



**The Food Bank  
Gardening  
Handbook**

Almost Everything You Ever  
Wanted to Know About the  
Food Bank Garden in Area # 1  
of the Magnuson P-Patch  
By Sue Truman



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This booklet is dedicated to:

Shau-Lee

Clement

Lynn

Janell

Melissa

Juan

Beth

Christine

and Jake!



## Introduction

This handbook was originally written for a group of ten volunteer Food Bank gardeners who share a 16' X 32' food bank plot at the Magnuson P-Patch. The people in the group are like ships in the night, coming and going at all times of the day. This handbook was put together as a way to get the information out to the group. It was later suggested to make it available to other Food Bank gardeners by putting it on the Web as an example of how one group has organized the tasks.

I had a lot of fun putting this together. I hope you enjoy it!

Sue Truman



To the Food Bank Gardeners in Area # 1  
at the Magnuson P-Patch:



Our produce donations from the Magnuson P-Patch go to the Lake City Way Food Bank as well as to the Transitional Housing Units located in the park.

During the past two years we have donated 3,000 pounds of produce per year! Now, with the downturn of the economy, the Food Banks are likely to be busier than ever this year.

Some of you have been vegetable gardening for years and have lots of expertise. Others, like me, have not been doing this for very long, so I thought I would put this information together for the group.



## IDEAS FOR THINGS TO GROW

I asked the director of the Lake City Way Food Bank if there were any foods that they could *not* use. The director replied "No, at the end of the day, all produce is taken." The produce that we provide is so much fresher than any other produce they receive, that it gets taken really quickly. She went on to say that both she and the Food Bank customers are very appreciative of the donations.

Regarding what to plant, it's simple. You can plant whatever you want. That being said, here are some suggestions that I have collected from other Food Bank gardeners and from the book [\*The Maritime Northwest Garden Guide - Planning Calendar for Year-Round Organic Gardening\*](#) by Seattle Tilth. If you don't own a copy, it's worth the \$10.00. It's available at PCC or most bookstores.



## VEGETABLES

**Beans** - Lynn and Janell plant pole beans on the bean arch. Bush beans are great too.

**Beets** - Can't be beaten.

**Carrots** - Popular with kids in the transitional housing units.

**Collard greens** - Very prolific and easy to grow.

**Green Onions**

**Kale** - The curly kale just keeps producing and producing.

**Lettuce** - Let us hear it for lettuce and all other garden greens!

**Radishes** - Fast growing, easy to plant, and can be planted again in August for a fall harvest.

**Snow peas and snap peas**

**Spinach** - Best planted in early spring as it tends to bolt in the mid-summer heat.



## Summer and Winter Squash

**Swiss Chard** - Just keeps producing all summer and into the fall.

**Tomatillos** - Easy to grow, and makes you feel successful.

**Tomatoes** - All kinds are appreciated.

**Zucchini** - Terrific! Like bunnies, prolific!

*The trouble is, you cannot grow just one zucchini. Minutes after you plant a single seed, hundreds of zucchini will barge out of the ground and sprawl around the garden, menacing the other vegetables. At night, you will be able to hear the ground quake as more and more zucchinis erupt.*

- Dave Barry

## FLOWERS

A few flowers here and there are welcome and encouraged. Flowers will feed and attract beneficial insects that pollinate the plants and work the soil. Good bugs like Lady Bugs, Lace Wings, Ground Beetles, Rove Beetles and spiders will eat the bad bugs:



Aphids, Thrips, Mites, and Leaf Miners.

Marigolds repel Aphids. Borage attracts Lacewings (AKA Aphid Lions) which eat Aphids. Pansies, Violets, Feverfew, Calendula, Sweet Peas, and more are welcome in the Food Bark Garden.

Flowers also feed the soul.



*"Just living is not enough," said the butterfly. "One must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower."*

- Hans Christian Anderson

## HERBS

I went to a meeting last year hosted by the Lettuce Link people. They said that herbs are a welcome luxury for their Food Bank customers. Oregano, basil, rosemary, thyme, mint, chives and parsley are all welcome.



There is a box of sandwich bags in the Food Bank shed for herb donations. Please label the bag with a Sharpie or masking tape and a pen.



JUNE 2007



*A vegetable garden in the beginning looks so promising and then after all, little by little, it grows nothing but vegetables, nothing, nothing but vegetables.*

*- Gertrude Stein*

*Gardening is something you learn  
by doing — and by making  
mistakes... Like cooking,  
gardening is a constant  
process of  
experimentation, repeating  
the successes and  
throwing out the failures.*  
- Carol Stocker



## SEEDS AND STARTS

You can find seeds in the red wooden box in the Food Bark side of the shed. These seeds are free for you to use in the Food Bark plots. If you have other seeds to share with the group, please let us know.



*One for blackbird, one for the crow,  
One for the cutworm, and one to grow.  
- American saying*

Nathan Hale High School usually donates some tomato starts in late May. Last year Melissa was able to bring some nice starts from Seattle Tilth. If you grow starts and have too many, let the group know. I'll bet someone can find a place for them.



## WATERING

We have all been watering our own beds. If you are going on vacation and need help watering, let the group know.



Soaker hoses let the water soak in down to the roots. Last year Juan put soaker hoses in two of the beds. If he puts some in again this year, please don't do what I did, which was turn the water on high! It blew a big hole in the soaker hose on the first day! Good grief! It looked like Old Faithful. Turn the water on low and just let it dribble out when using the soaker hoses.

*Water, taken in moderation, cannot hurt anyone.*

- Mark Twain

## FERTILIZER

Fish fertilizer usually arrives on the scene around the beginning of June. It's in a bucket by the composting bins across from the Food Bark Garden.

*Early to bed, early to rise,  
Work like hell: fertilize!*

JULY 2007





## COMPOSTING AND WEEDING

Chop up garden waste into 2" pieces and put it in the middle bin of the three compost bins next to the Food Bark Garden.

Take any invasive weeds (e.g. bind weed, dandelions, thistle, ivy, etc) down to the cement bins for disposal. Or, if you just have a few invasives, feel free to put them in the bucket next to the half barrels. I take the bucket down to the cement bins several times a week. If you don't have time to chop your greens for the compost bin, take the plants down to the cement bins.

*The philosopher who said that work well done never needs doing over, never weeded a garden.*

- Ray D. Everson

## THE PATHS

*Thank you, thank you, thank you* for your help last year in keeping the weeds (especially the thistle) out of the paths in and around the Food Bark Garden, composting bins, and tool box area.

I have an orange-handled weed knife that works well on the paths. It is kept in my personal garden. The knife is stuck in the dirt in the tallest square raised bed (the one with the house on a pole). Feel free to use it anytime.

If you hear of anyone at the Patch looking for volunteer hours, they can always weed and chip the paths in and around the Food Bark Garden, composting bins, and tool box area.

*Give the weeds an inch and they will take your yard.*  
-Mark Twain



## HARVESTING

Everyone is responsible for harvesting their own bed. If you need help with harvesting, let the group know.

Harvest time	Pick up time	Destination
Sunday evenings or Monday mornings	Monday, 10:00 AM	Transitional Housing Units
Thursday evenings or Friday mornings	Friday, 10:00 AM	Lake City Way Food Bank

Regular weekly deliveries begin around the end of May and stop around the beginning of November. If you are able to help with the transporting of produce, please contact Kathy Dugaw.

If the food you harvest has big clumps of dirt on it, please run it under the faucet to remove them.

Deposit the produce in the Food Bank side of the green shed. Use the bags inside the shed for the produce. The person delivering the food will weigh it and record it in the log.

If you have extra plastic bags at home, or plastic food containers that you don't want, please put them in the shed on the Food Bark side.

SEPTEMBER - 2007



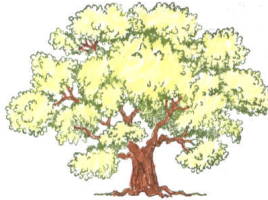
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### GARDEN OVERFLOW

If you have extra produce from your personal garden that you cannot use, please consider adding it to the harvest.

### NEIGHBORHOOD FRUIT TREES


On a related note, the Lettuce Link people have also started a city-wide campaign to make sure that fruit does not go to waste on neighborhood fruit trees. So, if you know of neighbors that have apple, plum, or cherry trees with fruit rotting on the ground, consider asking them if you can harvest it and donate it to the Food Bank.





## CROWS

I am sure you remember from last year that the crows were stealing all of the tomatoes. As soon as a tomato would begin to grow ripe and red, the crows claimed it. Generally, I am a big fan of crows, *BUT* nobody steals my tomatoes!

Netting is a  good deterrent for crows. When the tomatoes start to ripen, cover them with netting. Alternatively, when a tomato starts to ripen, you can pick it and put it in the shed and it can finish ripening in the shed.



## SNAKES

Last year we had a few snakes living in the Patch. Hopefully they will be back this year. There is a good sized one that lives close to Juan and Melissa's personal garden. They saw it eating a snail! Snakes also eat small mice and rats.





*Great Expectations, March 2008*

# NOTES





# NOTES

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*Kind people help each other without  
noticing that they are doing so.*  
- Chinese Proverb

