

Troy Gardens Gazette

Harvest · Harmony · Home

SPRING 2006 VOL. 4 No. 1

Plant Yourself at Troy Gardens



More than a place where plants grow, Troy Gardens is a place where *people* grow.

Plant yourself in our Adult Education Series. Explore digital nature photography, backyard bee-keeping, and the history of ancient Indian mounds in our neighborhood.

Plant yourself among our Volunteer Natural Areas Stewards—learn the fine points of prairie restoration and the lore of native plants—and join us for Volunteer Picnic Nights!

Plant your children at Troy Gardens! Our Kids' Gardening Program introduces youngsters to a relationship with the natural world, a bond that will stay with them the rest of their lives.



Plant your appetite at Troy Community Gardens and CSA Farm. Fill your table with wholesome fresh food.

Plant your spirit on the land! Walk through Troy Prairie with your senses open to the beauty that lives here all year long.

Plant your future. Youth in our Farm & Field Program grow as leaders and develop job skills—while earning a stipend.

Plant yourself at Troy Gardens. Visit us on the land, on the web, or simply turn this page—to discover how you can plant your heart and soul, here and now, at Troy Gardens.



FRIENDS OF
troy gardens





Save The Date Savor The Summer Festival!

Saturday, August 12, 2006
Troy Gardens 2nd Annual
Summer Celebration

- Live Music!
- Food!
- Cooking Demonstrations!
- Flower Festival!
- Silent Auction & Raffle!
- Art for Sale!
- Outdoor Activities for Kids!
- Senior Tent—Comfort for Everyone!
- Site Tours
- Free admission!



We salute our supporters!

American Girl Fund for Children

Bradshaw-Knight Foundation

The Capital Times Kids Fund

David S. Bourne Foundation

Evjue Foundation

Madison Community Foundation

National Gardening Association

Natural Resources Foundation

Quixote Foundation

Sowing Seeds Donors

Starbucks Foundation

Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Program

Wisconsin State Journal Youth Services

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food and Society Initiative

Friends of Troy Gardens Members

**Troy Kids' Garden has won a first place award from the
National Youth Gardening Association recognizing our
Kids' Garden as one of the best in the nation!**

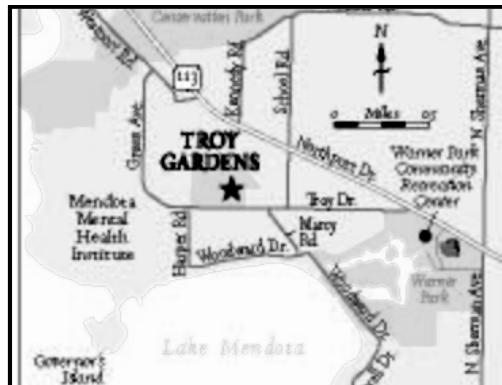
Friends of Troy Gardens Staff

Maggie Anderson
Community Farm Assistant
Nathan Larson
Education Program Director
Amy Martin
Natural Areas Restoration Manager
Dana Slowiak
Office Manager
Claire Strader
Community Farm Manager
Sundee Wislow
Executive Director

Phone: 608-240-0409
Email: info@troygardens.org
Web: www.troygardens.org

Friends of Troy Gardens Board of Directors

Rita Cairns, Co-Chair, Northside Resident
Marge Pitts, Co-Chair, MACLT
Briana Meier, Secretary, *Urban Open Space Foundation*
Gerianne Holzman, At-Large Member
Martin Bailkey, *Troy Gardens Homes*
Marcia Caton Campbell, *Troy CSA Farm*
Sam Dennis, *UW-Madison*
Beulah Lee, *Northside Resident*
Steve Lendved, *Northside Resident*
Sharon Lezberg, *Troy Youth Programming*
Anne Pryor, *Troy Community Gardens*
Pat Woicek, *Northside Resident*
Marcia Yapp, *Northside Resident*



Troy Gardens is located in the 500 block of Troy Drive on Madison's Northside.

Ground Breaking News

TROY GARDENS HOMES COMING SOON!



On March 21, Troy Gardens broke ground in preparation for the townhouses pictured here. People who reserve units now can make upgrades like natural flooring and solar water heaters.

Troy Gardens homes are almost here!

On March 21, the Madison Area Community Land Trust (MACLT) formally broke ground, and will begin construction this spring on 30 townhouses on five acres at the eastern end of Troy Gardens. There will be 20 Land Trust homes, available to first time homebuyers who earn no more than 80% of county median income. Prices for these income-restricted homes range from \$109,500 for a two bedroom to \$155,000 for a four bedroom. The remaining ten homes will be “market rate,” sold to people who don’t meet the income restrictions. The market rate homes range from \$149,500 for a two bedroom to \$214,500 for a four bedroom.

The response to the housing has been fast and enthusiastic. Homebuyers are drawn to all that Troy Gardens has to offer—community gardens, the CSA, the prairie and open space, and the friendly and willing community of neighbors who already consider Troy Gardens home. MACLT has already accepted 12 reservations from homebuyers wishing to secure their place at Troy Gardens. They have started a waiting list for the two bedroom income-restricted homes. Two-bedroom market rate homes, and three and four bedroom homes are still available.

If you would like to learn more about living at Troy Gardens, please call MACLT’s Sharene Wilcox at 280-0131, or visit MACLT’s website, www.affordablehome.org, for more information.

There’s still room for you!

Spring Gifts from Troy Gardens

Give the gift of . . .

- A season of fresh produce from Troy Farm
- A summer of organic flower bouquets
- Sponsorship of a community garden plot
- A bee hive adopted in your name
- Unique greeting cards that capture the beauty of Troy Gardens in color photos
- A Troy Gardens gift certificate



“HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY!”

Your gift will succeed in two ways, because you’ll be supporting our work as you share your love for this special place.

Visit
troygardens.org
 or call us to receive
 your gift brochure.

**Enjoy
 Troy Gardens!**

Troy CSA Farm Feeds You!

Not everyone likes to muck around in the soil growing their own food, but everybody can appreciate the healthy boost one gets from eating fresh, nutritious vegetables. Locally grown organic vegetables are your best bet. Add the element of connection between farmer and eater, and there you have the basic recipe for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

Members of Troy's CSA Farm purchase their share of the year's harvest up-front, in the spring—now, in fact—only 100 shares are available each year.

Troy CSA members support our farm at the time of year when the farm faces most of its expenses. In return, members receive a weekly supply of certified organic vegetables from the farm, for 21 weeks from June through October. Members come to the Farm Stand at Troy Gardens (or our new west side location, see below) every Thursday to pick up their shares, and they're invited to the farm to cut their own flowers and herbs. Members can visit their farm and the rest of Troy Gardens any time they wish!

Troy CSA Farm offers one standard share size, designed to feel abundant but not overwhelming for households of one or two adults. Members are invited to split a share with friends or to purchase multiple shares to suit their needs, and may pay for their share in four installments. Each weekly CSA share includes our farm newsletter, *Urban Roots*, with farm stories, cooking tips and detailed recipes to go with that week's harvest. A share at Troy Farm costs \$400, an average of \$19 per week.

If that price seems impossible, don't stop reading. We have ways to make our vegetables affordable!

Affordable Troy CSA Shares

- **Troy Assistance Fund**

This fund consists of private donations from people who want their money to have a direct, healthful effect in our community. Contact Troy Gardens to see if you qualify, or to contribute to this fund.

- **Installment plan, four easy payments**

- **Physicians Plus "Eat Healthy Rebate"**

Physicians Plus will reimburse members \$200 for family contracts or \$100 for individual contracts. Go to www.pplusic.com for more information.

- **Food Stamps, Quest cards accepted**



New this year!

Troy Farm is adding a west side pick-up location at Regent Market Co-op, 2136 Regent St.

Visit our website, www.troygardens.org, or call 442-6760 to receive your farm brochure, and sign up now!



Where can you buy our organic vegetables?

Troy Farm Stand—at Troy Gardens, 500 Troy Dr. Thursdays 4-6:30pm, June through October.

Northside Farmers' Market—Northside TownCenter, N. Sherman Ave. at Northport Dr. Sundays, 8am–1pm, June 5 through October 16.

Eastside Farmers' Market S. Ingersoll St. one block north of Williamson St. Tuesdays 4–7pm, May through October.

Food stamps are accepted at all three of these markets.

Prairie Milestone—Our First Burn

Don't be alarmed if you see smoke rising from Troy Gardens on Saturday, April 8. It's not an emergency—it's a reason to celebrate. We're improving Troy Prairie!

Fire is a natural part of prairie ecosystems. Fire keeps prairie plants vigorous, and deters trees and invasive species from creeping in. We love our trees at Troy Gardens, but when trees establish themselves in a prairie they create a shaded environment where prairie plants cannot survive.

The burr oak that anchors the Prairie Council Ring at the center of Troy Prairie has thick corky bark that allows it to survive fires. Burr oaks are one of the few trees one will find in a native Wisconsin prairie. This magnificent tree was donated and planted by Steve Ziegler, Troy Gardens' landscape architect. The one and only tree in Troy Prairie is 50 years old—just a youngster, as these trees can live for hundreds of years.

Troy Prairie may seem sad and bare after the burn. The soil will be dark and covered in ash. As spring days grow longer and warmer, you will see green sprouts bringing life back to the prairie. By summertime the black-eyed susans, yellow coneflowers, blazingstar, and all of the other prairie plants will be back stronger than ever. The animals that live in the prairie will escape to the neighboring natural areas during the burn, but will enjoy an invigorated prairie home afterward.

As those green sprouts appear, Troy's Natural Areas Volunteer Stewards will closely monitor what is growing, hand-pulling the invasive species they find. We have several unwanted species—sweet clover, thistle, wild parsnip, and reed canary grass—but over the past five years our Stewards have greatly reduced the number of these plants, and the burn will help our efforts.

Fire will knock back sprouting plants, and will work with the biology of plants in ways that assist us. Fire often helps seeds to germinate, which is good not only for the



A flock of bluebirds passed through Troy Prairie in early January. They perched in the burr oak and found food in the prairie before moving on toward the west.

prairie plants we want, but also for the invasive species we want to control. For example, a prairie burn can cause 99% of sweet clover seeds to sprout. After the burn, sweet clover will sprout like crazy, but if we are persistent in pulling it this season, by next year the seed bank for this invasive species will be gone!

The Woodland School, supported by the Aldo Leopold Foundation, will be leading our burn, as part of a one-day class on prescribed burns. The training and burn will take place from 8am-6pm on April 8. The class costs \$45. People who have been Troy Vol-

unteer Stewards for one year may take the class for free. Students will conduct the burn under the guidance of the instructors. If you would like to participate in the full day training, visit www.thewoodlandschool.org to register.

At 4pm on April 8th, we invite all interested people to the land to join us for a discussion about prairie burning, and to observe as the second half of the prairie is burned. If you have any questions or would like to apply for a partial scholarship to assist you in attending the full day training, contact Troy Gardens. We need dry conditions for the prairie to burn well, so if it's raining we'll delay the burn until the following day.

New This Season—Volunteer Picnic Nights!

Join Troy Natural Areas Stewards for an evening of work and play at Troy Gardens. Get your hands dirty on a volunteer project, explore native and herbal plant use, and share a potluck picnic supper. If you wish—camp out under the stars for the

night! Picnic nights will be held the second Saturday of each month from May through November, starting at 4pm. Be there!



Come and Watch the Prairie Burn! Saturday, April 8, 4pm

Voices of Troy Gardens

MINNIE YOUNG, TROY HOMEOWNER

Minnie Young is taking a big step and making a short move, at the same time.

Ten years ago, Minnie and her then 4-year-old daughter moved from Chicago to Madison, into a rented townhouse a few blocks from Troy Gardens, in the Vera Court Neighborhood. At that time, Troy Gardens was 31 acres of state-owned vacant land. Community gardens took up a small part of it, and the rest was just an attractive but weedy field that neighbors used for daily walks and little else.

Back then, the Vera Court Neighborhood was in the process of transformation from a dangerous and unpleasant place, guided in large part by neighborhood resident Darlene Horner, who still lives there. Ms. Horner's community activism in the 1990's led to landlords cleaning up their buildings and residents taking responsibility to create the kind of safe and respectful neighborhood they wished to live in. Nowadays, the Vera Court Neighborhood Center is a thriving, merry place and Mendota Elementary School, although it has one of the highest poverty rates of all Madison schools, consistently wins awards and shines as a school where parents are eager to get involved.

Minnie lived through this transformation. "I haven't had any problems on the Northside," she says. "People are nice, helpful." That's why, when she felt the time had come for her family to own their own home, she looked no further than here. When she read in the *Northside News* about the Madison Area Community Land Trust building affordable homes on the Northside, she contacted MACLT's Mary Myers, who told Minnie about the houses that were soon to be built at Troy Gardens.

"Sounds very interesting," said Minnie. "I've been waiting a long time," she thought, so waiting a little longer for a home at Troy Gardens seemed a smart thing to do. This winter she put a down payment on a three-bedroom Troy townhouse. Her home will be built and ready for her to move in by the end of the summer.

Minnie's current rented home is peaceful, immaculate, and comfortable. Like Minnie, her home exudes a sense of warmth and love—the perfect environment for children. Indeed, since she moved to Madison, Minnie has adopted two more daughters, now age 7 and 9. Minnie runs a day-care business in her home, which she will continue at Troy Gardens. She will be accepting additional children into the daycare once she is established in her new home.

Minnie's townhouse—"Number 3A," she announces proudly, will be located at the back of the development, near the woods. She chose that section because it will be built first.

Although Minnie is not a gardener or particularly outdoorsy, she has enjoyed watching "people working and digging and planting and picking," every year at Troy as the seasons march along. Her next door neighbor for the last ten years has been Troy gardener Bo Vang, one of the nicest and best known people in the gardens, and Minnie

is very happy that she won't have to say good-bye to her good friend.

Although Minnie's daughters are a bit anxious about moving from the home they know and love, they won't be moving far, and they won't have to change schools. That gives all of them "peace of mind," Minnie says.

"It's gonna be the same thing and better," Minnie tells her girls. "We're taking a step ahead."



Minnie Young and her niece, Connie.

Troy Garden Journal

THE CONDITION OF MY SOIL

By Marge Pitts

In my garden, harvest isn't the point. It's only a manifestation, the outcome of genetics (hybrid or heirloom); plus my own elbow grease (flowing through my own green thumb); plus the amount of time I can steal from more banal priorities (like having a day job). All of this rests literally on the condition of my soil. I work my garden in order to discover that essence, that source, that is my soil.

Plants are in it for themselves, pure egoists. In good circumstances they grow fast and easy, hogging the sunshine, flowering wantonly, gaudy and succulent. When bad weather or marauding insects challenge plants, they can either develop exquisite flavor and superior nutrition if they live in healthy soil, or become grotesque parodies of themselves if they live in naked dirt. Sometimes plants enjoy perfect conditions and still grow up weak and unproductive. This indicates a soil lacking some fundamental substance.

Plants have only a season, or a stretch of seasons. They come and go in fast motion compared to the slow composition and decomposition of the soil beneath them.

My soil contains mysterious ingredients, too small and numerous to distinguish. I add what I like—compost, rotten leaves, and mulch; and remove what I don't like—quack grass roots and stones. Nature adds some stuff—minerals from a glacier twenty thousand years ago, plus worms, plus whatever rode in on the weather last week.

If you could go back far enough you would see that the atoms that form my soil were actually made by the Creator at first light, when He/She/or It invented the first word in the first language, a big voice loosely translated: "YES!"

During the hectic life of summer I keep my soil under a cover of mulch—the chaos of unmerciful weather and trespassing weeds would injure the garden if my soil were exposed during the hard work of growth.

When summer's jumbo nodding plants get over themselves and fall down dead, finally, I can pull them out, scrape back the old mulch, and sink to my knees in my dark, essential soil. In early spring, during the open days



between the death and rebirth of plants, my soil is laid bare. At last I can get down to the source and see what I've got.

The labor that went into coaxing and protecting my desired plants, and then harvesting everything I wanted from them, is as insignificant as the life of an unknown peasant a thousand years ago, once it's over.

What really matters is the condition of my soil. Is it black with organic matter, fuel for the engine that turns past life into present life? Does it hold water, life's lowest common denominator? Is it home to worms, valued servants of the Creator? Do I recognize my own soil, soft as my mother's cheek? Is it improving year by year, due to my self-serving work and desire? Can my soil support my future?

When I hold my soil in my hands, I feel a harmony coming on, a small voice loosely translated: "Yes!"

WELCOME NEW COMMUNITY GARDENERS!

REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION

Saturday, April 1
Lakeview Library,
Northside TownCenter,
N. Sherman Ave. at
Northport Dr.

10:30-11:30am—Hmong
gardeners registration,
translation provided

11:30am-1:30pm—General registration



PLOTS AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER!

The Friends of Troy Gardens

Room 171, Building 14

3601 Memorial Dr.

Madison, WI 53704

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
MADISON, WI
PERMIT NO. 61

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Coming Up This Spring!

Prairie Burn

Sat. April 8

Community Gardens Opening Day

Sat. April 22, 9am

Bird Identification Walk

Sat. May 6

Bio-Blitz! Species Identification Event

Fri.-Sat. June 23-24, 1pm-1pm

Indian Mound Tour

Wed. June 21, 7pm

Urban Farm Day for Kids

Sat. June 24, 10:30-Noon

Fall Planting Workshop

Sat. July 1, 3pm

Backyard Beekeeping

Sat. July 29, 10-11:30am

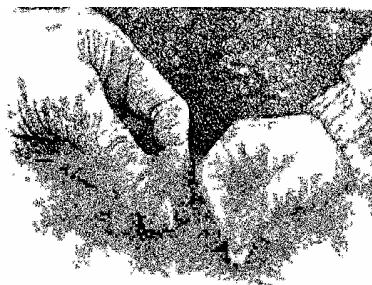


Yes! I want to join the
Friends of Troy Gardens

Members receive the **Troy Gardens Gazette** as well as notices of events, volunteer opportunities, and educational programs.

Sign me up! I want to help:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | TRANSPLANT | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PLOW | \$45 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | HARVEST | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SUSTAIN | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PRESERVE | \$200+ |
- Low income member-ships available, call
PRESERVERS RECEIVE FREE T-SHIRT 240-0409



Please make your tax-deductible gift payable to:

Friends of Troy Gardens

Room 171, Building 14

3601 Memorial Dr.

Madison, WI 53704

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Thank You!