

THE MAPLE STREET RAG

Forest Grove Community Gardens News

June 2010/Vol. 2, No. 2

Visit Us On the Internet

Forest Grove Community Gardens has moved its website. It now can be found at <http://fggardens.wordpress.com>.

The site is updated regularly with information about the Victory Garden. There are links to other organic gardening sites that provide tips and ideas for improved sustainability.

Be sure to check out the "How to make seed balls" link to read about this unusual and effective method of propagation.

Spinach In a Pinch

There is an ubiquitous weed at the Victory Garden that can satisfy Popeye's hunger, but keeping it from overrunning your garden requires Popeye-like strength.

Pigweed has broad, lance-shaped leaves with a violet tinge underneath on seedlings. It is a heat-tolerant plant that begins to appear at the Victory Garden in late June. It grows to about 3 feet tall at maturity.

Tough to eradicate, pigweed thrives on excess water from garden irrigation and spreads quickly without regular weeding. It produces fuzzy flower spikes that release thousands of easily dispersed seeds.

Although unfavorably known as pigweed, this summer annual

is an herb from the amaranth family and has many uses.

Amaranth seeds are high in protein and gluten-free. They can be ground into flour or popped to make miniature popcorn. The colored leaves from certain species are used for dye. Amaranth leaves are edible, and often are used in vegetable dishes or soups as a substitute for spinach.



Conserving Water Is Easy

After a wet, cold spring, the weather seems to be returning to normal, which means gardeners will soon begin regular watering of their plots.

The city of Forest Grove has so far charged Forest Grove Community Gardens a fixed annual sum for water. Last year, gardeners used far more water than that sum would cover.

A lot of water was wasted last year by overwatering (leaving faucets running after the soil was soaked); the use of sprinklers (losing water to the air through evaporation); and deep trench irrigation (soaking the soil below the root level of plants).

To ensure the city continues giving a fixed water rate, gardeners should use water more wisely.

Try the "finger test" before you water. If you can push your finger into the ground and find damp soil 2 inches down, you don't need to water.

When you do water, use a system that delivers water directly to your plants, such as soaker hoses, drip irrigation or hand watering individual plants.

Don't broadcast water all over

the plot. That method not only wastes water, but will increase weed growth and slug problems.

Many vegetable plants prefer being watered near their base. Tomatoes, especially, suffer production issues when watered excessively from overhead.

Gardeners are asked to monitor their water use.

Unattended sprinklers will be shut off without notice.

Everyone has their own watering regimen, so be courteous to other gardeners when you water. No one wants their plot soaked by someone else's inefficiency.

Drip irrigation equipment is available to gardeners at cost. If you are interested in setting up a drip irrigation system, call 503-357-4577.

Irrigation Workshop

Learn more about drip irrigation at a demonstration 10 a.m. Saturday, July 17, at the Victory Garden in the C row. Another irrigation workshop, sponsored by Adelante Mujeres and conducted in Spanish, is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, July 11.

If we all conserve water, we can sustain a great city water rate at the Victory Garden.

