



Diggin' Your Roots

WINTER 2008

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BUGs community garden
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Hello, from the coordinator!

Hello everyone and happy new year. I hope you all had good holidays. I am very excited about BUGs this year. In case you thought that we took the winter off, well your steering committee has been working hard this fall and winter to move BUGs forward in this critical year.

We are busy with the garden on various levels. We have met with CCOC about the plans for the garden on the Beaver Barracks site (where the garden currently resides). We had a good discussion with them about what the garden will look like. Their landscape architect will now develop an initial drawing (I will request it be in electronic format so we can send it out to everyone for feedback).

We are moving on finding a new garden. I have been in touch with City of Ottawa staffer Sue Bramley, who

works with Community Gardens. She will contact the parks department for us, looking into the pieces of land that we have identified (I sent those out for feedback a month or two ago), particularly McNabb park. Steve Gibbs and I wrote a grant proposal to the United Way that was roundly praised by staff at Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC), including the Executive Director, Simone Thibault. I met her briefly and



she was very impressed with BUGs and the energy we have.

Many thanks to Steve, who did a phenomenal job, Patty

Thille who reviewed and revised, and also to Aleksandra Milosovic, CCHC's Community Developer, who has been really helpful with resources and support.

We have also gotten positive feedback from the Community Foundation and will likely try to submit a grant proposal to them.

Steve has also been in contact with the University of Ottawa regarding possible garden space. We will report on this shortly.

As well, thanks to Jeanne and Michaela for their efforts in putting together this newsletter and for organizing the Seed Starting Workshop.

Things are percolating along nicely. Stay tuned for future editions and future BUGs developments.

Susan Wellisch



Seedy Saturday—March 1, 2008, 10 a.m.—3 p.m.

Ron Kolbus Lakeside Centre

Come to buy your heirloom seeds, organic breads and other natural delights.

Info: greta@seeds-organic.com, Greta Kryger (613) 521-8648

Seed Starting Workshop: A chance to reconnect!

WHEN: Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Please register by calling (613) 233-2317, ext. 3000

WHERE: Centretown Community Health Centre
420 Cooper St (between Kent and Bank)
Program Room (Room 208)

WHAT TO EXPECT: A seed starting demonstration and a question and answer period with our guests, a chance to reconnect with fellow BUGs gardeners and an update regarding progress on our quest for land to garden in Summer 2008. We will be using extra plants as a fundraiser at the Great Glebe Garage Sale in May!

COST: \$5.00 or pay what you can

WHAT TO BRING: *If you would like to donate some seed starting items for our fundraiser, or to start extra seedlings, bring one of these items to the workshop:*

- Seeds
- Potting soil
- Egg cartons or containers to plant in
- Bread bags

If you are interested in volunteering please call and leave a message on the BUGs information line.

Please note that there is limited space, first come, first served.

Seed Starting: Definitions & How-to

You can use cardboard egg cartons, peat pots, yogurt containers, and/or plastic containers to start your seeds in! If using cardboard egg cartons or peat pots, plant everything into soil so you do not disturb the roots.



Seeds planted in peat pots

1. If using a container with no drainage hole, poke a hole in the bottom of cup with a nail.
2. Place a plastic tray, or cardboard lid under the cups to collect the water that drips through.
3. Fill the cups with sterile seed-starting mix.
4. Place two or three seeds in each cup and cover with a little more mix.
5. Wrap the whole thing in a plastic bag or use a plastic cover to retain moisture and store it in a warm place with a lot of light. You can place this on your



Seedlings under lights

windowsill or you can use grow lights or halogen lights. If using lights, place tray a few inches below lights.

When the seeds germinate:

1. Remove plastic bag.
2. Move the carton to a bright windowsill. As plants grow, move lights up so that there is a bit of space between the light & the plants.
3. Run a fan or open a window for an hour each day as air circulation encourages stem strengthening.



Plants ready to be transplanted outside

After about two weeks snip off (don't pull out) the one or two extra plants so that each cup has just one plant. If you like, an organic liquid fertilizer can be used when watering, but only at 1/4 to 1/3 strength.

After about four to six weeks, harden off the plants by putting them in a sheltered spot outside for a week. When it's time to plant out, separate each cup and break up the walls before burying.

Adapted from *Guerrilla Gardening: A Manifesto* by David Tracey (2007, New Society Publishers).



10 Seed Starting Tips (Adapted) *By Adrianna Vargo, Fine Gardening Magazine,*

1. **Keep records to allow for better planning** You should record when seeds are sown, the germination date and success rate, and when seedlings are ready for transplanting each year. At the end of the year you can evaluate what went right and what went wrong. These observations will help you make adjustments for next year.
2. **Store seed properly to maintain viability** To maintain dormancy, keep seeds in a cool, dark location with low humidity, like a refrigerator. Label them (seed name, source, year) and store them in a small re-closable bag or empty film canister that is, in turn, kept in a larger plastic container.
3. **Use wide, flat containers to avoid overcrowding** Plants that resent root disturbance when transplanted are best sown into small, containers like cell packs or plug trays. Recycled plastic containers, like empty yogurt or margarine tubs, work well, too, provided you've poked holes in the bottom for drainage. To sanitize a container, soak it in a 10 percent bleach solution for 15 minutes and let it air dry.
4. **Tamp seeds down to make direct contact with the soil** Use a soilless seed-starting mix evenly over the top of the seeds to the depth of two times the seed diameter. Very small seeds and those that require light to germinate should lie directly on the surface. Whether covered with planting medium or not, each seed must be in firm contact with the moist surface to begin germinating. Use a pestle or even the bottom of a glass to gently tamp down the surface.
5. **Prevent disease by providing air flow and drainage** The fungal infection often referred to as damping-off is usually caused by excessive moisture and poor air circulation. To promote good air circulation, place a small fan near your seedlings. Keep the fan on low and direct it to blow across the containers at the soil level where air may become trapped and stagnant. To prevent excessive moisture, poke holes in the bottom of your containers so that excess water can escape.
6. **Cover trays with plastic wrap to keep the moisture level constant** Securing plastic wrap over the surface of a freshly sown seed pot can help to keep the moisture level constant. However, the pot must still be checked daily for moisture and germination. As soon as the seeds germinate, remove the plastic wrap.
7. **Keep seeds warm to encourage germination** Most seeds require temperatures of 65° to 75°F to germinate. Placing seed containers near an existing heater can raise the ambient temperature as needed. If placing close to a heater, be sure to check for moisture often, since the seed containers may dry out more quickly.
8. **Turn seedlings daily to keep stems strong** Most seeds will perform best with 12 to 16 hours of sunlight each day. Indoors, place seed containers in a sunny, south-facing window and give the container a quarter turn each day to prevent the seedlings from overreaching toward the light and developing weak, elongated stems.
9. **Feed them well** As the shoot emerges from the soil and the true leaves develop, the initial nutrients will be depleted and supplemental fertilization is then required. Once the true leaves emerge, it is time to begin a half-strength liquid fertilizer regimen on a weekly basis.
10. **Acclimate seedlings to direct sunlight** Before seedlings can be planted outdoors, they need to be hardened off, or acclimated to direct sunlight and fluctuating temperatures. It is best to do this over a three-day period by placing them in direct sunlight during the morning only of the first day, then increasing their time outside by a few hours each day until they are vigorous enough to be transplanted.



There is no official date for transplanting outdoors, but we chose Victoria Day (May long week-end) as the date for getting them into the garden. With that in mind, here are the dates for you to sew your seeds indoors. If you want to start this vegetable indoors, then plant the seeds after this date:

Onions	February 24 (12 weeks)
Peppers	March 9 (10 weeks)
Spinach	March 23 (8 weeks)
Tomato	March 23 (8 weeks)
Eggplant	March 23 (8 weeks)
Broccoli	March 30 (7 weeks)
Cauliflower	March 30 (7 weeks)
Lettuce	March 30 (7 weeks)
Cucumbers	April 20 (4 weeks)
Squash	April 20 (4 weeks)

