

And We're Off!

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Spring Into Action!

Well, the order was a bit wacked but we have had warm weather, cool stretches, and rain this spring. It wasn't quite April showers, but the result is the same: we have May flowers!

It's great to see the gardens going in—some really creative work is taking place right before our eyes. And those little touches of artistry to make the common areas stand out is simply beautiful.

Have you been able to harvest anything from your gardens yet? Outside of the spinach plants bolting already because of the heat, my cool weather plants are happy. I've had a couple of meals using salad greens from my hydroponic salad table and a crisp using the rhubarb.

It's safe now to plant tomatoes, peppers, and other heat-loving plants. The [average last killing frost for our zone](#) is May 10th. The rest of May looks warm and our State Climatologist is predicting a warmer than normal June. This year the soil temps are definitely already up there so the plants should be fine.

Happy gardening!

Del

Gardening Milestones

Please refresh yourself on the milestone dates and guidelines in the Gardener's Agreement. Click [HERE](#) to see it on our Web site.

- Your plot must be clean, fully prepared, and at least half planted by June 1.
- Your plot will be fully planted by July 1.
- Your plot cannot be left fallow or unused for any period of four (4) weeks or longer.
- You will water your plot according to water-wise guidelines.

Let me know if you have questions on any of this.

Water Wisdom

The water is connected at all three sites. Arthur and Cornerstone tested out fine, but at Yale there is a water hose that needs to be replaced. Please draw from the first post (furthest west) until the hose between the first and second posts can be replaced.

A reminder, the garden provides and maintains the water backbone. The gardeners are responsible for providing the hoses from the spigots to your gardens. While we have been fortunate to have been given most of the current hoses, replacement hoses will be the gardeners responsibility. So please take care of the hoses that are there! Coil them up neatly after each use, avoid getting them pinched or crimped, etc, so that we can extend the life of the hoses.

Additionally, we need to use water-wise techniques so that we can keep our costs down. Some suggestions:

- Give plants only as much water as they need.
- Deliver the water closer to the plants roots. The leaves develop fungus and such if they remain wet.
- Care for the Soil - by adding compost or mulch. Compost helps the soil hold water and adds nutrients needed for plant growth.
- Mulches prevent the soil from overheating and drying out. Mulch also helps reduce weeds
- Shorter watering times, with a break in between, can be more advantageous than a long, single soaking. The goal is to have water readily available in your plant's root zone. Too much water passes below your plants' root zone. By having multiple watering times, and waiting a few hours in between, your plants' roots have time to absorb the water in the soil before more is added.
- The rainwater costs nothing. Capture it if you can, but there certainly is no need to water for a couple of days after a good soaking rain.
- Don't be fooled by "mid day wilt". Plants with large leaves (i.e. squash plants), often wilt as temperatures rise – that's how they deal with the heat. If your soil is damp, save your water.
- Share Your Wisdom - talk to gardening neighbors and other people in our gardening community. Help people to develop a knowledge and wisdom of gardening techniques.

For more details on these suggestions, click [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#).

Welcome to the New Gardener!

See the article on Page 2.

PicStrip (click to enlarge):



Welcome New Gardeners and Volunteers!

We continue to pick up new gardeners and I'm aware of a few more application that are in the mail. The additions since last month follow. Welcome aboard!

- Angie Hoffman-Walter (Cornerstone, C14)
- Calista Ostenso (Cornerstone, C27, C28)
- Evan Martin (Cornerstone, C9)
- Hanna and Andrew Temme (Cornerstone, GS)
- Jenna Triscari (Cornerstone, C37)
- Jeremiah Gerdin & Lauren Janes (Cornerstone, GS)
- Jessi Paddelford (Cornerstone, C12)
- Mae Hanzlik (Cornerstone, C13)
- Rebecca Orrison & the Student Coop (Cornerstone, GS, C47)
- Sam Weber (Volunteer)
- Tyler Russell (Volunteer)

Service Projects

Thanks to all who signed up for your service commitments. Click [HERE](#) to see the updated **Arthur** sign-ups, [HERE](#) for **Cornerstone**, and [HERE](#) for **Yale**. For those of you who have yet to sign up for a service commitment area, click [HERE](#) to please send me an email expressing your interest. (Please remind me if I've overlooked your previous request)

We will be focusing on [composting](#) and [garden cleaning](#) as the two service areas to develop this year. Martha has offered to lead the composting effort across all the gardens but we need a captain at the Yale site. Jean Emmons has offered to be the overall leader for the garden cleaning program and we need a captain at Arthur and Yale. If you are interested in leading one of these work streams at the particular garden sites (A, C, or Y) please let us know.

Soil Amendments

Our request for free compost from the city did not make the cut for Arthur and Yale. There were 89 requests for the 30 allotments of free compost so those two sites didn't meet the criteria to make it on the list. We're hoping to get a free fall delivery instead, but for now it looks like it's time to get serious about creating and using our own compost.

I'm already seeing the benefits of using the three types of soil amendments - organic horse manure from Pegasus (click [HERE](#) for more info), mushroom compost from Forest Mushrooms (click [HERE](#)), and coffee grounds from the local coffee shops. My soil is fluffy, packed with nutrients and beneficial bacteria, and holds the moisture well but sheds off any extra. I'm hoping that the soil leads to happy root systems which translates to productive plants.

Greenhouse

Rather than putting in the hoop house with [BIJA](#) and others at the Cornerstone site., Rob and Del are brainstorming on a greenhouse design that would fit in with the other structures there. We may be using some concepts from the UMN Design students Community Design Practice class. They are working with some community gardens in the city. Who knows, but the time the June newsletter comes out it may already be built and you can see pics of it in the PicStrip. Stay tuned!

Gardener's Agreement

We are still missing some signed [gardener's agreements](#). We will be sending out final notices shortly. A reminder, we need to make sure we have one on file for you before you begin gardening. It's required because of the agreements we have with the property owners and the City of Minneapolis. In addition, for PPCG Cornerstone gardeners we will need to sign the updated agreement because of the new Memorandum of Understanding we have with The Cornerstone Group, the property owners of that site. Failure to have a signed gardeners' agreement on file will result in forfeiting your gardening privileges.