The Compost is an SF Environment and Rec and Park Dept project serving San Francisco community gardens. This Post is for you, so please tell us what you need!

Garden Spotlight: Tenderloin People’s Garden

A flood of veggies is building at the 1/10 acre site of the Tenderloin People’s Garden. With the constant care of Nella Manuel, the volunteer coordinator at the garden, and a steady flow of volunteers, they’ve harvested over 3000 pounds of produce every year. Manuel says that the garden is all about generosity and helping, and that she never lets anyone leave the garden empty-handed, provided that they weigh what they harvest.

As might be expected in a communally managed garden, all decisions are made through community processes. The garden was created through the 2009 Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC) summit and ongoing weekly garden meetings provide plenty of opportunity for community members to chime in on everything from their thoughts about the future of the garden to whether or not they should build new raised beds. At these group meetings, they consider offers for new garden features from their fellow community members. For example, a new vertical garden structure that’s growing lush bunches of greens, was designed by community volunteer and architect Geoffrey Burton.

DPW Urban Harvesting Program

The Department Public Works’ Urban Harvesting Program is up and running! Nancy Wong, the program coordinator, helps urban gardeners collect excess fresh fruit and veggies from trees and community gardens that are brought to the Food Bank where they’re weighed, washed, and then distributed to shelters and neighborhood pantries.

The program likes to harvest hard-to-reach fruit, leaving the easily picked fruit for the home gardener to enjoy. If you have a highly productive fruit tree or garden and want to reduce food waste, while helping address food insecurity, visit their website to find out more and sign up your tree!

tinyurl.com/DPW-harvest

What to plant now from the San Francisco Seed Library

July
Beets, broccoli seedlings, Brussels sprouts, cabbage seedlings, collards, early corn, kohlrabi seedlings, lettuce, parsnip, potatoes, radish, snap peas, spinach, summer squash, chard, turnips

Foggy hoods: fava beans, carrots, cauliflower, celery, mustard

August
Beets, broccoli seedlings, Brussels sprouts, cabbage seedlings, carrots, celery seedlings, collards, kale seedlings, kohlrabi seedlings, lettuce, mustard, parsnip, peas, potatoes, radish, spinach, chard, turnips

Foggy hoods: fava beans

September
Same as August plus fava beans and onion

Visit sfseedlibrary.org for the full calendar list and information about borrowing seeds.
Garden Spotlight continued

In addition to the garden oversight meetings, they host open garden harvest days twice a month, where volunteers harvest an average of 100 pounds of produce that’s distributed amongst the workers and surrounding community. Through these giveaways, fresh food is provided to over 400 people every year.

The giveaways not only serve to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the Tenderloin neighborhood but also to build the connection from soil, to produce, to meal. The experience of growing food builds skills and helps awaken awareness about the issue of food access. Sharing brings people into the expanding garden network, connecting volunteers, food recipients, and organizers. People who receive food are encouraged by Manuel and other volunteers to visit the garden, if only to get outside and enjoy the sunshine.

Building these connections are important to Manuel. After a volunteer has dropped in a few times, she invites them to register with her so she can personally notify them of upcoming trainings and events. Volunteers can then be introduced to leadership opportunities in the garden and become more involved in the community. All in all, the garden draws 200-300 volunteers per year, and everyone one of those volunteers, from community members, to corporate groups, to TNDC staff, share the garden’s bounty.

To volunteer or learn more, visit: tinyurl.com/TNDCG.

Urban Ag Program Almost Up and Running!

A public hearing was held at the Board of Supervisors on July 8th to review plans for the establishment of a citywide Urban Agriculture Program. The plan is for the Recreation and Park Department to house a full-time Program Coordinator to set up a “one-stop-shop” or “front door” for urban agriculture. The Coordinator will continue to engage a working group comprised of other departments and community stakeholders. The resolution includes provisions regarding reporting to the Board and the timely development of a work plan. RPD will begin recruitment for the Coordinator position in August. Visit the Community Gardens Program section of RPD’s website and click on “News and Events” for updates and job posting: sfrecpark.org/parks-open-spaces/community-gardens-program

Resources

Free Compost:
DPW Clean Team Events
September 28th and October 19th
tinyurl.com/DPWcompost
(415) 641-2600

Worms:
The Worms Resource Page
SFEnvironment.org/worms

Seeds:
SF Seed Lending Library
at Potrero Hill Library
sfseedlibrary.org

Tools:
The Green City Store
1029 Geneva Ave
tinyurl.com/tool-lending

Bees: More than Just Honey!

California is home to more than 1,600 native bee species. Most are solitary, making their nests in the ground or in pre-made cavities, as opposed to living in colonies like European honey bees. Native bees are very important and effective pollinators for crop plants and wildflowers. Help conserve them by planting native plants and leaving bare soil and hollow plant stems for nesting.

Check out helpabee.org for more information on how to invite native pollinators into your garden!

Photos courtesy Rollin Coville

‘Leaf-cutter’ bee

‘Ultra-green’ sweat bee

‘Orange-rumped’ bumble bee

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