

RCCG NEWS

July 2026 RCCG Newsletter

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2026 Important Dates

Inspections generally occur on Sundays at 4pm. Time may be adjusted at the discretion of the inspection group for inclement weather.

July 12

July 26

August 9

August 23



RCCG Water Update

RCCG Water Team

Our water is provided for FREE (to date; who knows about the future) by the NPS. We believe the water main, which goes through the garden, and allows for our garden distribution system, services the horse stables at the top of the hill. Since the horses are not there right now, the NPS can actually see how much water WE are costing them.

In the spring, when the weather and ground warm up, we route a hose from the NPS owned hydrants, orange one in the interior

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meadow and the bib on the west side by the asphalt trail (blue), to our garden pipe system, allowing the water to run to individual spigots spread throughout the garden. Over the growing season, the NPS hydrants (bibs/faucets) should (or will) have their handles UP ALL THE TIME, so the water may flow into our pipes. During the growing season, water flow is controlled at the individual spigots spread throughout the garden.

The blue NPS bib on the west side of the garden services the paths to the west of the garden and the orange NPS bib services the plots to the east. The consequence of our system is, periodically, the main hose bibs get their handles pushed down, which leads to a water shut off. Consequently, if YOU have to raise the handle, because during the handle-up season someone pushed it down, go check to make sure no outlying garden distribution spigots are open. It's been so that we have come into the garden to find water pouring out of an outlying spigot. This happens when someone frustrated by no water in the hose by their garden, hasn't gone to turn the water on at the hydrant or hasn't known to do that, and has left the outlying spigot wide open. Check on the water flow throughout the garden if you pull the handle up.

Going forward, we anticipate the garden water distribution system is going to need more care and replacement as the pipes age. The system has been at work for almost thirty years. Generally speaking, it's anticipated we will replace sections a bit at a time, but only as they break down or leak.

Hoses. Hoses are a BIG investment on the part of the garden. They are not cheap and we spend a lot of regular money on them. As the Association President noted in an earlier newsletter this year, we can have either heavy rubber hoses that are a challenge to use, or we can get flimsier hoses, but those end up kinking and getting replaced every year. It's always a shame to throw away an otherwise decent hose for the kinks. Thus, please, please, please, when you use the hoses, do so without kinks and put them up without kinks. And clean them off after using. Let's keep our hoses out of the landfill.

Finally, water pressure. There are times the water pressure in the garden is abysmal. Sometimes it is caused by the number of gardeners attempting to water at the same time. Other times it is a great mystery. Rima has never discovered the answer, but after a number of discussions, various clever people has come to believe it is an issue not in our control and something outside of the garden that is the issue. While we have a decent relationship with the NPS this is not something, to date, we have chosen to rock the boat on, since the water is free and there are times when our relationship with the NPS gets sticky and/or the NPS is non-responsive to our perceived needs; and the whilst the pressure may be low, there is water. Please bear with the low pressure and manage as best you can.

Let the Water team know of any issues that need to be addressed.

Weed Update

From Anita Albertson

Weeds are the plants that we don't want where they are.

One can pull them from the roots wherever possible - but when that isn't possible - prevent them from getting sunlight by cutting them at the soil and removing any part that might send seeds into the great beyond!

It's an order of magnitude dance - we are just trying to give intentional plants a leg up by removing as many of the weeds that would compete with them. We won't get everything - but if we can prevent them from establishing strong roots or going to seed, we've helped! For those of you on the RCCG whats app group - the pictures are there to see (in reverse order):

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| (1) Pinella Ternata (lily weed) is still doing its work underground - but it is not as evident above ground. | (12) Morning glory |
| (2) Creeping Cress - where it takes hold, it is relentless! | (13) Wood sorrel |
| (3) Purslane - edible | (14) Fleabane |
| (4) Sedges - relentless once let to go to seed | (15) Eastern Redbud (tree) |
| (5) Cypress vine - pretty but seeds go everywhere | (16) Black Walnut (tree) |
| (6) Sedum/stone crop | (17) Wire grass |
| (7) Virginia Creeper | (18) Mock Strawberries |
| (8) Dichondra Repens | (19) Ground Ivy |
| (9) Bind weed | (20) Mugwort |
| (10) Goose grass | (21) Porcelain berry |
| (11) Sedge | (22) Tulip tree (tree) |
| | (23) Asiatic day flower |
| | (24) Pokeweed |

Here is a good article about some weeds in the garden at <https://fairfaxgardening.org/top-5-summer-weeds/>

Thanks again for all you are doing to keep our community garden productive and a happy place!

Featured Gardeners - Juliet Maryland

By Susan Galbraith

Juliet Marrkand joined the Rock Creek Garden Community sometime around 2014, she can't quite remember. She originally hails from Ghana where she met her husband, and they moved to the United States in 1991. They married and they have two grown children, a girl, Karla, and a boy, Gus.

Juliet is best known in our community for her super delicious-and-nutritious juices which she prepares daily for herself and often generously brings to share at our gatherings.

It was her husband, Jack, who originally registered to get on the RCCG list, and he helped get things started, but then, and Juliet laughs her hearty, generous laugh, "I haven't seen him in the garden much since! But I love gardening. I love flowers, and my backyard is looking beautiful right now. I am still catching up on my vegetable garden this year.

But Juliet, you just moved plots this season, right, taking over Natasha's double plot?



Yes, I wanted a bit more space to spread my wings and plant more. I like to explore and experiment with things. In Ghana, Mother Nature gives us everything – helped by the birds, who especially love hot peppers, and they drop seeds. I don't remember planting anything. My mother had a poultry farm, and we helped take care of it. I still love and plant hot peppers, corn, okra, and, of course, tomatoes.

How do you find being part of this community?

Everybody is very nice. People share. Some talk, and some don't. That's natural. Some share about themselves.

Just like you shared with me you have earned a Black Belt in karate. Impressive. And potentially formidable, I dare say.

I've been told that on occasion. Perhaps that comes from my schooling on a military camp from elementary school on up. Everything was by the book; you have to iron your uniform, polish your shoes, and strict enforcement of rules. You learn to act like the soldiers there. And I've been doing karate going on twenty years. And guess who introduced and registered me? – my husband. He thought I might like it. One class and I never stopped. I guess because of my upbringing I'm very regimental or maybe better said disciplined. So yes, First Degree Karate Black Belt.

Getting back to our community, I did experience the other side of life here. Once my car was broken into. And another time, when I had just taken over, I was marked as suspicious, and someone called the police on me. I was getting some assistance replacing rotting posts and putting in a garden. But that was long ago, and the lady was the only one.

I am sorry you experienced this, and it is a reminder to all of us to be welcoming and respectful to all new gardeners.

But look at all the gardeners who helped me clean up and prepare Natasha's former plot—Anita and so many others. I was overwhelmed at first. But I went back to how Susan Davis first instructed me. "Dig deep and get out all those weed roots." It took me over two weeks. And I have now the gift of calla lilies, dahlias, and bergamot.

Please, tell me more about your juicing. When did you start? You're quite a wizard with your beneficiary juices, and I am so grateful to you for your knowledge and sharing.

I maybe started in 2012 and gradually, but now it is an essential part of my daily routine. [See Juliet's favorite juice recipes in this Newsletter]

Recipe Corner

Favorite Juice Recipe from Juliet Maryland

Here are 2 of my favorite recipes.: (I use the Amzchee Masticating Juicer)

Beet Juice

Ingredients:

4 Pcs fist size beets

1/2 Red Bell Pepper

1 Red Apple

1/4 of a whole Pineapple

4 Pinky size Ginger
1 Lemon

Celery, Parsley, Cilantro Juice

Ingredients:

1 bunch Cilantro
1 bunch Parsley
5 pcs Celery sticks
1 Green Apples
1/2 cucumber
1/2 Green Bell Pepper
1/4 of one whole Pineapple
4 pinky size Ginger
1 Lemon

Directions:

Wash and clean all ingredients. Peel (optional) and cut into smaller pieces before putting ingredients through the icing machine to collect all the juice. Add - 16 oz of cold water and Coconut water without the pulp- refrigerate for 4-5 days.

Note: I do not peel my vegetables.

Bringing a Taste of the Mediterranean to DC

From Michela Cirioni

This is my first season as a community gardener, and I knew exactly what I wanted to grow: a little taste of home.

I'm originally from Rome, where most people live in apartment buildings rather than houses with backyards. Instead of gardens, many families (including mine) kept pots of herbs on balconies or kitchen windowsills. Fresh basil, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and sage were always within reach while cooking. They weren't just seasonings, they were part of everyday life.

Now, after ten years in Washington, DC, I'm excited to grow those same Mediterranean herbs in my garden plot. Every harvest reminds me how food connects us to our roots, wherever we are.

If I had to pick a favorite, it would be Italian flat-leaf parsley. Here in the U.S., parsley can be confusing: the herb we use in Italy is flat-leaf parsley, not curly parsley (often used as a garnish), and it's definitely not cilantro! Although parsley and cilantro belong to the same plant family, their flavors are completely different. (Fun fact: I have the gene that makes cilantro taste like soap, so parsley wins every time!)

Italian parsley is much more than a garnish. It's rich in vitamins K, C, and A, antioxidants, and other beneficial plant compounds. Growing up, I always heard that parsley was a wonderful "detox" herb, especially for helping the body eliminate heavy metals. Whether that's an old Italian kitchen tradition or simply healthy folklore, I still love adding generous handfuls to my juices.

One of my favorite post-garden treats is a green juice made with fresh parsley, celery, ginger, and pineapple, or the same ingredients blended into a smoothie to keep all the fiber.

The rest of my Mediterranean herb garden is just as hardworking. Basil brings the unmistakable taste of an Italian summer and is perfect for pesto or tomato salads. Rosemary adds incredible flavor to roasted vegetables and potatoes. Thyme is delicious in soups, beans, and marinades, while sage pairs beautifully with squash, mushrooms, and pasta.

Happy gardening and, as we say in Italy, buon appetito!

Poetry Corner

3 from the Poetry Foundation Planting our Poetry Garden

Ode to the Tomato

A heavy sun, a glowing sphere,
The ruby of the garden year.
It bursts with sweet and earthy rain,
A bright escape from summer's strain.
To slice it thick, with salt and crust,
Is mid-July's most sacred trust.

The Watermelon

A fortress green, a jagged shell,
With secrets that the summer tells.
Crack it open to the light,
A sweet and dripping, blush-pink bite.
The black seeds scatter in the grass,
As slower, warmer hours pass.

Little Sun-Gold Cherry Tomatoes

Like jewels hiding on the vine,
These little bursts of glowing wine.
You pop them warm, right from the stem,
A golden, sweet, and tiny gem.

Rima found this poem in old records she was going through.

Sing it to the tune of "Hymn to Joy."

Garlic, beet greens, and cucumber, carrots, cabbage, peppers, peas,
Bean and broccoli without number, purple eggplant majesty--
In the garden of thy mercy, grant us, Lord, the sun and rain
For potatoes, onions, parsley, for the goodness of the grain.

Grant us, Lord, a row of lettuce, grant us spinach by the bunch.
May the worms not come and get us, may the bugs not eat our lunch.

Grant us, Lord, a crop of sweet corn, every row of kernels bless,
Shining like a golden beacon of thy love and tenderness
Thou hast given strength of hoeing, thou hast given earth so pure,
Streams of water ever flowing, thou hast given great manure.
Gardeners singing, march we onward, growing in the midst of strife;

Vegetables are rising sunward in triumphant praise of life!