

## WE GROW LOCAL

Here at Community GroundWorks we believe that a fundamental shift in the way our nation produces food is both desirable and unavoidable: we need to grow more locally.

In fact, this fundamental shift applies to more than food. Peace and happiness, verdant biodiversity, life-long learning and meaningful art: all of these desirable outcomes must be grown locally if they are to exist at all.

That's what we're trying to do with all our programs at Troy Gardens, and why we have decided to expand our mission to include teaching others to grow locally too.

The idea is catching on all around us. Imagine our delight when Troy Community Farm Manager Claire Strader won the online "White House Farmer" competition a few weeks ago, from a field of 111 nominees from around the country.

In an October *New York Times Magazine* article, author Michael Pollan called for the creation of a White House Farmer position, suggesting turning five acres of the White House grounds into an organic fruit and vegetable garden, the produce from which would be used by the White House Chef and given to area food banks.

This winter, The Brockmans, a family farm in Illinois, launched the website [whitehousefarmer.com](http://whitehousefarmer.com), to accept nominees and elect the top four candidates for the job. Voting ran from Jan. 20 to Jan. 31. The top four vote recipients will have their names forwarded to President Obama for consideration to be the first White House Farmer. Other top four candidates include Carrie Anne Little with Mother Earth Farm in Puyallup, WA; Margaret Lloyd, with Home Farming in Davis, CA; and Will Allen with Growing Power in Milwaukee, WI.

"The top four farmers are working toward building a national coalition to promote establishment of a White House Farm," said Bob Gragson, Executive Director of

Community GroundWorks. "Recently, an advisor to Agriculture Secretary Vilsack hinted at the possibility that there would be a White House Garden in place this summer," he continued.

The top two candidates, Claire Strader and Carrie Anne Little, issued a joint statement about the outcome of the race:

"It is a great honor for us to be recognized by our communities as potential candidates for the first White House Farmer. We are thrilled by the possibility of converting a portion of the lovely White House lawn into a lively vegetable farm. As vegetable, fruit, and flower growers, we know that a well-managed organic farm can be at least as beautiful as a lawn and certainly more engaging, productive, and inspirational.

"The fact that so many farmers were nominated for the White House farmer position and that so many individuals voted in this unique "election" speaks loudly to our combined interest in local, organic agriculture...

"We are working toward a new future of agriculture in our country. We believe that future is grounded in small-scale, organic food production that meets the nutritional needs of people within reach of the farm and is not shipped from coast to coast at great cost of fuel, freshness, and nutritional value. With the support of more and more eaters in our communities, that future is coming nearer. A White House farm and a White House farmer will be powerful symbols for this future of agriculture, not to mention a delicious resource for the DC community. No matter who becomes the first White House farmer we stand in support of the White House farm project and would be honored to bring our spades and worm castings and hula hoes to join in the effort!"



## TROY COMMUNITY GARDENERS DEFEAT WINTER!

### Upcoming Troy Gardens Events to Remember: Gardens Opening Day; Plant & Equipment Sale; Savor the Summer Celebration!

Troy Community Gardeners put down their seed catalogs and put on their clean garden clothes just as soon as the ground thaws enough to get their clothes dirty again.

Official Opening Day is set for April 18, rain or shine. Gardeners can help set up the plots from 9am-noon and get credit for their volunteer time commitment. See our website for details.



photo by John Beck

Our third annual Community Gardens Plant & Equipment Sale will be held the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, May 24, 9am-noon in front of Pierce's Northside Grocery. This year we'll be specializing in heirloom tomato and pepper plants in 3-4 in. pots, so you can try several different varieties in your garden. We'll also have herb plants, flowers, prairie plants and perennials for sale. A portion of our plants will be sold for Timedollars. If you have heirloom tomato or pepper seedlings you'd like to donate to this sale, please contact Marge Pitts (see bottom of this page).

We also have several refurbished power tools to offer at this sale: power mowers at \$20 to \$40 and electric or gas-powered weed trimmers at \$10 to \$20 apiece. All proceeds directly benefit Troy Community Gardens.



photo by Jill Schneider

Once again we invite all our friends and supporters to Troy Gardens for our Savor the Summer Celebration, Saturday, August 1, from 3-7pm. We will have delicious treats, music, and relaxing fun on the land for kids and adults of all ages. We need help organizing Savor the Summer—and we can pay Timedollars for it! Contact Marge Pitts, below, if you would like to be a part of the Savor the Summer team this year.



#### Staff

Bob Gragson  
Executive Director  
Jake Hoeksema  
Community Farm Assistant  
Nathan Larson  
Education Director  
Christie Ralston  
Natural Areas Coordinator/Office Manager  
Claire Strader  
Community Farm Manager

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

#### Board of Directors

Mary Myers, President  
Madison Area Community Land Trust  
Gerianne Holzman, Vice President  
Troy CSA Farm  
Martha Worcester, Secretary  
Troy Gardens CoHousing Community  
Tom Popp, Treasurer  
At Large  
Terrie Anderson  
Northside Planning Council  
Joanna Balsamo-Lilien  
At-Large  
Sam Dennis  
UW-Madison  
Anne Pryor  
Troy Community Gardens  
Cher Peng Her  
Northside Resident  
Marge Pitts  
Troy Learning Community  
Kurt Schneider  
Troy Community Gardens  
Vincent M. Smith  
UW-Madison

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



## LESSONS FROM TERRA MADRE

Last October, a delegation of four people from Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens—staff members Jake Hoeksema, Nathan Larson, Claire Strader and board member Marge Pitts—traveled to Italy to participate in Terra Madre (“Mother Earth”), a biennial conference hosted by Slow Food International. With over 100,000 members in 132 countries, Slow Food promotes a simple, threefold idea: that food should be good, clean, and fair.

**Good:** delicious food created with care from healthy plants and animals. The pleasures of good food can help to build community and celebrate culture and regional diversity. **Clean:** nutritious food that is as good for the planet as it is for our bodies; grown and harvested with methods that have a positive impact on local ecosystems and promote biodiversity. **Fair:** food is a universal right. It should be accessible to all, regardless of income, and produced by people who are treated with dignity and justly compensated for their labor.

At Terra Madre, more than 7000 delegates from some 150 countries gathered, all of whom (including us at Community GroundWorks) are working locally to create good, clean, and fair food.

Many brilliant leaders in the sustainable agriculture movement, including Carlo Petrini, Alice Waters and Vandana Shiva, helped shape Terra Madre. Rapt audiences, equipped with headphones transmitting the



**VANDANA SHIVA**

*photo by Claire Strader*

speakers in eight languages, listened as the world-renowned ecologist Vandana Shiva spoke about the dangerous impact on climate change caused by globalized corporate agriculture.

“Chemical fertilizers are killing our soils,” Vandana said. “They’re creating dead zones in our oceans; and they’re killing the atmosphere. Whereas organic agriculture . . . brings life to the soil, life to the oceans, and brings back life to the air. That’s the way we will have to move.”

A wealth of information, including pictures of Terra Madre and videos of the speakers, is available on the web, at <http://multimedia.slowfood.it/index.php?lng=2>

“The globalized economy based on fictions, the globalized economy based on greed, is failing us, is leading crisis to crisis,” Vandana said in her opening remarks. “Terra Madre invites us to return to the earth, *Terra*, and *Madre*, earth as mother. . . . never thinking of how to take, always thinking how to give. It’s that generosity and abundance of sharing, of caring, that we must rejuvenate. We can: we are the future, let’s make it happen.”

### We Salute Our Supporters!

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Alliant Energy Foundation   | Manna Cafe   |
| American Girl's Fund for Children                                       | Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant)            |
| Anonymous Fund (a component fund of the Madison Community Foundation)   | Northside Town Center  |
| Capital Times Kids Fund   | Office Depot   |
| Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems                              | Taste of Asia Restaurant   |
| Dane County Environmental Council                                       | The Great Dane   |
| Dane County Youth Commission  | The Old Fashioned  |
| David S. Bourne Foundation  | UW Health  |
| Eagle Optics  | Williamson Street Cooperative  |
| Evjue Foundation  | Community Reinvestment Fund  |
| Findorff  | Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation   |
| Goodland Tree Works   | Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom   |
| Hoooper Foundation  | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Citizen-Based Monitoring Partnership Program |
| Insty Prints  | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Program                       |
| Joan Collins Publicity, Inc. (through the Madison Community Foundation) | Wisconsin Environmental Education Board  |
| John A. Johnson Foundation (through the Madison Community Foundation)   | Wisconsin State Journal Youth Services, Inc.   |
| Lazy Jane's Cafe & Bakery   | Zeigler Design Associates  |
| Madison Community Foundation  | & Community GroundWorks donors!  |
| Madison Gas and Electric  |  |
| Madison Hours Cooperative   |  |
| Madison Rotary Foundation   |  |

## TROY LEARNING COMMUNITY: GROWING SCHOOL GARDENS

Michael Ableman, author and leader in the sustainable agriculture movement, visited Troy Gardens last summer to help promote Community GroundWorks' (CGW) new program, *Growing School Gardens*.

“One of the most powerful things you can do is to feed children well,” Ableman said, “to give them a space where they can explore the sciences and the natural world in context.”



School gardens do just that. Nationally and locally, increasing numbers of teachers and parents are eager to develop school gardens that integrate their schools' curricula—from

mathematics and science to art and music—with an outdoor garden, providing kids an opportunity to learn as well as to eat the fruits of their education.

*Growing School Gardens* will begin its work with five Madison elementary schools which have already started gardens: Midvale, Lindbergh, Glendale, Hawthorne, and Frank Allis.

Step one, according to Rachel Martin, a parent at Midvale who is volunteering her time to act as program manager for *Growing School Gardens*, is to meet with focus groups comprised of leaders of the respective school gardens to discuss what is working for them and what challenges and needs they're facing.

Step two will be to discern common needs and to identify organizations and resources that can help. Nathan Larson, CGW's Education Director, points out how important it is that the school garden movement be unified, rather than a disconnected group of individual schools competing for support and resources.

Support can take the form of curriculum. *Growing School Gardens* has begun conversations with the Madison School District to create garden guidelines

and curricula that meet the District's educational goals. This ongoing relationship is important to establishing a secure place for school gardens, literally and figuratively.

Support also takes the form of practical help, like finding greenhouses that will donate plants and businesses and organizations that can help with materials like tools, fencing and compost. Perhaps most valuable is on-the-ground advice, which Nathan will provide as he visits each school in the program.

The Madison Community Foundation, the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, and the American Girl's Fund for Children have provided financial support to CGW to enable Nathan to teach a professional development course this summer at Troy Kids' Garden. The five-day course is open to K-12 teachers, school and community center staff, and anyone who is interested in developing or enhancing a kids' garden. CGW is working with the University of Wisconsin to establish continuing education credit for this class. Contact Nathan Larson (pg. 1) for more details.

Rachel Martin's eventual goal for *Growing School Gardens* is to provide a structure of practical and educational support for school gardens throughout Madison and beyond. The greatest need at the moment is money to get this program both off the ground and into it.

If you would like to support school gardens in Madison, you may designate “Education Programs” when you donate to Community GroundWorks, and your support will help strengthen *Growing School Gardens*.

An interesting short video about the *Growing School Gardens* program is available for viewing on the web, at <http://mediaproductweb.madison.k12.wi.us/node/132>.



Contribute by mail (see page 8) or online at [www.friendsoftroygardens.org](http://www.friendsoftroygardens.org)!

## SOLAR GREENHOUSE ON THE DRAWING BOARD—YOU CAN HELP!



Community GroundWorks (CGW) at Troy Gardens is the “grow local” piece of the “eat local” movement. Troy Community Farm has been limited by the lack of an onsite greenhouse since day one—we’ve made do by borrowing space in other greenhouses and by imposing on our Farm Manager to grow starts in her basement and backyard hoophouse. Not an ideal set-up.

Now, finally, a passive solar greenhouse for Troy Farm is on the drawing board. The greenhouse will be built between the community gardens and the cohousing community at Troy Gardens. This will be the first passive solar greenhouse in Madison that we know of—true to our mission, CGW is setting an example for a sustainable future. With luck and support the Grow Local Greenhouse will be built this year.

Architect Roald Gunderson of Whole Trees Architecture and Construction and Troy Farm Manager Claire Strader are currently reviewing preliminary floor plans for the greenhouse, which will be heated by the sun and possibly by a heat-generating composting system. It will be cooled through passive venting. Fossil fuel energy needed to operate the greenhouse will be kept to a minimum, if it is used at all. The picture above depicts a greenhouse design similar to what Roald and Claire have in mind for Troy Gardens.

Our Grow Local Greenhouse will be put to work in numerous ways. In addition to the obvious, starting the plants for Troy Farm, the greenhouse will allow us to extend the season on the herbs and wheat grass we grow for wholesale to local groceries. It will also provide us with enough space to start organic vegetable and flower seedlings for sale to Madison community gardeners.

We’ll install worm bins in the greenhouse for composting vegetable scraps and garden waste. Worm castings from this vermicomposting system will be used to make soil mix to start seedlings in the greenhouse.

With a greenhouse, we’ll be able to increase sales through our farm and make Community GroundWorks more financially secure.

Most exciting for the Learning Community at Troy Gardens, the Grow Local Greenhouse will provide new opportunities for us to offer educational programming for people of all ages. Troy Kids’ Garden will use the greenhouse as a classroom where youth will learn about vermicomposting, making soil mix, starting seeds, and caring for young starts. As an indoor space protected from the elements, the greenhouse will allow us to extend our youth programming both earlier in the spring and later in the fall when outdoor programming is not possible.

Support from the Madison Community Foundation, the David S. Bourne Foundation, the John A. Johnson Foundation, and individuals in our community has brought us very close to making the Grow Local Greenhouse a reality—but we’ll need help equipping the greenhouse as well as staffing it to keep its many functions harmonizing efficiently.

And here’s the good news: an anonymous donor through the Madison Community Foundation has recently put up an \$8500 greenhouse challenge grant. Every contribution we receive for the greenhouse fund from now until July 1 will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$8500, by this anonymous donor!

If you would like to help, please make a contribution to Community GroundWorks and designate the Grow Local Greenhouse as your desired recipient.

Community GroundWorks thanks  
**MADISON GAS & ELECTRIC** for printing the  
*Troy Gardens Gazette* for free!  
 Local partners like MG&E are helping us  
 Grow Local at  
 Troy Gardens.  
 We are very grateful!



## VOICES OF TROY GARDENS

A notebook is kept in the large kiosk at the entry of the Troy Prairie, for visitors to record their observations and impressions of the prairie throughout the year. The entries below were written by various anonymous people during the previous fall and winter.

Welcome to our prairie...

9/21 Last day of summer. Beautiful afternoons. Tall grass forever

9/23 1st full day of autumn! Feels like summer. Warm sunshine & a gentle breeze. Just an incredible "Day on the Prairie"!!

9/24 Lots of grasshoppers in the prairie—Flip! Flip! Flip! A buzzing singing in the distance as I am feeling the hot sun on my shoulders—who would know that the Earth has already turned its way past summer?

9/27 Savannah saw flowers & the rock circle

10/2 A dandy brisk morning in the prairie—beautiful purple asters!

10/08 Got to within 3 ft. of a red-tailed hawk 50ft. from road.

10/29 Immature northern shrike, American tree sparrow, Lincoln's sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, E. bluebird (~ 7), chipping sp., field sp., fox sp. (2), savannah sp., flicker

11/6 Busy hawks. Lots of bunny parts left about for doggies to find. ACK! Eat up, hawks!

11/22 Ahhh! PERFECTION!

11/23 N. shrike, hairy woodpecker, adult R.T. hawk

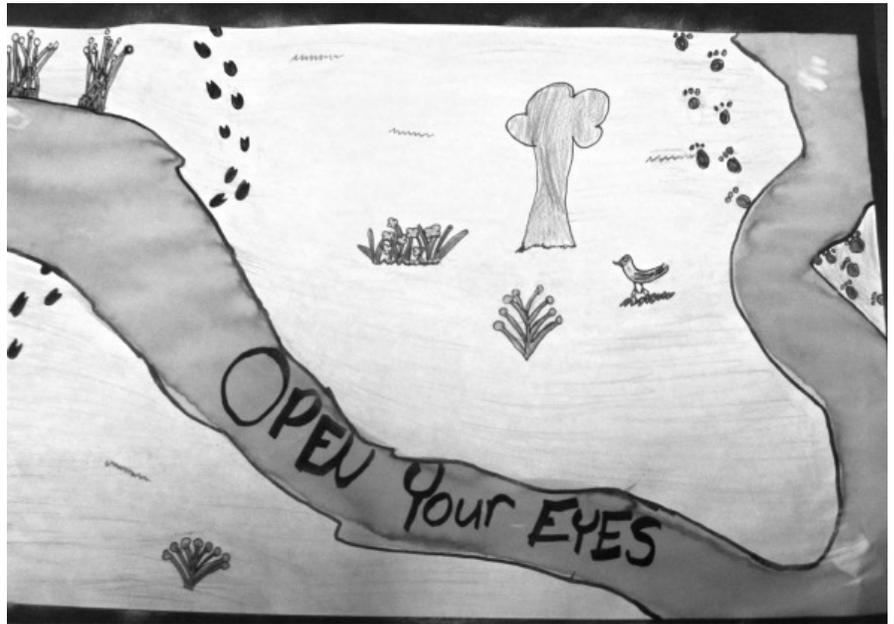
12/7 Deer tracks the fresh fallen snow. Rabbit & field mice too. Good hunting for the hawks (& skis & boots & doggies, too)

12/31 Quiet small wind

1/1 Superlative cold! Welcome Happy New Year

1/10 Full moon, fresh snow, no wind, let's go

1/31 Ahh—29°F & sun. Break out the shorts & flipflops!



### Trees at Troy Gardens: An Inventory

Troy Natural Areas Intern Leah Sorensen recently completed a tree inventory at Troy Gardens. Funding for this project was provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Program. Here are some of the things Leah found:

- Sixteen tree species are found in the wooded areas of Troy Gardens.
- Of these 16 species, 7 are non-native, and 4 of those are considered invasive.
- Nearly 1/3 of the trees in Troy's woodlands are green ash trees—which is a concern as the threat of the emerald ash borer approaches our area.
- Other common trees at Troy Gardens include white mulberry, box elder, black cherry, and American elm.
- While sugar maples are prominent features of our landscape at Troy, they only constitute 3.2% of the total trees in our woodlands.

To get a copy of Leah's inventory report, email Christie at [christie@troygardens.org](mailto:christie@troygardens.org) or call 608-240-0409.

## TROY GARDENS JOURNAL

By Marge Pitts

### SOLITAIRE

I don't know what to feel about current conditions. I have a deck of emotions spread out on the table, face down. I'd like to draw the three of communion, or the seven of satisfaction. I'm looking to fill a straight I've been working on for several years now. I've already got the four of hope and the five and six of desire.

But what if I draw the jack of despair, or the ace of sadness? I know they're in there. I've drawn them before and been forced to fold, in previous time-gobbling games of solitaire.

Something feels like it's shrinking, my luck perhaps. A bad card from this deck could wipe me out.

People around me are trying on optimism again, like an old coat that's been stuffed in a closet for eight years. Still fits? Sort of, but in my case the colors on the old optimism seem way too bright. I can't believe I ever wore such a gaudy thing. It seems pretentious, and pretending is getting harder and harder. So back to the solitaire game I go, to stare at the face-down cards, cautiously wondering which one I should pick up.

It's not as if I don't know what to *do*—the work before us is as obvious as an elephant blocking an emergency exit. We have to rebuild a broken paradigm, in a completely different way that won't crash and fail and ruin everything. We have to become sustainable instead of consumptive, that's all.

I recently attended Slow Food International's Terra Madre (Mother Earth) Conference in Turin, Italy, where

the above mentioned worldwide task was heartily embraced by over 7000 delegates from some 150 countries. Each afternoon I indulged my jet lag with a short nap on the worn-out lawn of a small courtyard located in the rear of the huge convention center, where the sounds of various private conversations in many languages lulled me into a state of complete relaxation. My personal identity went to sleep while my soul diffused into the delicious stew of humanity surrounding me. *Communion.*

In the evening my small group of delegates dined at our residence, a petite monastery in a town 12 kilometers from the city, in the company of our Italian guide, Matteo, a delightful young man who reminded me of the son I never had. I was enjoying the braised fennel the nuns had prepared, and Matteo held out the platter for me to take more. "Oh, no!" I protested. "I couldn't!"

"*Mahrre!*" Matteo drawled in his delectable Italian accent, "What about your *relaht*ship with Terra Madre?" Priceless! Laughing, I took another helping. *Satisfaction.*

Something is shrinking. In her opening remarks at Terra Madre, Vandana Shiva said that the worldwide economic collapse that is upon us is actually a necessary development. Having the old consumptive paradigm collapse under its own illogic fosters broad awareness of the need to create a new, sustainable one.

This work, this squeezing the elephant out the door, cannot be accomplished by superstars. They are only leaders. The heroic part will have to come from local yokels like me and you, when we stop fearing our feelings and step away from the game of solitaire.



### Dane County Timebank

Timebank members—donate some of your Timedollars to us and we will use them to pay volunteers for helping out at on the land and in our office.

It's easy to do online at [www.danecountytimebank.org](http://www.danecountytimebank.org).

Open the My Account page and choose the Deduct time box under the My Hours tab. Designate Community GroundWorks as the Service Provider. It's like paying someone else to volunteer!

Mukwanago, WI. The students were inspired by Troy Gardens while studying Aldo Leopold and the Land Ethic.



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

c/o Friends of Troy Gardens  
3601 Memorial Dr., Suite 4  
Madison, WI 53704



photo by John Beck

*Oreo the Chicken says:*  
**REMEMBER THESE DATES!**

- SAT. APRIL 18, Troy Community Gardens OPENING DAY, volunteer 9am-noon
- SUN. MAY 24, Troy Community Gardens PLANT & EQUIPMENT SALE in front of Pierce's Northside Grocery, 9am-noon
- SAT. AUG. 1, SAVOR THE SUMMER free celebration at Troy Gardens, 3-7 pm  
SEE PAGE 2 FOR DETAILS!

## Help Us Keep Troy Community Gardens Healthy!

*Did you know?*

- *In 2008 Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens provided 329 plots for 190 gardening families.*
- *Gardeners pay plot fees based on household size and income. More than half of Troy Gardeners are from low-income households.*
- *Community gardeners use shared land to grow their own food, enhancing their food security and family nutrition. Community gardens provide outdoor recreation for gardeners as well as visitors who enjoy a peaceful, interesting place to walk.*
- *Troy Community Gardens is a fun and friendly environment for people of all ages, incomes, and cultures to share the land and their gardening knowledge and ideas.*
- *TROY COMMUNITY GARDENS OPERATES THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS! We need your help to continue to offer plots to families at every economic level.*

Make a contribution this year to support Troy Community Gardens.

Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at [www.friendsoftroygardens.org](http://www.friendsoftroygardens.org).

A donation to Troy Gardens rewards hard work and puts food on the table for local families!

