



Portsmouth Community Garden – July Newsletter

A place to grow

The early harvest is underway with peas, radishes, lettuce, and more on offer despite the many, many, many days of rain! Our bounty has attracted some unwelcome guests, see the two-pronged plan of attack below. Get ready for SUN!



Key Updates

- **Potluck Events** – Plan to stop by the garden from 5 – 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. Bring something to share or simply say hello to your fellow gardeners. See you on **July 20**.
- **Public Enemy #1?** – Rabbits and gophers like fresh vegetables, too. While the rodent barrier proved effective last season with only a few pilfered items, we will implement additional measures. [Reach out to us](#) if you see any rodent activity.
 - Plans continue for making the rodent barrier higher. Watch for a special Work Day request asking for volunteers.
 - As vegetables begin to ripen, make sure to harvest them in a timely manner. Dropped or rotten vegetables attract birds and rodents.
- **NEW Garden Maintenance Awareness** – In order to ensure proper weeding and harvesting, the Board of Directors developed a program to notify gardeners if they need to take action in their garden beds. Unchecked weeds spread to other beds and rotten vegetables attract unwelcome visitors. If you receive an email notification that outlines the concern, please take action. As always, if you need assistance or have any questions, [reach out](#).
- **Important Weedy Reminders** – That black “Knotweed” garbage can is for knotweed only. Please continue to take your weeds home with you. Remember ... NO WEEDS in the knotweed barrel or in the compost holding area to the right of the bins. In addition, please remember to place all garden waste (roots and leaves) in the fenced-in area and do not place it directly in Bin #1. Check out the overview details posted in the shed. It is stapled to the wall to the right of the white board. [Reach out to us](#) with any questions. We will all benefit from home-grown compost next season!

- **Member Community Bed** – The long bed to the left of the gate is for members to harvest at any time. Enjoy a blueberry or a handful, flowers, potatoes, tomatoes, and herbs as they grow. The strawberry plants will shift to this member community bed, now located in the Gather bed to the right of the gate, next season. The idea behind this was to provide a little extra for garden members. Those beds are full, so please do not plant anything there. [Reach out to us](#) if you have ideas for next season.
- **Watering Tip** – Remember, when watering your vegetables, put the hose down near the base of the plant and water to avoid getting the leaves wet. Wet leaves invite disease.
- **Learn How to Prune for Healthier Plants** – As air circulation is crucial to the health of our plants, check out the following videos, also shared last season, to prune summer squash/zucchini and tomato plants with confidence:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICPaEhDEuBc>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoNY9BiDQF8>
- **Upcoming Voluntary Surplus Harvest Collection Options** – If you have surplus vegetables, consider donating them to community members in need. Once again this season, after donating 250+ pounds of surplus harvest to Gather last year, we will put out a cooler on Sundays to drop off to Gather on Monday.
 - Collection starts on **Sunday, July 9!** Simply place any ripe items you do not want in the cooler or in the boxes set out. All will be clearly marked. If you will be away, consider asking a neighbor or [board member](#) to pick any items that may rot before you return.
- **Vacation Watering Coverage** – Note the list in the shed detailing member names, bed numbers, and email addresses. Feel free to use this information to reach out to a neighbor for vacation watering coverage.
- **Request** – When weeding your own bed, please pull up any weeds you notice near your bed or in the walkways. This will leave larger weeding projects for Work Days. Thank you!





Member Spotlight

Stop by garden plot 3A to meet **Fran Berman**.

Background

Fran grew up on a chicken farm in New Jersey, where she helped her family grow vegetables in a large home garden. Since then, she has been a backyard gardener and was also part of the Willow Pond Community Garden in Brentwood for several years.

Second Season Gardener

After more than 40 years in Exeter, Fran moved to her condo in Portsmouth in the winter of 2021, just in time for the first summer of the Portsmouth Community Garden. Last year, her cherry tomatoes, zucchini, and kale did very well. She shared that she has never before had such prolific zucchini plants ... they just kept producing!

What are you most excited about growing this year?

This year, Fran is excited about growing Brussels sprouts, which she loves.

Fun when not gardening

When not gardening, Fran plays with the Leftist Marching Band, has fun with her grandchildren, goes for walks in the woods, and is an active community volunteer.



Gratitude Corner

- **New Compost Holding Bin** – Shout out and a BIG thank you to **Shawn Parkhouse** who used some of his Work Day hours to build a compost holding bin for finished compost that garden members will use next season.
- **Fresh Salad Anyone?** – When Chris Duprey (and his wife, Louise) found themselves with a bountiful crop of lettuce, they offered a gorgeous head to a fellow gardener.
- **Radishes** – Impromptu radish sharing has been spotted at the garden!
- **Tomatillo Sharing** – Many tomatillo plants now have homes in member beds thanks to an anonymous gardener. Thank you!
- **Hose Etiquette** – Many thanks to the members who carefully hang the hoses when finished with them. **Please remember to always recoil the hoses and empty them of water.**
- **Dahlias** – Thank you, Laura Gunning, for sharing! Members may help themselves to fresh flowers from the member community garden to the left of the gate once they bloom.
- **Picnic Table and Adirondack Chairs** – The Rotary Club of Portsmouth strikes again! We thank our amazing supporter for the picnic table and chairs now gracing our beautiful garden.
- **Send in Content** – Send your photos, tips, and kudos to [Beth Hartnett](#).



Learn More about Gather

Garden member and long-time Gather volunteer, **Theresa Garabedian**, sat down at the new picnic table with Board member, **Beth Hartnett**, to share her experience with Gather, a NH organization devoted to supporting those in our community who experience hunger and face food insecurity.

Theresa started volunteering for Gather over 20 years ago. She cooked meals at the Cross Roads kitchen, worked in the food pantry, and helped out on and off over the years as her schedule allowed. Most recently, she connected with Gather's new Gleaning Coordinator, John Hennessy, to help harvest vegetables from local gardens including a big garden in the Little Harbour neighborhood. A family no longer wanted to plant it, so they handed it over to Gather. Gather has seen such an increase in these garden plot offerings that they do not have enough volunteers available to plant, water, and harvest all the space that has been offered. But the volunteer staff continues to grow, so that may change.

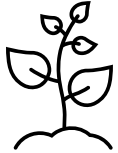
Donations provided the funds for Gather to purchase two Community Sponsored Agriculture (CSA) shares from Wake Robin Farm, a family owned enterprise in Stratham, NH. Theresa often picks up the produce, delivering it to the food pantry market at 210 West Road in Portsmouth. Volunteers unload it from her vehicle and display it in the food pantry. This sourcing process has improved from prior years and is truly a Win/Win situation ... fresh produce for members and support for a local farm.

When asked how the Portsmouth Community Garden's support makes a difference for Gather's members, she enthusiastically shared the two major ways that fresh produce has an impact. Members, people who have lost jobs or find themselves in need of support for any reason, "shop" at the food pantry. Gather sees most of its members using this resource on a short term basis to help bridge a gap. Members see an area for fresh, local produce right when they enter and the reaction is always wonderful. Canned goods are staples, but the fresh produce has a "wow" factor. Theresa plans to put out some recipes once the surplus harvest starts to flow.

Theresa shared, "Many gardeners feel good about growing and sharing vegetables with friends and family, but growing to help people who are food insecure, takes it to another level. The Portsmouth Community Garden is my happy place and this type of volunteering brings me joy. It's good for the soul!"

The second way our donations make an impact is through cooked meals. Gather prepares ~700 meals a week, using the kitchen at Crossroads and at the Great Bay Community College. These prepared meals make a huge difference for members and can be picked up at the food pantry. Theresa also noted that Gather is very discreet about the confirmation process for members ... they simply need to show a picture ID and proof of residency, which could also include shelters. If anyone is in need, they are helpful!

Theresa takes care of the community bed to the right when you walk through the gate. Feel free to pull a few weeds if you see any there or in the three beds with Gather signs. If interested in gleaning, check out www.NHGlleans.org or reach out to John Hennessy at jhennessy@gather.org. Visit the Gather website for more information about the organization in general and volunteer opportunities.



Photos

Wild and Glorious Lettuce



Penny on the Outside Looking In



Laura Gunning in Action



Our Mission

To create a community space where individuals and local organizations can grow food in a peaceful, respectful and inclusive environment



Find us on Instagram and Facebook –
search “portsmouthcommunitygarden.”

communitygarden603@gmail.com

portsmouthgarden.org

Thank you for helping us grow!
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