

## MANHATTAN COMMUNITY GARDEN

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"...No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden. Such a variety of subjects, some one always coming to perfection, the failure of one thing repaired by the success of another, and instead of one harvest, a continued one thro' the year. Under a total want of demand except for our family table. I am still devoted to the garden. But tho' an old man, I am but a young gardener."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Charles Wilson Peale, Poplar Forest, August 20th, 1811

## 2011 MCG ANNUAL MEETING & SOCIAL

Our Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, November 5th. The day starts off with a Workday followed by the Annual Meeting and will finish with the ever popular Potluck Dinner. Please bring along some produce from your garden for the "Hobo Stew." MCG will furnish the stock for the stews, including stock pots with meat and stock pots for

vegetables only. We will furnish plates, bowls, and table service. You will need to bring a folding chair and side dishes to share with the group.

### Starting times will be:

#### Workday:

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

#### Annual Meeting:

11:15 AM to 12:00 PM

#### Potluck Dinner:

12:15 PM to 2:00 PM

### **\*\*Please Note:**

Although we hope for a beautiful Fall day, if it is raining at 9:00am on November 5th, the work day, annual meeting, and social will be held the following Saturday, November 12th, at the same times.



## Preparing Your Garden For Winter By Dr. Chuck Marr

**Covering your Garden for Winter:** If you were getting ready for a cold winter night, you might think about getting under a thick blanket and many gardeners use the logic that you should do this for your garden too. Putting down a layer of mulch for winter must be a good thing to do. Although

there are several 'schools of thought' on this, it is not necessarily a good thing to do or necessary for your garden area. Here's my observations on this process. There are several things that need to be mulched to enable them to survive winter conditions and I'll talk about them later. For bare soil or

where no crops are growing, exposure ensures that diseases and insects can be reduced to the lowest level they can be. Also, the freezing and thawing action of winter will break down clods (not much of a problem in the MCG soil) and aid improve soil workability in the spring.

(continued on pg. 3)

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

So far, it has been an interesting year for me and the board and it appears that it will remain that way for a while longer. If you read the Mercury on Thursday, October 6th, you learned that Riley County approved UFM's application for additional garden space on the county property west of South Manhattan Avenue on Collins Lane. There are still site selection details to be resolved with the County the week of October 10th before UFM can enter into leasing negotiations. Hopefully, we will have more definitive information regarding Collins Lane at the Annual Meeting on November 5th.

The entire process involved with obtaining additional garden space has become more protracted than I ever expected. Our initial contacts with the County were so promising that I anticipated we would have been at this point in late July or early August. The process became protracted when the County staff advised UFM that a formal application procedure, open to all interested parties, would be required for the Collins Lane property. The application was submitted the third week in August with the County making their decision

on October 6th. The next steps are to finalize the site location, for UFM to obtain a lease, followed by the board selecting courses of action regarding the Collins Lane site and resolution of the North Garden question.

Even though the North Garden issue has been the dominant topic for me and the board this year we have continued to work on several other activities for the benefit of the Community Gardens. The board recently updated and approved new Garden Rules for next year and you will be voting on updated By-laws at the annual meeting. Our participation in the CROP Walk is at an all-time high and we had more gardeners volunteering to be Mentors than we had gardeners requesting participation in the Mentoring Program. As a retired contractor I have a natural inclination for building type improvements and your board worked on a few of those too. We were able to install a new aggregate base at the main Riley Lane parking area including a new MCG sign. In addition to the entry sign we installed new perimeter signage along with a new MCG sign at the Equipment Shed. The old sign didn't look that good on the freshly painted Equipment

Shed. We followed up last year's exterior improvements to the Tool Shed by installing new tool hangers and shelving. One of the more useful improvements was the concrete pad for washing located next to the Equipment Shed. As much as the board accomplished this year, there are still several projects that were not completed, such as installing additional hydrants for the plots adjacent to the railroad right of way, replacing the old wooden picnic tables with recycled plastic tables, computerizing MCG sign-up procedures, and purchasing a lighter weight 4-cycle mini-tiller.

Please take a few moments and say thank you to your 2011 board members: Pat Butler, Ron Downey, Erika Huber, Susan Oviatt, Chris Feit, Jeanne Squires-Lake, Kruger Bryant, Leila Maurmann, Cybil Perkins, & Dale Stearns. Please let Chuck Marr know how much you appreciate his expert advice and the electronic newsletter. Our new board member candidates are Leila Maurmann, Max Urick and John Rogers; thank them in advance for serving on your board. See you at the Annual Meeting!

Regards,  
Dick Green,  
2011 MCG President

## PREPARING YOUR GARDEN FOR WINTER(CONT.)

We don't have to be concerned about soil blowing during a dry winter in the protected confines of the MCG area so a cover isn't necessary for that. It is also much easier to work organic material into the soil in the fall season rather than leaving it on top. Therefore, I'm not much of a believer in putting a mulch layer on your garden for winter. Now, here are the exceptions. Strawberries have a flat stem area between the root and leaves that sits right at ground level. Freezing and thawing action can expose this 'crown' area. Therefore, it needs to be protected by adding a layer of mulch usually applied after Thanksgiving. Also, if you have root crops that you want to dig into the winter you may want to try to prevent soil freezing for a while with a heavy mulch layer. However, this requires a very thick layer and only works for a few additional weeks before the soil freezes anyhow. Most perennial things such as asparagus, rhubarb, garlic, perennial flowers, etc. will grow quite nicely without a winter mulch layer. I've done some comparisons of overwintering spinach and even it does just fine without a layer of protective mulch for winter. Therefore, mulch if you want to, but it really isn't something that is necessary for the garden and there are rea-

sons why it may even be a hindrance.

**Compost vs. Compost:** Some nice loads of compost have been delivered to the gardens and it's time to make some applications to improve soil before tillage. I've just cleaned out my home compost pile in preparation for the fall leaves that I will soon be adding. It is important to remember that home-generated compost that is comprised of primarily leaves and lawn clippings is not the same as the compost that we have to use at the community gardens. Gardens compost is actually composted manure. Both composts improve the looseness and workability of the soil, but composted manure is much more nutrient rich than leaf-grass compost. It's almost impossible to add too much leaf-grass compost as far as nutrients are concerned. However, it is very easy to 'overdo' the nutrient addition with using a thick layer of manure-based compost. This may add not only too much nutrient, but also add salt in an excessive amount to the soil. This is in no way intended to encourage you not to use the garden's compost, but just use it in moderate amounts. Layers from 1-2 inches thick are about right for this

type of compost. It is also a good idea to till the compost in after application rather than leaving it on the surface. It will only improve the soil when incorporated.

**Direct Application of Organic Materials:** Many of you are using garden-provided compost to add to the soil before tillage. You can 'shortcut' the composting process by adding other organic materials directly to the soil and allow it to compost in place through the winter months. As leaves begin to fall, you can bag them up, bring them to the gardens, and apply them to the soil before tilling. Lawn renovation thatch and shredded leaves can be disposed of in this way. It is a good idea to shred the leaves by picking them up with your lawnmower bagger so they will not blow around when you apply them. This also encourages the materials to decompose quicker. Add a 2-4 inch layer of materials, till them in with a rototiller, and after 2-3 weeks you can add another layer and till it in. You should be able to get several applications made depending on the soil being dry enough to till before soil freezing begins usually in mid December.

## MAKING THE HARVEST LAST: HOW TO PROPERLY STORE YOUR VEGGIES

Table 1. Recommended storage temperatures, relative humidities, and storage life for fresh vegetables.\*

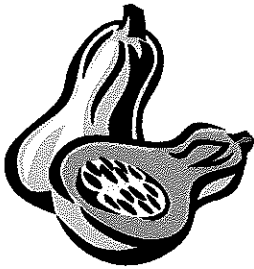
Vegetable	Temperature		Relative Humidity (percent)	Approximate Length of Storage Period	Suggested Methods for Extended Preservation
	° F	(° C)			
Asparagus	32-35	(0-2)	95-100	2-3 weeks	Freeze or can
Beans					
green or snap	40-45	(4-7)	95	7-10 days	Freeze or can
lima or broad	37-41	(3-5)	95	5-7 days	Freeze or can
Beets, topped	32	(0)	98-100	4-6 months	Freeze, can, or pickle
Broccoli	32	(0)	95-100	10-14 days	Freeze or can
Brussel sprouts	32	(0)	95-100	3-5 weeks	Freeze or can
Cabbage					
early	32	(0)	98-100	3-6 weeks	Sauerkraut
late	32	(0)	98-100	5-6 months	Sauerkraut
Carrots, mature	32	(0)	98-100	7-9 months	Freeze, can, or pickle
Cauliflower	32	(0)	95-98	3-4 weeks	Freeze or can
Celery	32	(0)	98-100	2-3 months	
Cucumbers	50-55	(10-13)	95	10-14 days	
Eggplants	46-54	(8-12)	90-95	7 days	Can
Garlic, dry	32	(0)	65-70	6-7 months	
Kohlrabi	32	(0)	98-100	2-3 months	Freeze
Leek, green	32	(0)	95-100	2-3 months	
Lettuce	32	(0)	98-100	2-3 weeks	
Melons					
muskmelon (full-slip)	32-36	(0-2)	95	5-14 days	Freeze
watermelon	50-60	(10-15)	90	2-3 weeks	Freeze
Okra	45-50	(7-10)	90-95	7-10 days	Can, freeze, or pickle
Onion					
green	32	(0)	95-100	3-4 weeks	
dry	32	(0)	65-70	1-8 months	
Parsnips	32	(0)	98-100	4-6 months	Can or freeze
Peas, green	32	(0)	95-98	1-2 weeks	Freeze or can
Pepper, sweet	45-55	(7-13)	90-95	2-3 weeks	Freeze
Potatoes	38-40	(3-4)	90-95	5-10 months	Can
Pumpkins	50-55	(10-13)	50-70	2-3 months	
Radishes, spring	32	(0)	95-100	3-4 weeks	
Rhubarb	32	(0)	95-100	2-4 weeks	Freeze
Spinach	32	(0)	95-100	10-14 days	Freeze or can
Squash					
summer	41-50	(5-10)	95	7-14 days	Can or freeze
winter	50	(10)	70	1-6 months	Can or freeze
Sweet corn	32	(0)	95	5-8 days	Freeze or can
Sweet potatoes	55-60	(13-16)	85-90	4-7 months	Can or freeze
Swiss chard	32	(0)	95-100	10-14 days	Freeze or can
Tomatoes					
ripe	46-50	(8-10)	90-95	4-7 days	Can or freeze
mature green	55-70	(13-21)	90-95	1-3 weeks	Pickle
Turnips	32	(0)	95	4-5 months	

\*Based on information from United States Department of Agriculture Publication No. 66, *The Commercial Storage of Fruits, Vegetables, and Florist and Nursery Stocks*.

## Butternut Squash and Cider Bisque



- 4 T. unsalted butter
- 2 cups onions, diced
- 4 t. curry powder
- 2 medium butternut squash
- 2 apples
- 3 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 cup apple cider
- Salt and freshly milled black pepper
- Melt the butter in a large kettle and sauté the onions and curry powder over very low heat for about 25 minutes.
- Meanwhile, peel the squash and apples and cut them into chunks (see Note).
- Add the squash, apples, and stock to the kettle and simmer for 25 minutes.
- Mash the solids with a potato masher or transfer the contents of the kettle to a blender or food processor and puree (depending on how much texture you like).
- Return pureed bisque to the kettle; add the cider and season to taste with salt and pepper.



**Note:** If you find the squash too hard to cut, bake it in a 400 degree F oven for about 20 minutes before peeling and cubing it.

## Beet Burgers

- 2 cups grated beets (about 12 ounces; peeling is optional) (see Note)
- 2 cups grated carrots (about 6 ounces)
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup sunflower seeds, toasted
- 1/2 cup sesame seeds, toasted
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup grated onion (about 1 medium)
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 3 T. all-purpose flour
- 3 T. chopped fresh parsley
- 2 to 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 T. soy sauce
- Ground red pepper
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- Generously grease a rimmed baking sheet or line the baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
- Form the mixture into patties and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until firm and the vegetables are cooked through. It helps to turn the patties over at least once while baking.

**Note:** Using the slicing blade of a food processor is a quick way to shred the vegetables needed for this recipe.

