

# RCCG NEWS

## March 2022 RCCG Newsletter

### RCCG Contact Information

Email: rockcreekgarden@gmail.com

Website:  
www.rockcreekcommunitygarden.org

### Important Dates

#### Spring Meeting

Saturday, March 12, 10-noon  
Zoom meeting

#### Soil Amendment Orders Due

April 1  
Last day to return Soil Amendment  
Order Form

#### Spring Garden Clean-up

Saturday, April 9

#### First Inspection: Garden Must Be Started

Sunday, May 1

#### Fall Garden Clean-up

Saturday, October 8



## Winter Garden Notes– 2022

By Joe Nelson

Happy soon to be spring fellow gardeners! Hope everyone is excited about getting started on a new season. As we get started I wanted to give reminders for a couple of things. First please get your responses to our secretary Bruce Jacobs and checks for renewal to our treasurer Tom Kraus. In your communication to Bruce please update any changes, secondary gardener, addresses, e-mails, etc so that we can make sure it's up to date. Also please sign up to volunteer to one of the committees as our community garden relies on all of us pitching in. Of note we are looking for an "at large" executive committee member which would be a chance for someone to be part of garden association leadership. If you are interested please reach out to any of us via e-mail/ website or other means. Please mark your calendars for Saturday 12 March at 10am as our Annual spring meeting. This will be via zoom

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February 18, 2022

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(phone dial in available as well) as we come out of the omicron wave we still should avoid large in person meetings..oh and the National Park Service Nature Center where we normally have the meeting is still closed. We did zoom last year and one of the nice things is we actually had a good turnout of gardeners and even though I know we all have Zoom fatigue, we'd love a big group this year as well. Spring cleanup will be a little early this year on April 9th. Due to COVID we been doing ok with having tasks divvied out and not a big spring clean up but it also means that one of the major events that allows us to interact as a community is gone, so we may do more and plan on more in person and on the day. Oregon Avenue construction is not finished and the last phase might not be done by garden clean up. So the meadow may still be fenced off. Regardless we are looking hard at how we can do soil amendment orders as we have pre-pandemonic stay tuned for further information. Looking forward to seeing you in the garden meeting and wishing you great success this year and hoping if the pandemic eases we can increase our social and community aspects of the garden.



## 2022 RCCG Volunteer Update

by Anita Albertson

Despite two years of Corona Virus Modifications, Rock Creek Community Garden persists in being a little oasis for urban farmers! It is served and thrives on the grace and lending hands of its volunteers.

RCCG is gearing up for the 2022 season. We need gardeners to sign up to fulfill the needs of maintaining the garden and meet the requirements of our National Park Service Permit. Our responsibilities include maintaining the plots in good order, cultivating primarily food produce, while involving as broad a base of community as we can.

The process for insuring inclusion in our volunteer efforts changed for 2022. We aim to address disconnects in communication between people signing up and Team Leaders receiving and responding to those volunteers.

Each garden is asked to provide at least one volunteer to participate on a single committee. There are 127+ gardens (most measuring 10' by 20' – with less than 15% (20) as double plots). There are about 20-30 gardeners who sign up to be on multiple committees and additionally second gardeners who also choose to participate on a committee. “It takes a village.....”

As of mid-February, 71 people have signed up for a committee, which means slightly less than half have not.

- ✱ Each garden is asked to provide at least one volunteer to participate on a single committee. There are 127+ gardens (most measuring 10' by 20' – with less than 15% (20) as double plots). There are about 20-30 gardeners who sign up to be on multiple committees and additionally second gardeners who also choose to participate on a committee. “It takes a village.....” As of mid-February, 71 people have signed up for a committee, which means slightly less than half have not.
- ✱ While the intention is to give you the volunteer job you want, once a committee is full or “saturated” – you might be redirected to another committee, toward a need RCCG has.

- \* We are still seeking inspectors, mowers, fencers, back up gardeners, people willing to work on communications, and people to deal with invasive weeds. We are also seeking 1 member at large to join the Executive Board. Additionally, we expect to need people to rework our By-laws, help on a water committee, and also a committee to look at the pros, cons, and how to's of regrading the garden.
- \* I regret to inform the membership that the herb/flower garden has ample volunteers and does not need any more for 2022. Please check the list above and let Anita Albertson know at [brownhouse22@verizon.net](mailto:brownhouse22@verizon.net).

### *Volunteer Groups*

- \* Back Up Gardener – Ad hoc. Fill-in for a limited time for gardeners on vacation, out sick, etc.; as needed for weeding and other tasks. This labor is ad hoc and is much appreciated. Level of exertion is easy to moderate
- \* Communications – this includes developing and maintaining the website and putting together the newsletter. Time commitment depends on the volunteer's imagination. Help plan and enact as potential social activities in the garden (e.g. yoga!). Level of exertion is easy
- \* Fencing and Gate Repairs – participate in helping fix perimeter fencing of quadrants. Involves digging, setting poles, resetting poles, and replacing fencing mesh. Aiding with the split rail fencing maintenance. This is generally two or three times a gardening season; level of exertion is moderate to strenuous
- \* Herb and Flower Garden – be part of a team managing, weeding, watering and looking out for the community cut-flower and herb plot. Regular (i.e., weekly/monthly) support is requested. Level of exertion is easy to moderate.
- \* Inspections – Participate on two (2) inspections as needed over the course of the gardening season. Be a part of the inspection team, on our committee, as a team leader, or an inspector, and help alert gardeners to potential or existing garden issues, promote good gardening and neighbor habits, sort out issues or concerns, and recognize good gardeners. The Inspection Team is responsible to establish and maintain the standards set out in the Garden Rules. Level of exertion is easy.
- \* Invasive Weed Team - Participate throughout the garden season to eradicate pernicious weeds that are known to effect multiple gardens. Work on your own schedule to comb the periphery of the garden exterior to proactively dead head or dig up "lily weed" and other pernicious weeds that are going to seed and threaten to spread. Attend to the full interior of the garden as a wholistic cultivation zone, the paths, the fences, and the shared areas. Work by request to educate individual gardeners about pernicious weeds, working with them to address issues in their gardens. Level of exertion is moderate.
- \* Mowing – Be available to mow the interior meadow and/or the perimeter fencing areas during an allotted volunteered-for time period. Generally, it means mowing once or twice over the gardening season. Level of exertion is moderate to strenuous.

None of the above require that you commit now to specific availability, but it is important that when you do commit to be there for a specific activity, you show up or contact the lead person, and be prepared to make up the work needed in that area.



## Seed Starting Indoors

### A beginners guide to starting seeds indoors

Read the recipe, or seed packet gather your ingredients and equipment, prepare them and then wait for it to be ready. If you have never had a go - try and rather like getting that cake out of the oven the results can be very rewarding as the seedlings begin to germinate and those first seed leaves appear.

### Read the seed packet

Study your seed packet as it can hold valuable information on its 3 by 5 inch surface. It can tell you seed depth, soil temperature for germination, days to germination and growing tips to name a few items. Some seeds can only be started directly outdoors so don't pick those if you are planning on sowing indoors. What are the ingredients?



- \* **Seeds** - Pick some seeds of flowers or vegetables you want to grow. Fresh seed stored in dark dry and cool conditions is best. Hybrid seeds cost more but have more vigor and uniformity.
- \* **Soil** - This needs to be loose, fine textured and drains well. For beginners a commercial planting mix works well as it has some fertilizer in it. As your experience grows you might want to experiment with other materials including vermiculite, sand, peat and garden soil. Some of these materials will also require you to fertilize them as they have little fertility.
- \* **Containers** - Almost anything can be a home for your seeds but generally select a shallow container. Plastic flats, clay pots, wooden trays and empty yoghurt pots are a few. It is important to wash them in soapy water and sterilize them in a solution of one part chlorine bleach to ten parts water. Dry them before use and make sure they have drainage holes at the bottom.
- \* **Preparation** - Look at the seed packet to find out when plants can go outdoors and also how long it takes from sowing. Fill your container to within  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from the top with the moistened mixture and gently level the planting surface. Sow in rows or by scattering on the surface and cover the seeds. Depth will vary but generally, other than very fine surface sown seeds like petunias, cover with soil to a depth of about 2 times their diameter. Cover the tray with a clear plastic lid, or plastic film or glass and place in the required germination temperature. 65-75
- \* In the days leading up to the germination date given on your seed packet, hold the plastic bag up to light to see if any seeds have sprouted. When they have sprouted, transplant them to flats or individual pots filled with potting soil. degrees F is usual though some seeds like sweet pea and broccoli only need 55degrees F. Do not place in direct sunlight.
- \* Once the seeds have germinated move the container to a bright place such as a south facing window and remove the plastic or glass cover. Try to keep the temperature constant for best results and water before wilting occurs. To water place the container in a shallow bowl and allow the water to filter upward until the soil is damp again.
- \* When you have at least one set of true leaves you can transplant the seedlings. If you are transplanting them outside you will need to harden them off to the outdoor temperatures by gradually introducing them to life outside. Start the process in a shady location when it is not windy or below 45 degrees F. Increase the time outdoors over a 2 week period and then carefully



remove from their container handling gently by the leaves. Lettuce and tomatoes are easily transplanted.

And a bit like making a cake- the results can vary but its always fun to have a go. For more detailed information check out <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-14.pdf>

Not sure what edibles to grow? <http://ucanr.edu/sites/MarinMG/files/122253.pdf>

## Start you plant seeds indoors- simple idea

Adopted from The Old Farmers Almanac

Long before the final frost, you can start the seeds for your garden indoors. A fast, almost foolproof, space-saving, no-mess way to start plants begins with a damp paper towel. You can spread rows of seeds across half of it, then fold the unseeded half over to keep the seeds moist.

Then, if you smooth the folded, seeded towel and slide it into a plastic bag, keeping it flat, you can store this in a place that is 70° to 80°F and wait for the seeds to start growing! Every couple of days, check the seed towel to make sure that it is not too dry, then sprinkle a little water on it with your fingers if it is.

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## Gardening Tips: It's all in Microgreens

By Peggy Cloherty

I encourage gardeners to consider using their excess seeds to grow micro greens. Last year I was given two packs of 1,300 vegetable seeds each. The inspiration for experimenting with them to grow micro greens came from a buying and tasting micro greens from a vendor at a local farmers market. Although some commercial vendors purchase special equipment and grow micro greens in a coconut shell medium in water, I used the technique of growing them in soil in my RCCG plot and a couple of pots at home. Hundreds of seeds can be sown tightly together in a few feet of soil, a fraction of one bed. Micro greens are ready to harvest in 2-3 weeks and are rich in vitamins and other nutrients that are in the full-grown version of the vegetable.

Micro greens can be harvested by clipping them with a scissors above the roots, picking up minimal or no dirt. Thus they are easy to rinse before using. They make any salad artistic and flavorful and can be used as a topping for sides and entrees.

Some types of micro greens will grow back after the top couple of inches are



harvested. Celery leaves and cress stayed green and delicious a few inches tall through the hot summer season as I harvested the leaves. Other micro greens I enjoyed were fennel, sunflowers, red and green cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, various bitter greens, turnips, onions, and peas. Many more vegetable varieties make delicious micro greens. Certain plant materials are not edible as micro greens, notably nightshades such as tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, and goji berries. As a first time experiment, growing micro greens was fun and rewarding. If you have questions, please consult the many websites that provide authoritative information.

## Planting Guide for the Capitol Area

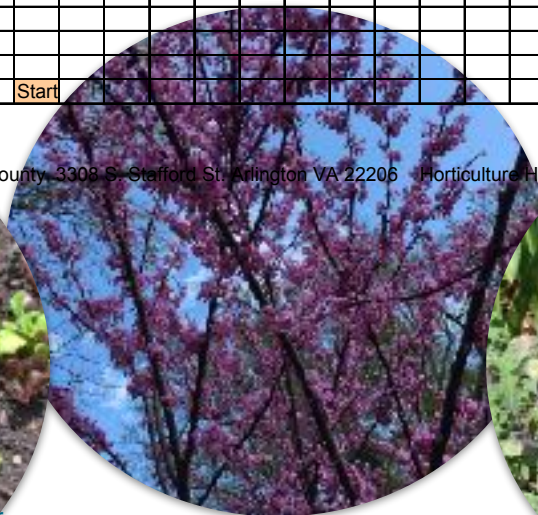
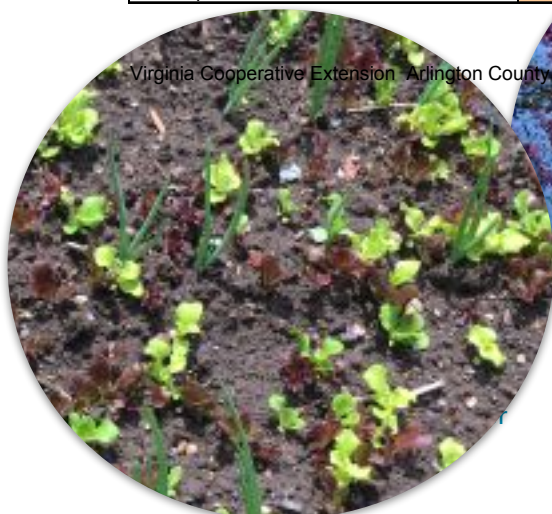
Virginia Cooperative Extension Arlington Office  
3308 S. Stafford St. Arlington VA 22206

USDA Hardiness Zone 7b  
Avg last killing frost: 4/1-4/10  
Avg first killing frost: 11/1-11/10

Horticulture Help Desk: 703 228 6414  
mgarlalex@gmail.com

Month	March				April			May			June			July			August			September			October		
Date	1	11	21	31	10	20	30	10	20	30	9	19	29	9	19	29	8	18	28	7	17	27	7	17	27
<b>Crop</b>																									
Collards	P								H								P							H	→
Onion, set	P				P&H					H															→
Peas, garden	P						H																		
Radish	P		P&H				H										P		P&H						→
Spinach	P					H														P				H	→
Turnips	P					H											P				P&H			H	→
Potatoes		P										H													
Beets			P						H									P						H	→
Cabbage*			P						H								P						H		→
Carrots			P						H				P&H				P			H					→
Lettuce, bibb			P							H							P				H				→
Lettuce, leaf			P						H								P				H				→
Broccoli*				P								H					P&H	P					H		→
Brussels sprouts*				P								H					P						H		→
Cauliflower*				P						H							P				H				→
Beans, bush						P					P&H						H								
Beans, pole						P								P&H			H								
Corn, sweet						P							P&H				H								
Cucumbers							P					P&H								H					
Eggplant*							P								H										
Muskmelons							P							H											
Cantaloupe							P							H											
Peppers*							P							P&H	H										
Pumpkins							P								H										
Squash, summer							P					P&H							H						
Squash, winter							P									H									
Sweet Potato							P									H									
Tomatoes*							P						P&H		H										
Watermelon							P								H										
<b>Key</b>																									
Plant																									
Plant & Harvest																									
Harvest																									
* Transplants - See notes on reverse																									
Start																									

Virginia Cooperative Extension - Arlington County, 3308 S. Stafford St. Arlington VA 22206 Horticulture Help Desk 703 228 6414 mgarlalex@gmail.com





# Recipe Corner

Spring is the time when fall root vegetables are still available and early cold loving greens and lettuce will give us some delicious meals

## Leek and Thyme Soup for Winter into Spring

A heart-warming soup against the blustering winds of February and March.

In the chilly days before spring draws me to the garden, I throw over-wintered vegetables in a pot. Leek and potatoes do the trick, but I need color and I find staring into a pot of gray depressing. I substitute sweet potatoes and throw in lots of thyme, then finish it off with a dollop of yoghurt or sour cream with lots of fresh chopped parsley. I don't bake but like to eat this with dark German bread.

### Ingredients

3-4 leeks

2 lbs sweet potatoes

Stick of butter

handful of fresh thyme

4-5 quarts vegetable stock

salt and freshly ground pepper

Dollops of plain yogurt or sour cream

### Directions:

Top and tail the leeks. Strip off the coarse outer leaves and rinse thoroughly. Chop leeks into thick rounds.

Scrub clean and roughly dice the sweet potatoes. In a big soup pot, melt the butter and add the leeks and sprigs of thyme. Cook 5 minutes until leeks are soft. Add potatoes and the stock, cover and on low heat cook for about 40 minutes.

Fish out the thyme stems. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Garnish with sour cream or yogurt and plenty of chopped emerald green parsley

Pull apart a round of dark bread, and if you feel you dare or deserve to, slather with butter or a hunk of hard cheese. I can imagine I'm in a Breughel painting or Bijl van Urk's 'Happy Peasants.'

## Tender Early Lettuce and Greens Salad

Take advantage of the earlyt lettuce and budding flowers to make a delicious spring salad.. I have some cold tolerant lettuce, overwintering carrots and arugula to add to an early spring salad, Add some budding flowers and you have a tasty and colorful spring salad.

### Ingredients

- Young lettuce leaves
- Arugula
- Carrots sliced thinly
- Radish sliced thinly
- Micro greens
- Redbud tree flowers, Arugula or Kale flowers, and flowers from

I like to drizzle olive oil over the tender lettuce and squeeze half a fresh lemon. Add a pinch of

