

## Saving seeds for the future: Mayor Mike McGinn's gardening and political philosophy

Article and photos by Jean Johnson

Mayor Mike McGinn remembers gardening throughout his life: first, reluctantly weeding the family garden under his mother's command; later, as the willing steward of several raised beds in his Greenwood home. This summer, with a much busier schedule than in years past and less time to tend his garden, he turned to Urban Garden Share. This program, which covers Seattle and six other areas, matches homeowners who have space to garden with willing, experienced urban gardeners who do not.

In late Spring of 2011, on the first day that Corrina Birdseye posted her profile on the Urban Garden Share website (<http://www.urbangardenshare.org>), the Mayor contacted her as a potential match to work in his garden. Like Mayor McGinn, she had gardened most of her life. After interviewing her, the Mayor determined they were a good gardening fit. They both shared a passion for organic gardening with heirloom varieties and open-pollinated seeds, and were flexible about how to get things done.

In Urban Garden Share, the terms of each co-gardening partnership are worked out by the two parties involved: whether to be organic; who provides the tools; what to plant; and how to divide the cost, labor and harvest. Mayor McGinn's Greenwood yard has one central 12 foot by 25 foot raised bed and a few smaller ones in which he and Corrina grow kale, sunchokes, Romano beans, rhubarb, Swiss chard, peas, cabbage, tomatoes, zucchini, potatoes and artichokes. The garden harvest is split among the McGinn family, Corrina and the local food bank, along with occasional donations to the Mayor's staff.



Mayor McGinn has a giving garden downtown, on balconies adjoining the public reception-area and his personal office.

The Mayor practices resource conservation and planning in his own garden too. Genetically modified hybrid plants, he says, can only be counted on for that current generation with no assurances as to the health of future ones. As a result, he is an avid long-time collector of seeds from his open-pollinated plants. Early in his mayoral campaign he gave packets of hand-harvested seeds to supporters and friends—a telling symbol of his philosophy: to manage current resources with a focus on preserving them for future generations.



The Swiss chard, kale, lettuce and flowers harvested from the Mayor's giving garden go to the Cherry Street food bank.

According to Corrina, a key component to their success is frequent text or email communication about schedules and tasks. Mayor McGinn acknowledges that this program wouldn't work for everyone, since those with a strong sense of personal property might find it a challenge to share resources. He also notes that a good personality fit is key.

The Mayor's love of gardening is expressed at work as well as at home. Downtown he has a "giving garden" with Swiss chard, kale, lettuce and flowers on balconies adjoining the public reception area and his personal office. The harvest from those gardens is donated to the Cherry Street food bank, which has a strong need for leafy green vegetables. He was also a major driver in putting the 2008 Parks levy on the ballot, which allocated \$146M to the expansion of public spaces and P-Patch community gardens.

The Mayor sees two important ideas in the recent resurgence of community gardening. First, Americans growing their own vegetables is part of a broader trend of creating and doing things with their hands (such as preserving, knitting and other home-crafting) that serves as a counter-movement to passive consumerism. In addition, locally produced and handmade goods and recycling are ways of rethinking our current resource-intensive system for food, energy and transportation. The Mayor knows that small-scale urban gardening will never be able to completely supply local food needs; however, he believes it is an important starting point in developing awareness and appreciation for local food and business.

Mayor McGinn envisions a system with a softer human footprint, so that resources are conserved for future generations. Within this philosophy, the development of healthy neighborhoods and cities is paramount, as is the conservation of the Puget Sound region's rich agricultural resources for intra-regional commerce.



Mayor McGinn's Urban Garden Share partner, Corrina Birdseye, admires a cabbage in the Mayor's garden.

# Levy update: World's strongest community gardeners

By Laura Raymond, Levy Projects Coordinator,  
P-Patch Program

Earlier this year, I had my first exposure to the phenomenon that is "The World's Strongest Man." As I sprawled on the couch in proper channel-surfing form, I found myself paused on the extreme sports channel for a few minutes of astonished viewing. Very large, very strong men pulled semi trucks with their bare hands! They lifted giant rocks up flights of stairs! They carried refrigerators down long runways!

Lately I've been thinking of these strongmen's Herculean efforts as I witness the feats that P-Patch volunteers are accomplishing in the quest for new and expanded P-Patch community gardens. Over the past year of garden-building, community gardeners and friends have completed demonstrations of might to rival those shown on TV. P-Patchers have moved mountains of soil! Hauled heaps of stone uphill! Transplanted whole trees! Mixed wheelbarrow upon wheelbarrow of concrete!

At the Eastlake P-Patch endurance was the name of the game as volunteer garden builders hand-carried (uphill!) and stacked 35 yards of concrete rubble and 30 tons of granite paving, not to mention the 10 pallets of concrete mix and 25 yards of gravel that make up the new garden walls throughout the garden's three levels.

At the Barton Street P-Patch in southwest Seattle, the gardeners strive for beautiful form, determined to utilize stores of local energy. It shows in the decorative stones that volunteers of all ages hand-dug, washed and placed in freshly poured concrete walls. Current score: 750 hand-washed stones, 48 mixed batches of concrete...and counting.

In a feat of speed and an application of the "many hands make light work" approach, Unpaving Paradise P-Patch volunteers moved 10 truckloads of compost (120 cubic yards) in one weekend. The mountain of compost that nearly filled the block of a city street now fills their new beds.

The small but mighty team at Bitter Lake P-Patch in North Seattle achieved a personal best by transplanting four big cedars to save the trees while making space for the new community garden.

The Parks and Green Spaces Levy is providing \$2 million in funding, but it's thanks to the strength of the communities building these new and expanded gardens that the P-Patch Program continues to grow. Here's to the world's strongest P-Patch community gardeners!



Hand stacked walls line a new sloping pathway at the Eastlake P-Patch.



The Umpquas go to work on the compost mountain at Unpaving Paradise.



Volunteers at Barton Street's twice-weekly work party mix concrete and place stones.



JIM BREWER

Volunteers are ready to transplant the first cedar at Bitter Lake P-Patch.

# P-Patches in the community: Lessons from University Heights

By Tracey Fugami and Jeff Miller

In 2009 we heard from a fellow gardener that our P-Patch at University Heights was scheduled for redevelopment, in a project that might shrink or significantly redesign our garden. Anxious rumors started to fly: the P-Patch was going to be removed! Or cut in half! Or converted into more space for the University District Farmers' Market—or would it be moved to the shady north side of the building? No one in the garden seemed to know precisely what was happening, but most of us were scared of it.

Geoff Berg, a U-Heights P-Patch gardener since the mid-1990s, saw opportunities rather than threats in the redevelopment. Talking to Berg also gave us some important context for the project. The U-Heights P-Patch opened in 1991 on the site of the former University Heights School, operated since 1990 by the nonprofit University Heights Center for the Community Association (UHCCA). In 2009, the UHCCA purchased the majority of the property from the Seattle School District, with the intent to preserve and enhance the historic building. The remainder of the property was transferred to the Parks Department to build new public open space.

After the purchase of the property, Berg volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors of the UHCCA. "When the State of Washington and the City of Seattle worked together to grant money to [UHCCA] to buy the land, the understanding was that some percent of the space would be used for community purposes, and the P-Patch fulfills that requirement.... [As a result], there's an opportunity now to do a real solid design for the whole P-Patch space."

The UHCCA operates the Center as a town hall and gathering place for the University District, housing a variety of organizations that focus primarily on education and community development. Dorothy Lengyel, Executive Director of the UHCCA, is a gardener herself. She describes the vision for the restored U-Heights as "a fully preserved property with a public park, community garden, native landscape and education programs for all ages."

## Realizing the Vision

Turning a vision into reality is hard work: it means navigating a complex planning process and staying engaged over the course of several years.

Planning began in 2009 with an initial round of public meetings. Later, the Parks Department hired HBB Landscape Architects to lead the planning and design, and held additional open forums in June and July of 2011. "It was critical to have P-Patchers at these meetings," Berg says, and the feedback that gardeners have given throughout the process has influenced the direction of the design. Ray Schutte, Board President of the P-Patch Trust, agrees; when the Trust met with the previous Executive Director in early 2010, several of the design options on the table would have significantly restricted space for the U-Heights P-Patch. Thanks in part to gardeners speaking out, the current draft design preserves an amount of space similar to the current garden, though organized differently.

Although the public comment period is over, the planning continues. In late August, Geoff Berg held a U-Heights P-Patch meeting to brainstorm a new layout for the P-Patch area, including compost bins, sheds and fencing. One remaining challenge is that there are currently no funds allocated for construction; Berg and the UHCCA plan to work together on a Department of Neighborhoods matching grant to support the redesign.

## Lessons for Other Gardeners

We asked Ray Schutte what gardeners should remember if they feel like their garden is under threat: "Community. Your garden community has strength." That's a critical point: when you're scared of losing the garden you've put so much time into, it's easy to forget that the P-Patch Program was built from the start around the idea of community. Reach out to the folks around you, and pretty soon you'll start seeing new opportunities, just as Berg and the rest of U-Heights have.

If your P-Patch ever faces a similar situation, start by breathing deeply: don't panic, and remember you have resources that can help you. Then reach out to your community—and to the P-Patch Trust itself. Schutte suggests that gardeners contact the Trust as early as possible, build a plan together, and keep the Trust informed throughout the lifetime of a project. Berg says: "Ray is a great resource, because he's been involved with so many of the P-Patches around the city." Whatever the situation, the Trust is likely to have experience to draw on to help you understand a process that's likely to be confusing at first. Once the process is underway, the Trust can also mobilize plenty of motivated supporters to speak on behalf of your garden.

Every P-Patch in Seattle goes through a lengthy process and public engagement in the beginning. The work of building community doesn't stop once construction is done, though—and neither does the opportunity!

## Action Items for P-Patch Gardeners

- Connect with your community. Find out who provides, shares or hosts your garden space; reach out to them and volunteer your time or services.
- Build a 5- and 10-year plan for your garden. How will you grow not just your food, but your garden and your community?
- Nominate someone from your garden to reach out to the P-Patch Trust and discuss your garden's plan and your community.

## From P-Patch to P-Plot

### Urban Agriculture Goes Suburban with Seattle Tilth's Small-Farm Incubator Program

By Eddie Hill

On a former dairy farm in the hills of unincorporated King County, just outside Auburn, WA, a group of farmers meets with Seattle Tilth staff outside the hoophouse and tool storage area to plan their day. Red Barn Ranch, a 39-acre pasture and forested site owned by the City of Seattle and managed by the Seattle Parks & Recreation Department, is currently housing Seattle Tilth's new Farm Incubator Program. Today, Tilth staff members and some interns provide guidance on which crops look ready to harvest for market, what time of day to water certain plants and how to get the land ready for another round of brassicas and root crops for over-wintering.

The Farm Incubator Program is part of a recent expansion of Seattle Tilth from teaching and promoting gardening and biodynamic horticulture (permaculture) to small-production urban agriculture, including small-animal husbandry. Tilth acquired the program from Burst for Prosperity, a regional organization that pilots creative solutions to poverty and instability.

The program began with twelve Burundian and fourteen Somali-Bantu refugees on the 10-acre Boscolo Farm in the Kent Valley between 2008 and 2010. Each of these family businesses tends about a quarter acre their first year in the program. One of them, the Somali-Bantu Family Farmers of Washington, now tends 1-acre in their third year of participation.

The Burst pilot was developed by Jenny Thacker and Njambi Gishuru, a Kenyan-born community builder with an awareness of refugee and immigrant issues. Taking cues from other successful small-farming incubators in the Midwest and on the East Coast, Burst for Prosperity added business training, household management and modified ESL courses to get the first participants started in learning how to farm in the Northwest.

At first, Burst worked with Washington State University Extension's Cultivating Success Program in Puyallup, Washington CASH and Highline Community College to support the Farm Incubator Program. After Seattle Tilth's participation in promoting the 2010 Year of Urban Agriculture in Seattle, Burst contacted Tilth about taking on the program and moving it to the next level.

"Burst focuses on starting pilot programs, not sustaining them. We look for partners that can advance the idea and solidify success," says Jenny Thacker, now a Program Manager for Grants and Contracts at Seattle Tilth. "We sought out a partnership with Tilth because of their solid background in community, as well as food production and environmental knowledge of the Northwest. It was a perfect match."

The program is providing insight into sustainable, integrated, regional food security. The Executive Director of Tilth, Andrea Dwyer, says, "In order to create a healthy and equitable food system in King County, it requires that cities connect with the counties,

and then connect with the rural communities. It is a whole system, requiring each piece do its part to connect and work together to improve our effectiveness."

The reenergized movement to "bring the farm back to the city" is now reaching the suburban and peri-urban communities that form a boundary between the city and the larger rural farms. Suburban areas in King County have maintained farmable areas of land in the form of county- or suburban-designed outdoor green spaces like sports or county fair fields, and large undeveloped areas of pasture or gravel.

Local advocates have long called for acquiring vacant public lands for public benefit (training, education, business incubation). However, a common interest in these issues has only recently galvanized efforts and energies to make real changes in regulations, rules and guidelines. "I think our work and our partners are committed to supporting and advocating for all farmers," says Dwyer, "rural, urban or suburban."

Currently, the Farm Incubator Program is maintaining a training cohort of 12 participants, making up five farm businesses. "We have a history of farming in our countries and when we came here to America it was hard to find out how to keep farming," said Mohamed Rago, a third-year participant and a Somali-Bantu from a Kenyan refugee camp. "We like to farm and the work makes us feel good about participating in this country. We are good farmers, and we want to be a part of making good food."

Red Barn Ranch already sells to several food co-ops, restaurants and small catering units, providing some training stipends for participants. Farm Incubator Distribution Manager Zach Gayne says, "Growing the food this season wasn't really the issue, nor was selling it, so far. One of the big issues is being able to sell to corner stores and smaller community markets in low-income areas of our cities."

Gayne continued, "Stores pay 60% less for conventional produce than what we can sell it for to meet the needs of the participating farmers. This creates a gap, where we are still able to service more economically stable communities while not being able to meet our goals of getting more healthy food to communities in food-insecure areas."

Seattle Tilth has just been awarded a three-year United States Department of Agriculture grant through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program to continue this work. The Farm Incubator Program is also connected to Tilth's new Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Program, the Rainier Valley Eats! Coalition and Seattle Youth Garden Works. Tilth hopes that this chain of opportunity from high school to adulthood will spark new generations of sustainable, chemical-free, organically-centered small farmers who rebuild and strengthen our local farming culture, community and economy.

# Posts from the Patch

By Diane Zebert

With this issue of the P-Patch Post, we are starting a regular column called "Posts from the Patch." Do you have a gardening question or problem that you are struggling to answer or solve? Send it to Posts from the Patch! Have you grown something successfully that your co-gardeners said you'd never pull off? Brag a little, let us know about it! Have you come across an interesting gardening technique and want to know more? Let us know and we'll do a column about it, giving you a running start on what you need to learn. This is your space to ask questions, send in success stories or failures and encourage all of us to learn from each other.

To kick off the first Posts from the Patch, I am responding to a question that was generated by my article in the summer P-Patch Post issue entitled "Milk and other home remedies for your garden."

Hi Fellow Gardeners,

**Last year a raccoon ate many of the ripe and unripe figs from my Desert King fig tree. Do you know any combination of substances that could be applied around the tree to keep raccoons away?**

I'll let you know what I've read, but I have to say I've not ever grown figs and blessedly not had to deal with raccoons. I also don't know about any spacing constraints that you have to deal with. But I'll list some ideas and hopefully they will make sense and one of them will seem practical enough for you to try.

I'm not surprised that you've had this problem. I'm sure the sweet sticky figs are quite a draw for the raccoons. Raccoons are smart, inventive and determined. Don't get in a tussle with raccoons; they can be aggressive, especially if they have little ones. I saw a couple of parent raccoons in action one night and I was shocked at how ferocious they were and how fast they could move.

First off, general housekeeping is your friend. Keep your area free from fallen fruit, take down bird feeders, remove pet food and so forth. This will lessen the amount of attractants that may draw raccoons to your figs. That said, I imagine the ripe figs have a fragrant odor, and there is nothing to do about that.

I've read a book called "Carrots Love Tomatoes," which is a pretty famous book about companion planting. The author claims that raccoons hate cucumbers, so it might work to surround the base of the fig tree with cucumber vines. Raccoons don't like the smell and most cucumber vines are prickly, which they also don't like. You will have to experiment with how many to plant. Think of this as a fence made of cucumbers.

Some people swear by putting out an old radio (that you do not care about) on or near your tree. Have it set on a timer to a talk station like NPR. It doesn't have to be loud. This supposedly gives the impression that people are nearby and the raccoons don't reveal themselves. This one won't work in a P-Patch, but if you're having the problem at your home it might work. I know someone who has this setup on her backyard deck just as a precaution because she doesn't want to be surprised by unexpected visitors.

Some people put up what is called a floppy fence. Surround the fig tree with metal stakes to which you attach firm wire fencing. I would bury the bottom edge underground. Overlap and attach chicken wire, which is less firm, to the top edge. The raccoon will climb up the firm wire fencing but the chicken wire will bend due to the weight and dump the raccoon back onto the ground! These materials are pretty inexpensive. With this method, unfortunately, the barrier you use to keep the raccoons out also makes it a pain for you to tend your plant.

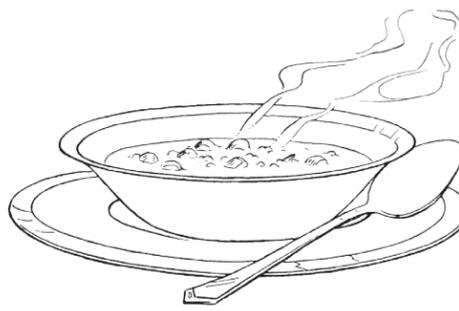
Some people use coyote urine to repel raccoons, placing urine-soaked cotton balls around the area to be protected. The cotton balls must be replaced from time to time. There is also a version of coyote urine that is in a dry granule form. Sometimes the granules are labeled as deer repellent. Just read the label and make sure it is coyote urine. These products can be found at garden centers, home improvement centers that have garden departments and I think even Amazon.com carries them! They are considered safe and organic. There is one company that supplies "predator" droppings and urine for use as repellents and it is amazing how many animals they have on their product list. Let's hope they have some kind of arrangement with a zoo!

One other thing you can try is to put a dish with "goodies" out for the raccoons to eat, and hope they will go for the easiest treat. I don't advocate this idea as it demands daily restocking of the treat dish and it rewards the raccoons for behavior that you don't want. It is, however, an option.

I hope one of these ideas will be appealing for you to try. I'm particularly interested in the cucumbers, which seem the easiest and perhaps give you a crop as well.

Best wishes and happy gardening,  
Diane

To submit a question or item for Posts from the Patch, please email [p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org)



## A simple summer soup

By Tegan Kaske

One benefit of our partly sunny summer (aside from not having to water as often) is that it's not too hot to have a lovely soup for supper.

Here's a great recipe using vegetables that have done well in this year's cool weather: chard, onions, carrots, celery and green onions. If you're lucky, maybe you have a tomato or two to add as well!

Don't let the simple ingredients fool you—this is a very flavorful recipe! Start by making an easy vegetable stock, using stems from cilantro and chard leaves that you add to the soup itself. If you're not feeling ambitious enough to fry the tortilla strips for the garnish, use tortilla chips you have on hand, but be aware that they're usually very heavily salted, and adjust the salt in the soup accordingly. Don't skip the tortillas in the stock—they add a lovely, rich flavor to the soup.

### Chard Tortilla Soup

Adapted from *Vegetable Soups from Deborah Madison's Kitchen* by Deborah Madison (Broadway Books, 2006).

#### For the stock:

1 ½ tablespoons olive oil  
4 garlic cloves, unpeeled  
1 onion, roughly chopped  
2 Roma or plum tomatoes  
1 cup coarsely chopped cilantro stems  
Stems from a large bunch of chard  
1 cup celery, chopped  
2 carrots, chopped  
1 bay leaf  
2 corn tortillas, quartered  
Salt

#### For the soup:

1 ½ tablespoons olive oil  
1 onion, diced  
1 cup cilantro leaves, chopped fine (reserve stems for stock, above)  
1 large bunch of chard leaves, chopped fine (reserve stems for stock, above)  
1 cup celery, finely diced  
1 large bunch of green onions, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon jalapeno or other hot pepper, diced (or more to taste)

#### To finish:

¾ cup peanut oil for frying  
4 corn tortillas, cut into narrow, bite-sized strips  
Monterey Jack cheese, grated  
Lime wedges for garnish

#### For the stock:

- Heat the first 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil. Add garlic and onion. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until garlic is softened and onion is lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Add tomatoes, cilantro stems, chard stems, chopped celery, carrots, bay leaf and tortillas. Add 2 quarts of water and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to boil, then lower heat and simmer, uncovered, for 25 minutes. Strain.
- While you're simmering the stock, make the fried tortilla strips:
- Heat the ¾ cup peanut oil in a small frying pan. When the oil is hot enough that a bit of tortilla dropped in sizzles immediately, add tortilla strips, being sure not to crowd them. The tortillas are done when they're golden and crisp. Transfer to a paper towel to drain.

#### Finish the soup:

- Heat remaining 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil and add diced onion. Cook for several minutes, stirring occasionally; then add green onions, diced celery, cilantro leaves, jalapeno and chard leaves. Season with 1 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring occasionally, for a few more minutes, until everything is starting to soften and the chard cooks down a bit. Pour in strained stock and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Garnish each bowl of soup with cheese, tortilla strips and plenty of lime.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**P-PATCH HARVEST BANQUET**

**SUNDAY, OCT. 9, 6-9 PM**

**Phinney Community Center, Seattle**

Celebrate our harvest with food, music and dance!  
Bring your family, and food to share.

Enjoy activities for adults and children, homemade decorations and world dance.

# Work party adventures: A shed, a gang and a shoe!

By Diane Zebert

Photos by Diane Zebert and Len Eisenhood.

The Ballard P-Patch had an unexpected surprise this summer: we were the grateful recipients of a solidly constructed 4 foot by 12 foot garden shed, generously donated by a lovely family from the neighborhood. The family was redoing their landscaping and no longer needed the shed. We could have it if we moved it before the landscaping contractor showed up with his bulldozer.

With the tones of the *Jeopardy* countdown timer song ringing in our ears, a broadcast call was put out for a shed moving party on Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. Under very welcome blue skies and sunshine, a dedicated and

determined crew showed up, and what an adventure we had! We faced some challenges because the redesign of the landscaping had already been started and we were extremely limited in our working space. And...we had an incline to conquer. The Ballard P-Patch was very lucky that Walt Banecki offered the truck and forklift from his business as well as his expertise in their operation. Since we had a short timeline to work with, we had worked out several scenarios for getting the shed moved. When Walt stepped up we had an excellent and elegant Plan A, which increased our odds of being safe and successful in this task.

Once at the P-Patch, more hurdles arose. The ground was still very soft after our cool, wet spring. It wasn't until we got the forklift to the garden that it became clear that driving it onto the paths would sink the wheels, like a car in fresh snow. When we discovered that the pathways in our Patch were too narrow to get the shed to the location we had selected for its new home, a new site was selected and prepared and a retaining wall was built.

Finally, we were ready to put our new shed into its forever home at the Ballard P-Patch. One of our former gardeners was able to provide us with a small crane, which made the final positioning amazingly easy.

Thanks to our outstanding crew who responded to the call: Shawn Mincer, Sean Taylor, Matt Hals, Carol Barber, Dobbie Boyington, Carl Chard, Len Eisenhood, Lisa and Garth Arnold, Kelly Ryan, Roy Bueler, Tom Kintzi, and anyone else who may have come and gone without me being aware of you. A

special thanks goes to Kate Folchert who secured the donation and for being the hostess extraordinaire, plying us with coffee, cookies, lemonade, snacks and enthusiasm galore. We can't thank everyone enough for your contributions to the cause.

All in all, I think everyone had fun. Most important, we were safe (one person's shoe not withstanding)!



Pre-move...



Roll, roll, roll...



And up she goes...

Here she comes...



Success!



She's outta there!



The arrival...



And up she goes again!



Final positioning...



The only casualty....

**Hats off!**



# Chef in the Garden 2011

Photos by Anita Binham



# Paella at Picardo

Article and photos by Melani Nagao

The Picardo P-Patch celebrated summer with its second annual Feast in the Garden fundraiser on August 31. Volunteers transformed Picardo's usually dusty and tranquil pavilion into an attractive and inviting spot filled with yellow tablecloths, colorful bouquets of summer flowers and bold dahlias, and red drapery and sashes hanging from the beams. The evening began with 62 guests and volunteers gathering to taste an enticing selection of wines and a mouthwatering array of Spanish-inspired tapas. Music flowed through the garden, provided by The Ravenna Ramblers, comprised of fellow Picardo gardener Jerry Gallaher and David Cahn and Bill Meyer.

Guests spilled out into the communal herb garden and garden pathways, meeting fellow gardeners, catching up with friends, and enjoying the amazing aromas from the simmering pans of paella cooked up by Picardo's own Paella King Jim Kuhn and his wife Claudia. As the sun descended over the garden, guests lined up for dinner. Plates were filled with heaping portions of garden salad sprinkled with edible flowers and authentic Spanish paella, replete with clams, mussels, calamari, chorizo, prawns, chicken and fava beans to accompany the saffron-scented rice. It was a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach!



Guests begin to arrive as the music of The Ravenna Ramblers fills the garden.



Early guests chat and watch the slow-cook process of Chef Jim Kuhn's paella.

The weather cooperated beautifully. At dusk, candles were lit and the tables and pathways glowed in their light, adding a magical touch to this evening under the stars. Guests enjoyed each other's company, the delicious food, Patty Abrahamsen's non-alcoholic "sangria," and wine poured by our winemaker Milton Tam. A buffet of luscious desserts, generously baked and donated by Picardo gardeners in support of the event, provided the crowning touch to the festivities. Most important, the event brought in \$1,000 to benefit Picardo's Children's Garden and the Matching Fund to Picardo's newly awarded Department of Neighborhoods grant to improve the south field and hillside.

Special thanks go out to the hardworking organizing committee and volunteers who helped make this event run so smoothly. We would also like to acknowledge those who made donations: Starbucks for coffee; Milton Tam, Art Christiansen, and the 8 Bells Winery for wine; Tim Towner of T. M. Dessert Works; and Chef Jim Kuhn. A very special thanks to all who attended and supported this fundraising effort. As many of the guests said as the evening came to an end, "See you at the next Picardo Feast in the Garden!"



Randall Schalk, Picardo's Rat Czar, who keeps the lid on our rat population, waits for his taste of Milton Tam's home-brew.



Behind the scenes, workers Johanna Striar, Betsy Bridwell, and Jody Hauge, pose with the tapas.



Paella King chef Jim Kuhn and his wife, Claudia, dish out hefty portions of paella filled with chicken, chorizo, artichokes, seafood and more.

# Market Gardens

By Tegan Kaske

Imagine yourself carless, a half-hour bus ride away from any grocery store where you can trade your food stamps for fresh, healthy, affordable food. Add a full-time job and children, and that trip can become a long and taxing journey. For a wide swath of West Seattle, encompassing the High Point and Delridge neighborhoods, the complications of living on a low income are compounded by being located in the middle of a food desert.

A food desert is an area where healthy, affordable food is inaccessible to low-income residents, due to the absence of traditional grocery stores or lack of public transportation. Sure, you can still find something to eat in a food desert. There are cheeseburgers, fried fish, fried potatoes, fried chicken, nacho cheese-flavored chips and snack cakes. There is beer and soda, and fast food and convenience stores abound. You can find food—you just can't find a nutritious meal. Many families in High Point and Delridge already struggle to get by; now add obesity-related illnesses to the list.

Since 1995, the Market Garden program has worked to serve these communities.

In cooperation with Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and the P-Patch Trust, the Market Gardens program seeks to not only provide fresh food for the High Point community, but create self-sufficiency in the mixed-income communities that the Seattle Housing Authority serves. The Market Gardens, located in areas adjacent to Seattle Housing communities, are tended by

SHA residents, often immigrants who bring previous knowledge and experience of farming from their former homes. These gardeners create resources for their neighbors by growing food in the desert, and they create resources for themselves, as well: 60% of the income from the Market Gardens produce goes back to the gardeners.

The first Market Gardens were intended to fuel a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription program aimed at these low-income communities. But that didn't go quite as planned. Most of the subscribers appeared to be middle-class families enthusiastic about supporting the P-Patch. Julie Bryan, Seattle's Community Garden Coordinator, says that while the program appreciated these subscribers, they weren't the target audience. The goal of the Market Gardens program was to feed the immediate community, those without access to fresh food. When CSA subscriptions began to dip in 2009, it was time to rethink the Market Gardens program's approach.

A farm stand seemed like a great idea. "Why not try to be a lot more local and make it so people come to the garden for their food?" Bryan asks. The farm stand, which started in 2009, has been a success so far, selling more than the CSA subscriptions. And since the Farm Stands are run out of the gardens themselves, they also cut down transportation costs.

But the farm stand was still serving a largely middle-class population eager for local, fresh, organic produce. Why?

The answer took some investigation, but was simple enough: low-income residents weren't spending actual

dollars on fresh vegetables. They relied instead on government benefits to buy their food, while the Farm Stand required residents to spend cash. If they wanted to provide the low-income community with fresh, organic food, Market Gardens would have to start taking food stamps.

Working through the bureaucracy hasn't been easy, and it's taken most of the summer to test different ideas and find funding for them. Experiments with coupons and vouchers boosted low-income clientele by about 25%, a figure that Bryan thinks will rise once the Farm Stand can take food stamps. The Market Gardens program, always an "elaborate collaboration" in Bryan's words, is receiving help from the Farmer's Market Access Program to bring in a wireless EBT card reader. (Food stamps are now issued via cards, which look and can be scanned like any other debit card.) Families who rely on food stamps will be able to use their benefits to buy organic vegetables directly from their gardening neighbors by September.

Bryan hopes that taking food stamps will draw a greater diversity of people from the neighborhood and better serve the High Point community. "It won't bring the program much money," she says, "but it will bring food to the people."

And that's what the Market Gardens was created to do.

If you'd like to help support the Market Gardens, you can subscribe to the CSA program via <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/marketgardens>—or visit the farm stand to see what's fresh. The High Point Market Garden Farm Stand is open Wednesday from 4-7pm until September 28 and is open to everyone.

## P-Patch Trust Mission Statement

P-Patch Trust, a nonprofit organization, works to acquire, build, preserve and protect community gardens in Seattle's neighborhoods. Through advocacy, leadership and partnerships, the Trust expands access to community gardening across economic, racial, ethnic, ability and gender lines; promotes organic gardening and builds community through gardening. We seek to break urban isolation by providing opportunities for people to garden together, learn from each other, develop a sense of neighborhood and create a more livable urban environment.

## From the Editors

We would like the *P-Patch Post* to reflect the diversity of gardeners in the Seattle P-Patch Program. We welcome stories about P-Patch gardeners who bring techniques and crops from all parts of the world, individuals who have stewarded the P-Patch Program over time, novice gardeners and their adventures, etc. Please contact us at [p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org) with ideas, gardener profiles, information about crops, recipes and photos. The whole community will benefit from this wealth of experience.

The *P-Patch Post* is published quarterly—in March, June, September and December—by the P-Patch Trust. Approximately 2400 copies are distributed each issue. Please submit articles or story ideas to the editors at [p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org).

The submission deadline for the winter issue is Nov. 15.

*The P-Patch Post is published by the P-Patch Trust. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the P-Patch Trust or the P-Patch Program.*

## P-Patch Trust Board of Directors

Alice Burgess  
[alice.b@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:alice.b@ppatchtrust.org)

Jacqueline Cramer  
[jacqueline.c@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:jacqueline.c@ppatchtrust.org)

Cristina Del Alma  
[cristina.d@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:cristina.d@ppatchtrust.org)

Erin MacDougall  
[erin.m@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:erin.m@ppatchtrust.org)

Michele Mancuso  
[michele.m@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:michele.m@ppatchtrust.org)

Brenda Mater  
[brenda.m@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:brenda.m@ppatchtrust.org)

Michael McNutt  
[michael.m@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:michael.m@ppatchtrust.org)

Joyce Moty  
[joyce.m@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:joyce.m@ppatchtrust.org)

Ray Schutte  
[ray.s@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:ray.s@ppatchtrust.org)

Sheryl Smith  
[sheryl.s@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:sheryl.s@ppatchtrust.org)

Tracy Stober  
[tracy.s@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:tracy.s@ppatchtrust.org)

## P-Patch Trust Associates

Lance LaRowe, Accountant  
[llarowe@comcast.net](mailto:llarowe@comcast.net)

Michelle Bates-Benetua,  
Lettuce Link Program Manager  
[michelle@solid-ground.org](mailto:michelle@solid-ground.org)

## P-Patch Post Editorial Staff

[p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p.patch.post@ppatchtrust.org)

Deb Britt  
Sue Letsinger  
Susan Levine  
Jim McKendry

Tracey Fugami  
Jeff Miller  
Christina Wilsdon

## P-Patch Program Staff

Rich Macdonald, Supervisor  
206-386-0088, [rich.macdonald@seattle.gov](mailto:rich.macdonald@seattle.gov)

Danielle Calloway, Administrative Assistant  
206-733-9916, [danielle.calloway@seattle.gov](mailto:danielle.calloway@seattle.gov)

Laura Raymond, P-Patch Parks  
& Green Space Levy Coordinator  
206-615-1787, [laura.raymond@seattle.gov](mailto:laura.raymond@seattle.gov)

## Community Garden Coordinators

Julie Bryan  
206-684-0540, [julie.bryan@seattle.gov](mailto:julie.bryan@seattle.gov)

Kenya Fredie  
206-733-9243, [kenya.fredie@seattle.gov](mailto:kenya.fredie@seattle.gov)

Minh Chau Le  
206-233-7112, [minhchau.le@seattle.gov](mailto:minhchau.le@seattle.gov)

Sandy Pernitz  
206-684-0284, [sandy.ernitz@seattle.gov](mailto:sandy.ernitz@seattle.gov)

Bunly Yun  
206-684-8495, [bunly.yun@seattle.gov](mailto:bunly.yun@seattle.gov)

Nate Moxley  
206-733-9586, [nate.moxley@seattle.gov](mailto:nate.moxley@seattle.gov)

**YES!** I want to help the P-Patch Trust acquire and advocate for community gardens, and preserve and protect our existing community gardens.

Here is my contribution as a:

**FRIEND: \$25-\$34** (pays the fiscal agency fee for one garden for one month)  
**GARDEN HELPER: \$35-\$49** (pays the plot rental fee for one low-income gardener)  
**SUPPORTER: \$50-\$99** (pays one year of liability insurance for one garden)  
**CONTRIBUTOR: \$100-\$249** (funds a Trust tool grant for one garden)  
**BENEFACTOR: \$250-\$499** (pays a portion of the property taxes on the Trust's gardens)  
**PATRON: \$500-\$999** (pays a significant percentage of the annual support for Lettuce Link)  
**GARDENING ANGEL: \$1000 or more** (pays for printing one edition of the P-Patch Post)

You may be able to multiply your contribution through your employer's matching gift program. Please check with your Human Resources Department for information and the necessary form. Adobe, Amgen, Bank of America, Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks and Chase Bank are among the major local employers that match contributions to non-profit organizations.  
*An acknowledgement of your contribution will be mailed to you.*

My contribution is \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you want to remain anonymous.

Make your check or money order payable to: "P-Patch Trust" and mail it to P.O. Box 19748 Seattle, WA 98109.

You can also use a credit card (VISA or MasterCard) to make a contribution to the Trust via our secure website: [www.p-patchtrust.org](http://www.p-patchtrust.org).

Thank you! For more information contact us at [p.patch.trust@ppatchtrust.org](mailto:p.patch.trust@ppatchtrust.org) or call 425.329.1601

P-Patch Trust is a nonprofit, 501(c) (3) organization and donations are tax deductible to the full amount allowed by law. Our federal tax identification number is 91-1091819.



# Getting ready for winter

By Sue Hartman, Garden Hotline Educator, Seattle Tilth

It may seem like summer just arrived, but it's already time to turn down and tuck in those vegetable patches and prepare the garden for winter! The soil is in need of replenishment after spending its nutrients to grow the food we enjoy. There are many materials available at this time of year to build healthy soil, and fall is a wonderful time to get outside and fortify your garden beds against further nutrient loss due to winter rains. Adding organic matter now will increase soil fertility and get the soil ready for more production next spring. Protect your patch now, and insure a healthy harvest next year!



## Preparing the Garden

You can learn about easy and economical ways to get your garden beds ready for winter at a hands-on class taught by Seattle Tilth, *Put the Garden to Bed*, that will be offered at three locations in October:

- Saturday, October 8, 2–4 pm at the Learning Garden at the Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, Seattle
- Sunday, October 16, 10 am–12 pm at Bradner Gardens Park, 1733 Bradner Place S, Seattle
- Saturday, October 29, 10 am–12 pm at the Community Harvest Garden at White Center Cultural Community Center, 9421 18th Ave. SW, Seattle

## Building the Soil

Healthy, living soil is the foundation of any productive garden. It's more than just sand, silt and clay: healthy soil also needs organic matter that is replenished on a regular basis. Compost—decomposed organic material—is one of the best ways to enrich and enliven soil, because it contains both plant materials and the soil-dwelling microbes that are responsible for breaking down organic matter and providing needed nutrients to plants. There are many ways to make quality compost, and you don't have to look far to find what you need to make it. You can help your P-Patch turn organic matter into "black gold" for everyone to use!

Learn about food and yard waste composting systems and techniques at a hands-on class taught by Seattle Tilth. *Composting 101: Free Food for the Garden* will be offered at three locations in November:

- Saturday, November 5, 2–4 pm at the Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, Room 107
- Sunday, November 13, 10 am–12 pm at Bradner Gardens Park, 1733 Bradner Place S, Seattle
- Saturday, November 26, 10 am–12 pm at the White Center Cultural Community Center, 9421 18th Ave. SW, Seattle

If you've learned the basics, and you want to become a soil and compost master, join the *Master Composter/Soil Builder* program in 2012! See the Seattle Tilth website for more details: <http://seattletilth.org/learn/mcsb/mcsb/>.

You can also get personalized advice about both composting and putting your garden to bed by contacting the Garden Hotline at 206-633-0224 or emailing [help@gardenhotline.org](mailto:help@gardenhotline.org).

Both of these programs are part of the Natural Soil Building program managed by Seattle Tilth and sponsored by Seattle Public Utilities, the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program of King County and the Saving Water Partnership.

## Preserving the Harvest

Do you have an excess of cucumbers this fall that you don't know what to do with? Did you find an amazing deal at a farm stand on peaches, and wind up with more than you could eat? Do neighbors insist on sharing their harvest with you, even though you already have plenty? Canning and food preservation techniques such as pickling and fermentation can come in very handy when you have a surplus of food that you'd like to enjoy all winter long, or give as gifts. December is right around the corner!

Learn how to preserve the harvest by safely preparing and canning jams, tomatoes, chutneys, pickles and more at the following classes offered in October by Seattle Tilth:

- *Basic Canning 101* Saturday, October 15 from 10 am–12 pm at the Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, Room 140, Seattle
- *Pickles and Fermentation* Saturday, October 15 from 2–4 pm at the Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, Room 140, Seattle

For cost and more information on registration, please visit <http://seattletilth.org/learn/classes-and-workshops/octoberclasses>.

## Plants talking: A play in one act

By Mary Waters

**Time:** Late September

**Place:** A Seattle P-Patch

**Tomato:** (sobbing) I am so depressed! I'm sagging. Got no energy. There's just not enough light these days. Where did it go? And there's a nip in the morning air. Not to mention how cold it's been at night.

**Strawberry:** Didn't they tell you?

**Tomato:** Tell me what?

**Strawberry:** Uh—oh, well, you see... (hesitates)... ask Lettuce.

**Lettuce:** Oh, you want me to break the news. Well, Tomato, time to face it: You and I are dying.

**Tomato:** Dying! Oh no! How did that happen? Nobody told me! Take me back to South America where I can live year-round! Or put me in a greenhouse, quick!

**Lettuce:** Too late. But it's not all bad news. Even though you had a rough year, what with the late spring and cool summer, you still managed to ripen your tomatoes. A few fell to the ground before humans picked them, and since there are lots of seeds in each tomato, some will germinate next year and make new tomato plants. You will have offspring!

**Tomato:** But my offspring won't be me!

**Lettuce:** That's not the point. You gotta let go of your ego, buddy. Think long term, think of the greater good. You won't survive, but your species will. Look at all the seeds I made when I bolted! Am I complaining?

**Strawberry:** Yeah, Tomato, your species will survive, so just chill and give us a break from your whining.

**Lettuce:** Easy for you to say, Strawberry. You're going to make it through the winter—in fact, you'll make it through quite a few winters.

**Tomato:** What's Strawberry got that I don't? Whatever it is, I want it.

**Cabbage:** (haughtily) It's called a crown, and it's not the royal kind. It's what makes Strawberry an herbaceous perennial.

**Garlic:** (aside) Ever since Cabbage grew such a big head, she's been lordling it over us with big words.

**Strawberry:** Let me explain. See, Tomato, you went and grew long, tender stems and tender leaves and didn't protect them. So you're going to get nipped by frost and that will do you in. Your leaves and stems will turn brown and die. You think you're sagging now? Just wait. Not to brag, but I keep my stem really, really short and thick and

just above soil level. And I protect it with scales. My stem and scales "crown" my root system. And my crown has different types of buds—buds for runners, leaves, flowers and even roots. So I don't care if my leaves turn brown and fall off. My crown will just go dormant and hang in over the winter. When the weather is decent again, my buds will emerge and voilá—a new plant, a clone of me. Can't say I mind one bit.

**Rhubarb:** Yeah, I use that strategy, too. My leaves die but my crown doesn't. Only I'm a little shy. I don't keep my crown above the soil – it's just below.

**Asparagus:** You copied that from me.

**Raspberry:** Stop fighting, you guys. We all got crowns figured out millennia ago. It doesn't matter who was first.

**Onion:** Personally, I prefer to go the bulb route.

**Cabbage:** (professorially) Ah yes, bulbs. Those underground storage organs consisting of a bud, or buds, surrounded by fleshy leaves that enable a plant to survive adverse conditions.

**Garlic:** (aside) Isn't he obnoxious?

**Dahlia:** Potato and I are fond of the tuber way of life. We prefer to make fleshy stems our storage-winter survival organs.

**Garlic:** (aside) Look who knows it all now.

**Cabbage:** Clearly, herbaceous perennials, all. Not woody perennials: plants with tough stems and winter-protected buds, like rhododendrons.

**Tomato:** I don't care how many kinds of perennials there are. I just don't want to be an annual. And I haven't even been through a full year! A few months—that's all I get in this rotten climate.

**Lettuce:** You got tender leaves, you die. Take a leaf from kale or collards or chard—they'll make it through the winter. They're tough!

**Cabbage:** (yawning) Oh, yes, those hardy annual types. They look good over the winter and many of them will just keep growing well into summer, before humans yank them because their leaves aren't large and tender any more, and they have too many flowers.

**Lettuce:** Listen up, Tomato. Seeds are probably the best way to make it through the winter. They're tougher than just about any other part of a plant.

**Human:** Looks like these tomatoes are about done for (yanks up a tomato plant.) And those lettuces, too....

**Lettuce:** Aaaarrghhh!

# Magnolia P-Patch

By Monica Wooten



JIM WOOTEN

Susan Casey (in red) and her Magnolia Manor Steering Committee plan a birdhouse-making workshop at the park.

Magnolia's first P-Patch will create space for 60 to 70 gardeners when it opens in 2012 on the sunny south side of Magnolia Manor Park. The development of Manor Park has been underway for over a year, and the new site plan has been approved in a community process. For Magnolians, this is welcome news, as the closest P-Patch is the very successful Interbay P-Patch, for which waits of up to three years are not uncommon.

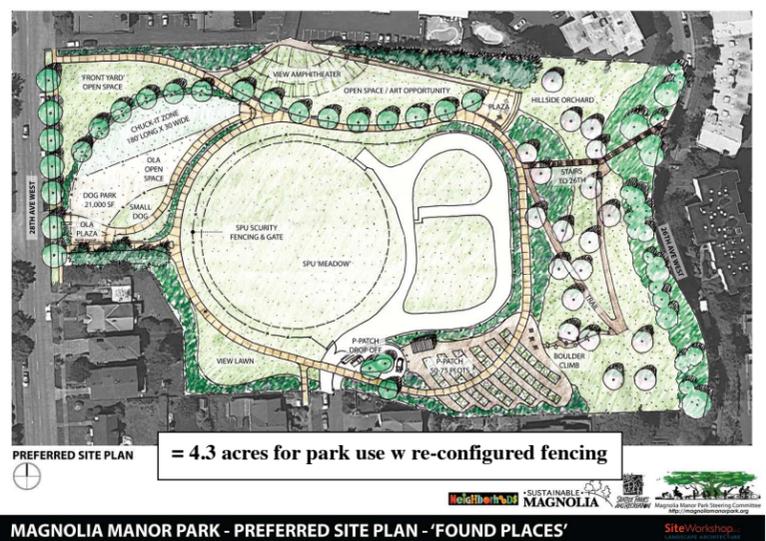
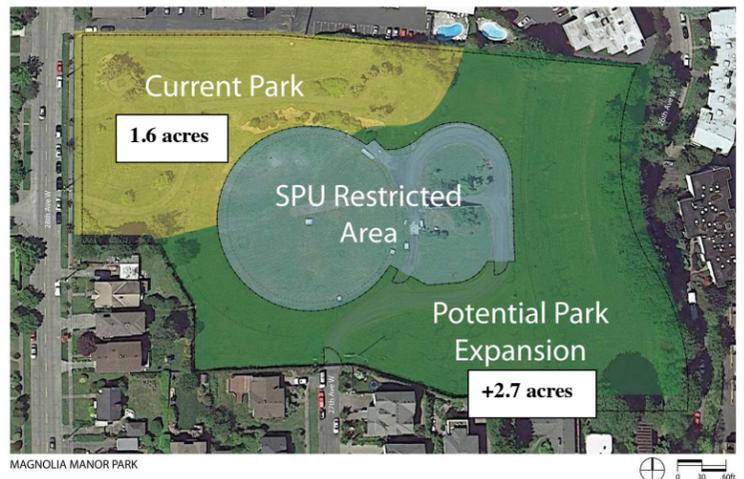
There is about \$60,000 from the Green Spaces Levy Fund to realize the P-Patch and park plans, and a matching grant award of \$20,000 from the Department of Neighborhoods Small and Simple Fund. Susan Casey, veteran P-Patcher and chair of Friends of Magnolia Manor Park, will work with the landscape architect, Site Workshop, to refine design and do early construction plans not only for the new P-Patch but for the entire park.

With the reconfiguration of fencing on the Seattle Public Utilities site, where there is a lidded reservoir, the park area will almost triple. This new open space, a rare commodity in Seattle, will be used for additional park elements: walking paths, the first off-leash area in Magnolia, view vistas, picnic and play areas, and an orchard.

Please volunteer for Friends of Magnolia Manor Park and help us build a new P-Patch with our matching grant!

More Manor Park news: <http://www.magnoliamanorpark.org>

Like us at our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofmagnoliamanorpark>



Park Plan: About 60 plots in full sun!

# Picardo's new look

By Pat Gibbon

Nearly 38 years after Picardo opened, it's finally getting a new look: a redesign that will accommodate more gardeners, an extended food bank garden, a new south-end irrigation system and a larger children's garden. The final look of Picardo's south-end redesign, which is part of the 2000 Master Plan, will be determined by the community design process, but at a minimum all current short-season gardeners will have plots.

Picardo is changing because seasonal gardening is a holdover from early Seattle P-Patching, when short-season gardens existed throughout the city, said Rich Macdonald, P-Patch Program Supervisor. It made sense when Picardo was a destination garden with zero waitlist, with gardeners primarily interested in extra summer gardening space, and with a large percentage of gardeners who were waiting for a plot close to home. Picardo today is increasingly a local garden, with a significant waitlist and demand for year-round gardens.

Picardo received a \$20,000 grant for the redesign from the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhood's Neighborhood Matching Funds. The process will initiate community involvement by requesting ideas from neighbors, local organizations, food banks, University Preparatory School students and Picardo gardeners. Redesigning Picardo involves many steps:

- Replant the long south-end hillside—which is currently covered with weeds, grasses and invasive plants—with natives. A special “thank you” bench for Jack Rucker will be installed. Rucker is a long time Picardo gardener who keeps the water running at the garden. We can't thank you enough, Jack!
- Replant the south end to all year-round gardens with a new irrigation system. There will be a lot more hose bibs!
- Create new raised beds especially designated for food banks.
- Install a new bamboo cutting garden to produce stakes, trellises, and supports for climbing plants. Bamboo is an ecologically sound, fast-growing, renewable resource that absorbs four times more carbon dioxide and produces 35 percent more oxygen than similarly sized plants.
- Install a mushroom demonstration garden.
- Expand the children's garden to 1,000 square feet and add new art, beds and seating.
- Install a mural on University Prep's retaining wall, designed and painted by the school's art students.

Picardo's new look will take time, energy and a lot of work by everyone. If you are interested in helping, please contact Picardo's site coordinators.

Laura Matter: [lmatter@comcast.net](mailto:lmatter@comcast.net)  
 Sandra Schaffer: [sandras@nwlink.com](mailto:sandras@nwlink.com)  
 Julia Wharton: [juliapicardo@yahoo.com](mailto:juliapicardo@yahoo.com)  
 Milton Tam: [miltontam@aol.com](mailto:miltontam@aol.com)



### P-Patch 2011 Discount Coupon

This is your P-Patch discount coupon, good for 10% off on purchases of garden-related merchandise only at the following participating merchants. Present your coupon before the cashier rings up the sale. Happy Gardening!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • City People's Garden Store<br>939 E Madison, 324-0737                | • Langley Fine Gardens<br>Selling at U-D, Phinney, & W Seattle farmers markets |
| • City People's Mercantile, Sand Point<br>5440 Sand Point Wy, 524-1200 | • Magnolia Garden Center – P-Patch Plants Only<br>3213 W Smith, 284-1161       |
| • Emerald City Gardens<br>4001 Leary Wy NW, 789-1314                   | • Sky Nursery<br>18528 Aurora Ave N, 546-4851                                  |
| • Eny Grows, LLC<br>2425 E Union, 588-2498                             | • Swanson's Nursery<br>9701 15th NW, 782-2543                                  |
| • Furney's Nursery<br>21215 Pac Hwy S, 878-8761                        | • West Seattle Nursery & Garden Center<br>5275 California Ave SW, 935-9276     |
| • Greenwood Hardware<br>7201 Greenwood Ave N, 783-2900                 | • Urban Earth<br>1051 N 35th St, 632-1760                                      |
| • Indoor Sun Shoppe<br>160 Canal St, 634-3727                          |  |

P-Patch Program, 700 5th Ave, Ste 1700 PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649, 684-0264

# Cascade Garden giving garden

By Harvey Jones and Luella Castelda

Cascade P-Patch is in a generous mood! This patch celebrates giving, and our members are caught up in the spirit. In 2009, our mid-sized patch (55 plots) donated 1,000 pounds of food to the food bank directly across the street at Immanuel Lutheran Church, to the nearby Seattle Cancer Care Alliance residence and to the Pike Place Senior Center that feeds 100 people daily. We were blessed that year with good growing weather into fall, resulting in a banner winter squash crop; the giant heirloom squash “Galeux d’Eysines” was a particular standout. In 2010, the crop was not as fruitful, and giving declined to 850 pounds. This was still a healthy total, but we have bigger visions. In 2011, our Giving Garden team challenged individual gardeners to help us beat our previous 1,000-pound record.

We are lucky to have plenty of available space for Giving Gardens, some in the patch and some borrowed from the nearby Community Center. We plant continuously in these common beds, harvesting kale, collards and chard year-round. Buckets of peas, beans, artichokes, rhubarb, carrots and summer and winter squash are harvested in season. We plant greens again in September for a big early crop in the normally spare months of March and April. And our dynamic Harvesting Team guarantees harvesters during the work week, when most of our gardeners have reported to their local “cube farms.” Luella Castelda leads this Team, which is anchored by a few scheduled gardeners and retirees from the nearby retirement complex.

Over the past five years, the soil quality of our individual plots has improved dramatically through a combination of education, compost, winter amending and summer mulching. At the same time, we’ve become more demanding that plots be productive and maintained. Now we have an abundance of healthy plots and the majority of food bank donations come from individuals who realize that they would rather donate Swiss chard than have it on the table night after night after night.

Our tips for building a culture of giving include:

- Challenge gardeners to give.
- Create Giving Garden spaces. Even growing beans and peas along fences makes a difference!
- Organize a dependable planting and growing team.
- Organize a dependable harvesting team that can transport the donations to the food banks.
- Plant three rotations per year—compost frequently.
- Don’t let any food in Giving Garden or individual spaces be wasted. Glean for the food banks!
- Cheerlead! Thank your donor gardeners, and keep everyone in the P-Patch informed of your progress.

Please stop by the Cascade Patch—enjoy our hummingbirds and flower gardens at the “epicenter of Seattle.” We make an effort to have plants in flower from January through November, and our garden shows color all year round.



MOLLY FRANKLIN

*The chef for the Pike Place Senior Center looks over a delivery of greens that we took this last month.*



P-Patch Trust  
P.O. Box 19748  
Seattle, WA 98109



## P-Patch Garden Skills Fair: Sharing leadership

By Joyce Moty

Thirty P-Patch leaders from 15 gardens across the city spent a sunny Saturday in July at the first P-Patch Garden Skills Fair, co-sponsored by the P-Patch Trust and City of Seattle staff, in Bradner Gardens Park. The fair offered workshops in practical skills, such as composting, faucet repair and sharpening garden tools. Afternoon panel discussions addressed inclusivity in the garden, event organization and garden safety improvements.

How did participants respond? Results from a survey indicated that attendees found the fair informative, but wanted more hands-on demonstrations where participants could practice during the workshop, and better notification of the fair, such as email reminders and posters for garden bulletin boards. Attendees felt that panel discussions needed more time and could take place in the off-season.

The idea of this fair arose from the city’s budget crisis. The P-Patch program has cut back staff time, and may need to cut again in the November 2011 budget. At the same time, more gardens are being added: the 2008 Parks and Green Space Levy allocated \$2 million for development of new P-Patches. By 2013, our current 75 community gardens will grow to 90, without any new staff. This means that P-Patch staff will have less time to interact with our gardeners.

How can P-Patch gardeners help? Take a more active role in stewarding and participating in garden activities!

P-Patches are about building community and food security, so collaborate with other gardeners in your P-Patch by organizing work parties to care for and harvest food bank gardens, maintain compost systems and public spaces in the P-Patch and make site improvements.

Learn who the site leaders are in your garden and offer to help with tasks. If your garden does not have a leader or leadership team, consider putting one together. Share tasks and leadership roles to reduce burnout and alleviate “grouchy leader syndrome.” Site leaders are volunteers who are just as busy as you are, and they appreciate your help in keeping the P-Patch running smoothly.

We live in challenging times for city budgets and community gardening, but together we can make our P-Patch program more effective and responsive to the needs of food security. Look for more leadership forums and skill workshops in the future! In 2013, when the Seattle P-Patch Program celebrates its 40th anniversary, I hope that volunteering is thriving in all 90 of our gardens.