

Spring 2008



A Quarterly Publication by the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, April 12th
6/15 Green
Potting Workshop with Maureen O'Brien from 11am to 1pm
Pot a new plant or repot a root bound old one.

Tuesday, April 22nd
Woodbine Block Assn. Garden
Earth Day Celebration
Children's introduction to the garden

Saturday, April 26th
Dunton Block Assn & Civic Assn. Garden
Celebrates Arbor Day!

Saturday, April 26th
Back to Eden Community Garden
Celebrates Arbor Day!

Saturday, April 26th
Dunton Block and Back to Eden Community Garden
Open Space Gallery Project

Community Garden Gates
b o o k

Brooklyn Blooms and BQLT Helps

BQLT was well represented at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's 27th annual Making Brooklyn Bloom (March 8). This year's theme, Edible NYC: Green It! Grow It! Eat It! was successfully carried out in morning and afternoon workshops, demonstrations and exhibits.



BQLT's table top presentation and hand outs caught the attention of many who attended Making Brooklyn Bloom. Photo: A.E. Green

At BQLT's information table, board and garden members took turns talking to event participants who stopped to pick up handouts and to learn more about our organization. During an afternoon workshop, two BQLT gardeners made a formal presentation on how to handle the presence of lead in garden soil.

Agnes E. Green, BQLT Board President



BQLT's Communications Committee Chair Cecile Charles King shared thoughts with representatives from New York Restoration Project. Photo: A.E. Green

Founders Day Celebration Huge Success

On Saturday, March 1, close to 100 people attended the first-ever BQLT Garden Founders Day Celebration at Magnolia Tree Earth Center and the location of Brooklyn Queens Land Trust's (BQLT) office. Much to everyone's pleasure, a significant number of original garden creators were present to receive their accolades. Enrique Alie, a founder of the Clifton Place Block Association Garden, said he had not seen that many BQLT gardeners together since its early organizing days ...back in 1999.

The celebration included NYS Senator Velmanette Montgomery's appearance. She expressed words of support and encouragement (13 BQLT gardens are in her district);

cable television's channel 12 ran coverage of the event all day on March 2nd; an impressive 40-page BQLT Garden Founders Day Celebration journal was presented to all. It contained a brief history of all 34 BQLT gardens and a listing of each garden's acknowledged founders; each founder was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation; and, BQLT's 6/15 gardemember Nitza Wagoner's Open Space Gallery photography exhibit "Images of the



Board of Directors President Agnes E. Green welcomed BQLT garden members to a historic occasion. Photo: E. Alie

Gardens", a display of BQLT gardens' and people. The event also received a half-page write up with photo in the February 28, 2008 issue of Our Time Press.

The day's good vibrations were accentuated by delicious home cooked food prepared and donated by BQLT garden members. Led by Chairperson Mary Jones with the assistance of Ada Smothers, the Garden Founders Day Celebration committee of



Garden Founders Day celebrants assembled in George Washington Carver Gallery where a BQLT gardens photo exhibit underscored the day's importance. Photo: E. Alie

BQLT members created an event that will be long remembered. **Agnes.E. Green**

A Real Good Time

The day before Easter, a dozen happy young children had big fun scampering about the Patchen Avenue Garden looking for buried treasure. Some in plain view, others tucked behind garden structures and many in small brown paper bags tucked in tree branches; red and blue teams of youth searched high and low for brightly colored plastic Easter eggs.

According to the garden's leaders Erma Winslow and Curley Thornton, the annual egg hunt is always a joyful event for young and old. All the children who participated in the hunt went home with smiles on their faces and Easter baskets of sweets in their hands... **Agnes.E. Green**



Easter baskets were given to all the young children who searched the Patchen Avenue Garden looking for hidden Easter eggs. Photos: A.E. Green

"Images Of the Gardens"

Nitza Wagoner is a member and gardener of 6/15 Green Community Garden in Park Slope. After September 11th, she was inspired to create the "Artist in the Garden" Project (re-named Open Space Gallery). The Project debuted in 2002. It was a 3-panel kiosk designed for art exhibition on front lawn where Brooklyn-based artists volunteered & held workshops/demonstrations and shared their artwork with garden members and visitors at Spring and Harvest festival. The Gallery has evolved and is now



Photo: Nitza Wagoner

installed on fences, on easels in garden plots and structures in a about the diverse garden environment. It will tour the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust Garden Community in 2008.

The introduction of the Open Space Gallery Project was held at the George Washington Carver Art Gallery at Magnolia Tree Earth Center on March 1st at the BQLT Gardener Founders Day Celebration!



BQLT gardener and photographer Nitza Wagoner addressed Garden Founders Day participants. Photo: E. Alie

The Open Space Gallery Project will be installed at Dunton Block and Back to Eden Garden(s) on Saturday, April 26th at Arbor Day Celebration.

WHAT'S WITH THE GARDEN OPERATIONS?

The Garden Operations Committee is the most direct face of BQLT. Comprised of representative members of each garden, the committee is the responsible resource to the routine matters of each garden's organizational and physical needs.

How does the Garden Operations Committee handle its business? Sometimes, it is a matter of members brainstorming, discovering alternate ways of examining issues, resolving problems as a group.

When a garden needs a boost to its membership, Garden Operations is the source for encouragement and advice. When a garden experiences safety or security issues, Garden Operations is the source of assistance. Likewise, when a garden succeeds, Garden Operations is a good place to boast of achievement! The active exchange of ideas is a good fuel. We want to know about the challenges, certainly. We also want to know about the successes, the things that work for each garden.

In terms of routine practical matters, the following are some tasks of the Garden Operations Committee:

- Development of a Garden License - This is the document that BQLT will sign annually with each member garden. Concerns have been raised and discussed in detail preparing this agreement. In fact, much of the discussion has helped define purpose for the Garden Operations Committee. The document is not yet complete, and will always be subject to the dynamic of an ever-changing membership

Sunday, April 27th

Classon Ful-Gate Block Assn. Garden
Banana Republic Work Day -
Beautify and Enhance Your Garden 10:00 AM. to 3:30 PM.

Saturday, May 10th

6/15 Green
Spring Celebration in the Garden!

Saturday, May 10th

Hollenback Community Garden
United Nations Visit and the Unveiling of Compost Toilet

Monday, May 26

Classon Ful-Gate Block Assn. Garden
Gloria and Leroy Fashion Memorial

Every Thursday Evening of the Week

Prospect Park, Brooklyn
Guided Herb Walk Tour -

Learn what plants are wild food and medicines that grows around us.

- Development of resources - Our files include each garden's regulations and/or by-laws. Has your garden prepared and submitted yours? And our files include copies of each garden's surveys. Has your garden completed and submitted yours? The Garden Operations Committee will gladly offer support and reference.
- Insurance - The Garden Operations Committee currently collects information regarding the matter of insuring each garden. Annually, each garden must complete a questionnaire. Has your garden completed and submitted yours?
- Water - Flowers and veggies require water to flourish. The Garden Operations Committee is gathering information that will enable the BQLT to deal with the matters of in-garden water plumbing, in terms of physical maintenance and NYC bureaucracy. The Committee also will be a good reference for alternative water sources.

Twice each year, BQLT garden experts visit each plumbed garden to turn water systems on and off, and conduct the required annual RPZ testing.

The Committee also will be a good reference for alternative water sources. Several gardens are exploring and helping to install water harvesting systems, gathering rain-water from neighboring rooftops.

- Soil testing - What constitutes that dark rich substance in which gardens plant their seeds? What's the good stuff and not so good stuff? How can we make our gardens more productive and avoid the urban pollutants that our soil has accumulated? A team of intrepid garden investigators is touring throughout BQLT, gathering samples for study.
- Our future - Garden Operations Committee has laid a foundation to

consider new membership. We are not a closed system. Our mission includes the welcoming of others into our community of gardeners.

During the green season, Garden Operations Committee has been a nomad, moving its first Saturday monthly meetings to member gardens, looking for challenges and strengths. In the cold months, we will move our meetings indoor but continue to travel throughout the BQLT network. When the gardens are a bit quieter, we have more opportunity to focus on the organizational work, reflecting on the past season and preparing for the next green season.

In forthcoming issues of this newsletter, we'll share more detail and explore other matters relevant to this Committee. And I cordially invite your participation, because you and I, we; and, your garden and our garden, our gardens, comprise BQLT, and the Garden Operations Committee.

Pat McCarty, Chairman
Garden Operations Committee

Good Gardening Is Having Healthy Soil

BQLT gardens, whose soil lead levels tested at **300 or more parts per million (ppm)** last fall, received a second visit from our soil testing team during the first weeks of April. This round, the samples were taken from garden planting beds (first round, only common areas) and sent to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Cornell University labs for testing.

Garden soil lead test results can range from "no precautions are necessary" to "soil lead levels are above the EPA (U.S. Environment Protection Agency) level of concern". A significant number of BQLT gardens' common area soil tested in category levels that prompted further examination of those gardens' soil. The presence of elevated lead levels in urban garden soil is not unusual. It is, however, very important that steps be taken to

limit exposure when lead is present and to reduce its soil levels.

According to Frank J. Peryea, Ph.D., Washington State University soil scientist and horticulturist, the wisest thing to do when lead contaminated soil is present ... "[combine] appropriate land use, horticultural and personal hygiene practices. These practices reduce the amount of lead in or on garden produce, and minimize direct exposure of gardeners and their families to contaminated soil."

If a garden's soil is identified as contaminated with lead, there are relatively simple remediation methods that can help to create healthy soil for producing edible crops and other garden activities. Gardeners may choose one or all of the following methods: cover bare and contaminated soil with wood chips, landscape cloth and new topsoil. Contaminated soil also may be covered by using certain plant life.

The University of Massachusetts suggests the following gardening practices to reduce risks associated with soil contaminated with lead:

- 1. Keep young children away from all garden areas and other exposed soil surfaces.**
- 2. Discard old and outer leaves before eating leafy vegetables. Peel root crops. Wash all produce.**
- 3. Incorporate organic materials such as finished compost, humus and peat moss.**
- 4. Keep dust to a minimum by maintaining a mulched and/or moist soil surface.**

A handy and easy to read brochure for handling contaminated soil in our gardens is being created for distribution to all BQLT gardeners. Availability is expected in May. For more information about garden soil contamination, contact BQLT Soil Testing Team co-leaders Demetrice Mills at 718/789.9566 or avadice@aol.com or Charlie Bayrer at 718/685.8460

Agnes E. Green

Remembering Beloved Gardeners Gloria and Leroy Fashion

The Classon Ful-Gate Block Assn. Garden members along with the support of TPL, BQLT, and other gradeners from the area planted bulbs honoring the Fashions for there long time particitation and support of the Block Association, the Block Association Garden, BQLT, TPL, and the community.

A garden get together is planned to further honor their commitment, and contributions to the community, the Garden, and Block Association for which they loved, worked, lived, and protected. They will forever be missed. **Rest in Peace - Fashions.**

Demetrice Mills



Pic #1 Recent photo taken in April when the daffodils bloomed.

Pic #2 Planting bulbs in cold January, Charlie Bayrer (Hollenback Garden), Marisa DeDominicis (TPL)

Pic #3 Jon Crow (Brooklyn Bears Garden), Mary Hayes and Demetrice Mills (Classon Ful-Gates Block Assn. Garden) taking a break.

Pic #4 Brothel Dean leveling the soil (rake in hand).

Photos: Brothel Dean, Demetrice Mills, BQLT Board Member, and Patchen Avenue Garden Member.

BQLT Annual Meeting and Election Results

The BQLT held its Annual Meeting on March 29, 2008 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Brooklyn, with more than 75 people in attendance. The meeting included elections for the Board of Directors based on the write-in ballots nominations received earlier in the spring. The 25 garden voting representatives present at the meeting delivered these results:

OFFICERS

- Board President** - Agnes E. Green (re-elected)
- Board Vice-President** - ShaKing Alston (re-elected)
- Board Secretary** - Brothel Dean (re-elected)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mary Jones, gardener (re-elected - 2 years)
- Michael Hooper, resource person (elected - 1 year)
- Nicole Brait, resource person (elected - 2 years)
- Virtus Haynes, gardener (elected - 1 year)
- Demetrice Mills, - gardener (elected - 2 years)
- Isak Mendes, gardener (elected - 2 years)
- Stephen Simpson, gardener (elected - 2 years)
- Nitza Wagoner, gardener (elected - 2 years)
- Ismael A. Qaadir, gardener (elected - 1 year)

8 New Board of Directors.

Veteran Board Of Directors - Not Up For Re-election

- Pat McCarty
- Cecile Charles King
- Carl Greene

The BQLT wishes to thank and congratulate former Board of Directors Ada Smothers, gardener, and BQLT Treasurer Rosalyn Forbes, gardener, on a job well done.

Sarah Pokora



COMMUNITY GARDEN GATES

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