

[View this email in your browser](#)

Welcoming Summer 2022



Friends of
Portland
Community
Gardens

**Produce for People Refreshes the
Beds**



May 21 was a banner day for Produce for People, which pairs fresh produce from volunteer growers in the city's community gardens with local food pantries and soup kitchens. Friends Board Member Carol Tompkins, pictured here with board member Mary Jean Hubert, organized a plan to refresh the beds in the 35 participating P4P gardens and improve their flavor and yields. Using part of an Arnold/Brownberry/Oroweat Seed Money grant, along with a generous discount from our partners at Concentrates Inc. (a supplier of organic soil amendments), Friends spent roughly \$1,000 on supplements. They included pelleted Nutra Rich Fertilizer, gypsum, bone meal, glacial rock dust and dolomite lime - along with seeds for cover crops. Board members met to divide and package the materials for each garden according to its size and needs. On May 21, Portland Community Garden technician Mikael Brust invited the P4P coordinators to the city's yard on the south side of Mt. Tabor to receive their supplements and to choose from an enormous variety of plant and herb starts and seeds

donated by Friends, the Community Transitions Program and the city's community gardens program. .

Below: the P4P Coordinator for Grant Community Garden takes supplements to his car before coming back to choose starts.





Above: A fraction of the starts grown and donated by the Community Transitions Program.

Mason Bees to the Rescue



They don't build hives, make honey or even look much like bees. But these gentle native pollinators are great friends to the spring garden, buzzing the blossoms of apples, stone fruit and berries when cool weather keeps other bees at home. During the pandemic, they've also helped support Friends of Portland Community Gardens when our other retail fundraisers were canceled. Friends board members Allen Field and Michael Wade originally started building bee houses to donate to the city's community gardens. Community gardener and mason bee expert Stephen Anderson taught gardeners how to care for the bees and cocoons. More recently, Field organized community sales of the bee houses and cocoons, raising almost \$2,500 for Friends and bringing in 21 new members. The new bee farmers pledged to donate the season's excess cocoons back to Friends, which was then able to supply more than \$4,000 worth of cocoons to the Green Thumb Orchard at Brentwood Community Garden. Members get a 20 percent discount off the \$70 price for a house and 70-80 cocoons. Contact awfportland@gmail.com with questions.

Below: Anderson, who maintains bee houses in his plot at Col. Summers Community Garden, was nominated as a Parks Champion this year for his work teaching others about mason bees.



Gardens for Transitions Projects

Last summer Friends of Portland Community Gardens board members were planning to propose gardens for the city's new Safe Rest villages for people without homes. However, when the city's timeline was delayed, board member Claudia Schechter connected Friends with the nonprofit Transitions Projects, which moves hundreds of people from homelessness to housing every year. Thanks to grants from West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District and the Portland Garden Club, along with partnerships with Northwest Sustainable Wood and volunteers from Thermo Fisher Scientific, the plan is now in motion. First up: a concrete slab outside the River District Navigation Center, a 90-bed shelter where residents were enthusiastic about creating a garden club. But with no available land for garden beds, Friends tried something different: rolling garden tables.

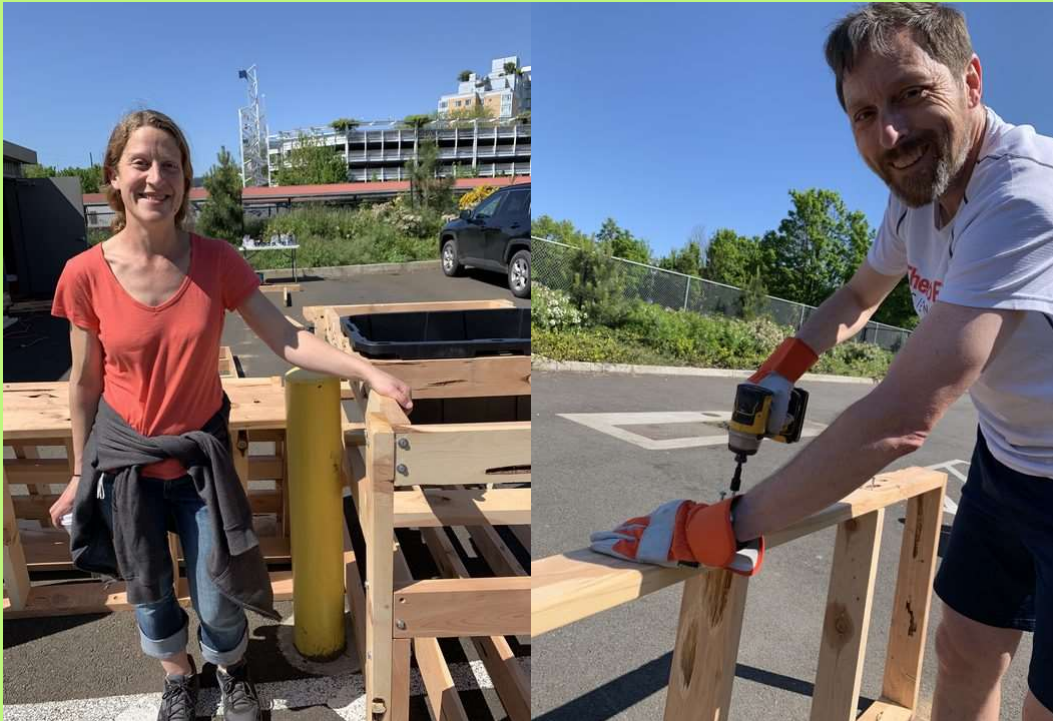


Above: FPCG co-chair Michael Wade, who led this project, built the prototype of the rolling juniper tables in his garage.

Volunteers from Thermo Fisher Scientific created similar tables for an emergency motel shelter at the beginning of the pandemic. The Friends tables would be slightly different. They would be made with juniper, an extremely rot-resistant wood from a tree that is invading grasslands in eastern Oregon. Northwest Sustainable Wood helps improve the environment and create jobs at small eastern Oregon mills by marketing juniper lumber in Oregon's cities. To support the Friends project, Northwest Sustainable offered a discount on juniper seconds that would create a smaller, lighter tables. On May 21, PFCG co-chair Michael Wade led the experienced volunteers from Thermo Fisher in building four tables at River District. Next up? Juniper garden beds - both standard and wheelchair height - for a Transitions Project sober recovery apartment building in North Portland. After that, Friends hopes to create another set of juniper garden tables for a small pod shelter proposed at a Parkrose area church.



*Above: Thermo Fisher Scientific volunteers with a finished juniper table ready for rolling onto the patio at the River District Navigation Center.
Below left: Transition Projects Volunteer Coordinator Emily Coleman.
Below right: Thermo Fisher Scientific volunteer Nathan Beste, who saw the potential for rolling garden tables in places where garden beds aren't possible.*





New Knott Community Garden

A new community garden opens this month at Knott Park in the Parkrose Heights neighborhood. With that addition, there are now 60 gardens and 2,544 garden plots in Portland's program. The nonprofit Unite Oregon helped with the new garden, reaching out to underserved communities and encouraging them to take part, community garden program coordinator Laura Niemi said. Unite Oregon focuses on creating a just society by uniting people of color, immigrants, refugees, rural communities and people experiencing poverty. The city's garden program received \$75,000 in system development charges to build the new 20,000 square foot garden at the park, near NE Knott Street and NE 117th Avenue. City garden plots remain in high demand even as pandemic rules of the last two

years have eased. Portland has a waiting list of about 2,000 people hoping for a space to open.

Hopes Fade for Avalon

Hopes faded last fall for a new community garden at an unofficial pocket park near SE 18th Avenue and SE Division. About 15 years ago, volunteers began cultivating the garbage-strewn strip, which was the undeveloped stub of a city street called “Avalon.” With help from the Portland Bureau of Transportation, the Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood Association and local businesses, volunteers planted a community fig tree, watered gardens with rain barrels, added benches and planned for a community gathering space. As time passed, however, key volunteers moved away. A small group of people began living at the site. Neighbors reported drug use and sexual behavior on the property, which is adjacent to an early childhood center. In the summer of 2021, one camper threw a propane tank on a fire, leading to an explosion so loud it rattled the neighborhood. Although many organizations and city staffers explored ways for Avalon to become an official community garden, development issues were complicated and the strip was too small, Laura Niemi of the city’s garden program said. Although Friends has helped build several community gardens, board members said it would be too expensive to develop a garden without the city’s help in obtaining a reliable water source.

2021 in Review



A fraction of Produce for People starts waiting for FPRG volunteers to bring them to new homes throughout the city.

As Portlanders continued to seek the solace of their gardens in 2021, the coronavirus pandemic continued to disrupt plans. Friends wasn't able to introduce itself to new community gardeners with in-person garden talks in 2021, and it could not hold its normal spring and fall fundraisers at Portland Nursery. However, with the help of a Seed Money grant from the makers of Arnold/Brownberry/Oroweat Organic Breads, Friends work continued, including

-gift cards to garden managers, who use them for whatever their garden needs, including new hoses, new tools or refreshments for a work party. Cards went out as usual in spring 2021;

-hand-built mason bee houses with cocoons, free to any garden requesting one;

-Produce for People starts, and support for Produce for People volunteers. Produce for People is a city program established in 1995 so community gardeners can donate fresh produce to food pantries and soup kitchens around Portland. In 2021 Friends board member Carol Tompkins founded a group for the volunteer managers. She also grew thousands of spring and summer starts for the program using greenhouse space donated by the Community Transitions Program. Board members met at Brentwood Community Garden in April and May of 2021 to hand-deliver the starts to gardens all over the city.

Members Help Gardens Grow

Our Mason Bee, Garden Bed and Produce for People projects are all made possible thanks to the generous support of the Friends of Portland Community Garden members.....like YOU! Member support helps us bring fresh food, pollinators and gardening to more people across the city. Please reach out if you'd like to volunteer for any of our ongoing efforts. If you've not renewed your membership yet this year, you can renew right now, [on our website](#). If you aren't sure when you last renewed, you can send an email to our [membership coordinator](#) to check. Your membership renewal will include our THANKS, along with coupons for 15% off at Portland Nursery and at Concentrates Inc. Thanks to them for their undying support of community gardening!

Get Ready!

Below, images of Beach Community Garden, summer 2021.







Grow your business with  mailchimp