The Garden Connection

A newsletter for the gardeners at the Waukesha County Rental Gardens

Reminder - Garden Closes on October 18th

The Waukesha County Rental Gardens close on Monday, October 18, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. (The closing date does not apply to those renting permanent garden plots, as those plots do not get plowed.) If you do not wish to continue gardening until October 18th, feel free to clean out your plot early.

Just a reminder regarding garden clean up... a $25 fee will be assessed to gardeners if they have not:

1) removed everything they brought into the plot including fencing, stakes, string, thick layers of newspaper, tomato cages, tools, plastic mulch, plant tags, etc.

AND

2) dug up and removed all thick-stem vegetables (i.e., corn), thick-stem flowers (i.e., sunflower), and thick-stem weeds.

End of Season Plant Waste

Wondering what to do with your plant waste as you begin to clean up your garden? Feel free to pull smaller plant material and **leave it in the garden**. The plant waste will decompose over winter and add organic matter to the garden. **BUT thick stem vegetables** (i.e., corn, Brussels sprouts, broccoli), **thick stem flowers** (i.e., sunflowers), **and thick stem weeds need to be removed and placed in plant waste bins**. These are located at four locations throughout the garden.

If any of your plant material was severely "hit" with a disease problem, consider bagging up that plant (place it in a black plastic bag and tie it shut) and place in the trash bin. By doing this, the disease will not overwinter in the garden or plant waste pile and re-infect plants the following year.

If you have a permanent garden, you can decide what you want to leave in your garden over the winter.

How Long will the Water be Available?

The water will be shut off when the weather turns cold or there is a frost prediction, which is usually in early October. Cold weather or frost can damage the water meter that is connected to the hydrant that supplies water to the garden. Before the water is turned off, the water tanks will be filled one last time. Once the water is turned off, it stays off until spring. Watch the bulletin board at the Garden entrance for a note about the water (or any end-of-season concerns) or our Rental Gardens webpage at https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/UWEX/HORT/rg/.

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Bulletin Board Garden Entrance

Please watch the bulletin board at the entrance to the garden for new messages or updates. It is the easiest way for us to get a timely message to the gardeners! If there is something that you feel we need to include in it, please let us know!

Harvest Celebration - A Wonderful Time

Thank you to all who attended the Harvest Celebration on Saturday morning, August 28th. Approximately 35 people attended! There was great food, good conversation, and a short garden meeting, where questions were answered.

Disease Control at the Garden

Even though this year's growing season is not over, it's time to think about next year's garden. Clean up at the end of the growing season is a good disease control technique for the following year. As you pull out any plants, take note if they show disease symptoms. If they do, bag them and place them in the trash. Do not throw them in the plant waste pile at the garden. The disease may over-winter if left in the garden or nearby.

This is also a great time to make a note of where you planted which vegetables this year and make plans to rotate your vegetables next year. Rotating your vegetables help keep disease-causing fungi from building up to high levels in any one area of your garden.

Vegetable Storing Tips

Home storage is a good and inexpensive way to keep vegetables so you can use them at a later date. When stored properly, fresh vegetables keep most of their food value and original flavor. Successful storage depends on several factors:

- Only mature vegetables of good quality should be stored. Eating quality and storage quality is reduced when produce is immature or over-mature. Do not refrigerate tomatoes or potatoes, as this will affect their quality and often their taste.
- Careful harvesting and preparation. For example, remove any non-edible portion, such as carrot tops, to prevent excessive water loss.
- Maintaining suitable temperature and humidity for storing vegetables and providing adequate care during the storage period. If vegetables start to grow, the temperature is too high. If they shrivel excessively, the air around them is too dry. Always remove any decaying vegetables at once to prevent rot from spreading.

For more information on storing vegetables, see Extension Learning Store publication #3823, "Storing Fruits and Vegetables from the Home Garden." This publication can be downloaded and printed from your own computer at https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0145/8808/4272/files/A3823.pdf.

Questions/Contact Information?

Questions? Concerns? Email Lisa at lboyer@waukeshacounty.gov or call 262-548-7775. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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