before 9 a.m. on the last Saturday of the month.** Gardener Maura Burns will pick up the produce on Friday night and again early Saturday morning to deliver to the distribution center for ALIVE!

Upcoming produce collection dates:

- Friday, July 25, or Saturday, July 26
- Friday, Aug. 29, or Saturday, Aug. 30
- Friday, Sept. 26, or Saturday, Sept. 27

If you have veggies to spare and find you can't wait until the end of the month to donate, let Maura know.

Hope you can help the needy with all the great produce grown at Chinquapin Gardens! Thanks for your generosity.

*Maura Burns, 703-820-1295,
mmburns95@comcast.net*

STUDENTS BRIGHTEN CHINQUAPIN GARDENS

CHINQUAPIN GARDENS is pleased to welcome students from T.C. Williams High School this year to our gardening community.

Through Project Discovery, a college-access program that serves disadvantaged youth, high school students are learning about nature and gardening



here at Chinquapin Park. Besides gardening, the group holds gardening parties each **Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** with guest speakers. Gardeners are invited to stop by and join in the educational fun.

Lorien MacAuley, youth program specialist with the Alexandria Department of Human Services, is the leader and contact person for the group, which has two plots in the gardens. The students are looking for extra plants and seeds as well as weekend watering assistance. If you can help, contact Lorien at Lorien.MacAuley@alexandriava.gov.

For more information on Project Discovery or to volunteer, visit www.pdalex.blogspot.com.

CHINQUAPIN GARDENS REGULATIONS 2008

All laws and park rules and regulations, including those herein, must be obeyed by gardeners at all times. Any questions or concerns about the following Regulations can be presented to the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board at one of its regular meetings or e-mail mglai@aol.com.

◆ **Season:** The official gardening season runs from March 1 through November 30. In typical years, the water for the gardens will be turned on by April 15 and turned off on November 15. These dates may vary in years with unusually mild or extreme weather circumstances.

◆ **Registration and Regulations:** Registration fee for the season is \$45 for residents of Alexandria and \$75 for non-residents. Renewals take place in the first week in January, exchanges and new registrations take place in the following weeks. For new registrations, as of January 2003, only one (1) garden plot may be assigned per household/address. Garden plots may be lost by failure to abide by the current year Chinquapin Garden Plot Regulations. These plots will be re-assigned without reimbursement.

◆ **Lack of Activity:** Plots not showing reasonable gardening activity by May 1st as judged by the monitoring teams, with exceptions for unusual weather delays (as determined by the Board), shall be subject to re-assignment. No refunds. Renters who are unable to maintain plots should release the plot, in writing, to the City for the remainder of the growing season or be responsible for maintaining the plot by providing a substitute gardener for that season. Should the above not occur, all abandoned plots will be placed on the list for re-assignment without reimbursement. Evidence of a consistent lack of response to monitoring team notifications of violations will result in loss of plot without reimbursement. Re-assigned plots cannot be given to individuals of your choice.

◆ **Waiting list procedure:** All persons desiring to obtain a garden plot after all plots are filled will go onto a waiting list by date of request. In order to be placed on this list you must contact the City representative listed at the end of these Regulations. Plots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Current gardeners are not eligible for the waiting list.

◆ **Boundaries:** Garden plots are approximately 15x20 feet. Gardening beyond plot boundaries is not permitted. Boundaries are not solely on the ground, but also extend straight up into the air space above the plots and paths. Do not allow produce, including those with long vines, to grow beyond plot boundaries.

◆ **Appearance:** The Chinquapin Community Garden is public parkland. The garden must be kept clean and reasonably free from weeds and other unsightly debris. Each gardener is responsible not only for maintaining the appearance of their plot, but also for keeping the paths on all sides of their plot well groomed and free of weeds (growing or pulled), stakes, rocks or other materials that obstruct passage. Weeds taller than 12" in plots are a violation of City code. When pulling weeds, shake off all soil, so as not to lose the topsoil of your garden. Storage on paths will not be permitted.

◆ **Trash:** Place garden refuse in trash cans or bagged beside trash cans. Any discarded rocks should not be

put in trash cans, but should be placed in the designated area located near the City compost demonstration area, which is along side the lower level of garden plots.

◆ **Animals:** Animals (except seeing-eye dogs and service dogs) are prohibited in garden plot areas. All animals (including seeing-eye dogs and service dogs) in the public area are required by law to be leashed.

◆ **Rodents/Mosquitoes:** Crops must be harvested as they mature; for example: do not leave tomatoes to rot on the ground. Rodents are attracted to produce. If rodent infestation increases, the City must contract with an exterminator. This could increase future garden plot fees. Eliminate conditions favorable to rodents and mosquitoes by making sure faucets are turned off completely, watering cans are empty and compostible kitchen scraps (no meat or dairy) are buried at least a foot deep. Rats need water, food and shelter to survive, therefore only rodent-resistant compost enclosures will be permitted. Contact the City representative listed at the end of these Regulations for this information.

◆ **Banned Activities:**

- The use of chemical pesticides (including fungicides, herbicides (weed killers), or insecticides) is prohibited. Only natural organic practices and organic fertilizers may be used.
- The use of tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco is prohibited in the garden area. The mosaic virus disease common to tobacco can infect tomatoes, peppers and eggplants, and can spread to plants in neighboring gardens.
- Illegal drug-producing plants are prohibited. The offending gardener is subject to prosecution under the law, and their plot will be re-assigned without reimbursement.
- Gardeners may not plant or maintain trees either in plots or on paths.
- The use of carpeting, press board, pressure-treated wood or other similar harmful materials on path or plots is prohibited; these materials provide cover for rodents and present a hazard to other gardeners navigating the paths. Carpeting, press board and pressure-treated wood contain hazardous chemicals that leach into the soil as they deteriorate.
- Avoid leaving personal property in the garden. Tools, roto-tillers, etc., pose a safety hazard and invite theft.
- Running water or sprinklers should not be left unattended.

◆ **Trellises and Fencing:** Trellises and fencing, etc., should be constructed of light-weight, non-permanent materials. Any fencing built shall be a foot or more inside the boundary of the plot on all sides. Any substantial structure proposed must be presented to the Board for approval.

◆ **Vandalism:** Report incidents of vandalism, tampering with plots without permission, produce theft, or any other property destruction immediately to the



Alexandria police. Be sure to include a description of the person(s) and/or vehicle, and the license plate number, when possible. In addition, report the incident to the City representative listed at the end of these Regulations.

◆ **Liability:** Gardeners agree to hold harmless the City of Alexandria, and the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board, for any and all liability which may be attributed to the gardener, or an authorized third party, as a result of renting a garden plot.

◆ **Monitoring:** Each gardener may be required to serve on one monitoring team session during the gardening season if called upon, usually held on a Saturday morning. An Advisory Board member will serve as monitoring team leader. Once you are assigned to a team, it is your responsibility to find a substitute if you cannot be present, to serve in your place. If you have not submitted your volunteer form as part of the application process, please contact the John Walsh at 703-838-6325, ext. 191, to schedule your monitoring session.

◆ **End of Season Clean-up:** The official gardening season ends **Nov. 30, 2008**. Dead plants, produce remains and debris must be removed. Stakes, tomato cages, trellises, fencing, etc., must be removed from the ground. Gardeners are encouraged to take these materials home. Returning gardeners may leave stakes and fencing materials provided they are neatly stacked together and placed well into the garden plot away from paths. Trellises needed for support of certain perennial plants may be left in place. Rodent-resistant compost enclosures may also remain on the plot of returning gardeners. Hoses must be neatly coiled and removed from the paths.

These regulations are also available on the Chinquapin Gardens Web site, which is online at www.chinquapingardens.org.