



Fall 2020 Newsletter



Happy harvest, friends. Does anyone else feel like summer sped by too fast? Hopefully everyone has been able to experience a bountiful harvest and enjoy these last few warm days of the gardening season.

Friends of Portland Community Garden Updates

In our last newsletter we shared information about how we've utilized the grants we were able to secure for 2020 to support the Produce for People Program. Now towards the end of the season our focus shifts to membership, fundraising, and looking towards prospective 2021 projects.

Fundraising

Unfortunately, we have been unable to participate in any in person events this year which has had an impact on our annual fundraising. We have been working on improvements to our [Website](#) and while there are site improvements still in the works, we are happy to announce that our ability to handle financial transactions through the website has been fixed. If you have attempted to send a donation or buy a membership

online and experienced any difficulty, the issue should be resolved. Thank you for your patience and we are very excited for the updates we have planned for the website.

Mason Bee Houses

It's that time of year to think about harvesting cocoons for use next March/April to re-start the Mason Bee life cycle. We were able to get together with our local expert, Stephen Anderson, via Zoom on harvesting the cocoons, pests and problems, winter storage, and prepping the cocoon trays for re-starting the process in the spring.

If you were unable to attend, it isn't too late to harvest the cocoons from your mason bee house. Once harvested, place your cocoons in the fridge over the winter, until they are ready to fly again in the spring. A vegetable drawer works well. Since fridges dry things out, it's important to keep a damp sponge or other humidifier near your bees, but don't get the cocoons wet.

Donating your extra cocoons back to Friends

Please consider donating your extra cocoons back to Friends of Portland Community Gardens. Each bee house requires 70 cocoons, so if you harvest 200 cocoons, you could supply 130 that will go to mason bee houses in other gardens.

2021 Project Ideas

Do you have any projects that you would like Friends of Portland Community Gardens to help with in 2021? Send your ideas to us! info@portlandcommunitygardens.org

You can vote to support Portland Parks this November!

The coronavirus pandemic and resulting closure of community centers and programs have combined to create a huge deficit for Portland Parks & Recreation at a time when we need our parks more than ever. A local option tax levy on the ballot in November, [Measure 26-213](#), will help to restore these cuts and fund essential programs for the next five years.

If passed by voters, the levy would:

- **Protect natural areas**, and plant more trees in park lands to help to ensure clean water in local rivers and streams;
- **Restore recreational programs**, including fitness, arts, senior programs, youth programs and environmental education;
- **Improve access** for all Portlanders by making our parks cleaner, safer, and more welcoming;
- **Preserve programs for children experiencing poverty**, including a summer playground lunch program, life-saving swim lessons, outdoor camps, and recreation scholarships.

Please join with the Board of Friends of Portland Community Gardens to support this measure and support our parks!

Right now in the garden

Planting now

A couple things to plant outside in October:

- **Garlic**: if you haven't planted garlic before, we highly recommend it! The flavor when truly fresh is *wonderful*



and garlic is simple to grow. For best results, start with seed garlic; you can find softneck (the type you typically find at the supermarket, this type stores well and has many smaller cloves per head) and hardneck (produces a single ring of larger cloves and makes scapes that can be harvested and enjoyed as an additional crop) varieties – both grow great around here. Break up the cloves, plant pointy end up about 6” apart in loose soil. It will do a lot of growing in the spring and can be harvested in summer.

- Cover Crops: also known as green manures, can be planted in the fall/winter and tilled in the spring to build healthy soil. Depending on your needs, you can plant cover crops to prevent soil erosion, minimize weeds, break up clay soils, add organic matter, and increase nutrient availability. Cover crops fall into the categories of grains, grasses, and legumes. Common cover crops in our area are crimson clover, hairy vetch, fava beans, Austrian field peas, and cereal rye grass.

Other fall garden activities

Seed Saving

Did you grow your best ever tomato/pepper/etc. this year? You may want to think about saving seeds. Depending on the plant, the process may vary but here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Save seeds from the best plants. You will be choosing the traits that you want to propagate; you wouldn't want to save seeds from a plant that suffered from disease or overwhelming pest issues.
- Avoid hybrid varieties as the resulting plant may be unpredictable.
 - Harvest seeds when they are ripe for seed harvest (by doing it at the right time, the seeds will have everything they need to eventually become healthy plants).
 - Thoroughly dry seeds and store in a cool dark place



Cover your beds

If you don't have any active plans for a winter garden, your beds may benefit from coverage. Like the benefit of a cover crop, covering your bed can help protect your soil from winter weather. Good options for ground cover are leaf mulch or burlap sacks. These will protect against soil erosion and create a barrier to weed growth. In the spring when you go to start working your bed you will have a head start on the planting season.

Preserve your bounty

There are many ways to preserve your produce now so you can delight in the taste of summer in the stretch of cold cloudy days that are surely approaching. These efforts can also be shared as a heart-warming gift; who doesn't love homemade goodies? Fermentation, pickling, and canning are all great options that can produce a wide variety of results through different recipes.

Check out this recipe for Green Tomato Relish from Allen on the Friends of Community Garden Board.

Green Tomato Relish (makes 7 or 8 pints)

4 c chopped onions (about 4 lg)

4 c chopped cabbage (about 1 small head)

4 cs chopped green tomatoes (about 8 medium)

1.5 c chopped sweet red peppers (about 6 medium)
1.2 c pickling salt
6 c sugar
2 T mustard seed
2 c water
1 T celery seed
1.5 t turmeric
4 c white or cider vinegar

Combine vegetables and salt in a large bowl. Cover and let stand for 12 hours, rinse and drain well.

In a 5 to 6 quart pot combine the remaining ingredients with the vegetable mixture, bring to boil and simmer for 3 minutes. Ladle hot relish into cleaned and sterilized canning jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Process in water canner for five minutes.

Support FPCG

Looking for more ways to support Friends of Portland Community Gardens?

- You can make a donation on our [website](#).
- The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible [AmazonSmile](#) purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. Just add Friends of Portland Community Gardens as the nonprofit organization to your account.
- If you shop at Fred Meyer, you can help support Friends of Portland Community Gardens through the Community Rewards program. Just designate FPCG as the nonprofit to be linked to your Rewards Card. Any transactions using the Shopper's Card number will be applied to the program with no added cost to you. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates and events.

Friends of Portland Community Gardens (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to support and expand community gardening opportunities for all Portland-area residents to grow healthy food and build community. For over 30 years, Friends has provided support to the Portland Parks and Recreation Community Gardens program, while also expanding our mission to also include non-Parks & Recreation community gardens throughout the Portland area.

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