



P.O. Box 3104
Binghamton, NY 13902
607-205-8108

E-mail:
vinesvolunteers@gmail.com

Website:
www.vinesgardens.org

Listserv:
[http://groups.google.com/
group/vinesbinghamton](http://groups.google.com/group/vinesbinghamton)

This newsletter was funded in part by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

VINES SPONSORS 2012

Garden Angel (\$1000+)
Southern Tier Young Professionals
Steward (\$500 Up to \$999)
Steven Bard
Unitarian Universalist Church and Rev. Taylor
Cultivator (\$250 Up to \$499)
Peg Johnston
Richard Hartigan
Carol Miyake
Amy Shapiro
Sponsor (\$100 Up to \$249)
Fiske Hanson
Merry Harris
Health Beat Natural Foods LLC
Gail Kovac
Laveggio Roasteria
Claire Houghtalen
Jennifer Michel
Mary Ann Szarmach
Friend (\$25 Up to \$99)
Peggy Benz
Fredrick Grisel
James and Ann Jordan
Karen and Robert Mess
Tony Norton
Erin Riddle
Roxanne Rought
Eugene and Carol Taren
Carrie Wenban
Rosemary Wilke
Tim Wolcott

Grants
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
City of Binghamton
Newman's Own Foundation

Special Thanks
Broome County Gang Prevention
Binghamton Housing Authority
City of Binghamton
Earth Day Southern Tier
Kovarik True Value Hardware
LCP Group
NY Auto Radiator
Safe Streets Binghamton
Southern Tier Young Professionals

Land Sponsors
Angela Testani (Pine St Garden)
City of Binghamton (Tudor St Urban Farm Site, Mather St. Garden)

VINES is a volunteer organization which supports and promotes urban food production. Our work is made possible by the hard work of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors.

Please consider donating to VINES to help our projects thrive!

~ All donations to VINES are tax-deductible ~

All donors will be recognized on our website and in our newsletter. Donations over \$1,000 will be recognized on a plaque at the garden of the donor's choosing for two years.

**Support VINES by sending your donation to:
VINES P.O. Box 3104 Binghamton, NY 13902**

VINES Meetings

VINES meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm
RiverRead Books, 5 Court St in Binghamton (www.riverreadbooks.com).

Call 607-205-8108 to confirm meetings.

All are welcome!



Inside this issue:

Gregory Lane and Mather Street Garden Updates **2**

Binghamton Urban Farm Update **2**

Binghamton Urban Farm Youth Interview **3**

Barrier-Free Gardening **3**

VINES Sponsors **4**

Mission Statement

VINES is an organization committed to developing a sustainable and just community food system. We do this by bringing together diverse groups of people, with a focus on youth development, to establish community gardens, urban agriculture and community green spaces. We strive to develop and beautify urban sites and empower community members of all ages and abilities.

Garden Beds Now For Rent

Are you interested in growing your own vegetables and meeting your neighbors? Don't have the land to grow your own food? You may live near a community garden where you can rent a garden bed for a small annual fee. For more information call 607-205-8108 or email vinesvolunteers@gmail.com.

NEWSLETTER OF VOLUNTEERS IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENTS

COMMUNITY GARDEN TIMES

Spring 2013

Greetings from the Board

It's been some time since our last newsletter, and since then how we've grown! Within the last year we've obtained our own 501(c)(3) status and are our own official non-profit organization. What a long awaited achievement. Thank you Earth Day Southern Tier for supporting us through our initial years! We've also been able to hire two employees to work for us, as well as an Americorp member to work at the Binghamton Urban Farm and help out with the Summer Youth Employment Program. We will now be accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits at the farm stand, and we received a key to the city from the mayor! As an organization we

are stronger than ever and can't wait to get our hands into the dirt after a long winter of preparation and paperwork. As the birds begin chirping outside and the days slowly become longer, we find ourselves in complete anticipation of spring.

As our organization matures and develops, so do the Urban Farm and our seven community gardens throughout Binghamton. These growing spaces, the heart of our organization, help to strengthen ties throughout our community, reduce an ever-increasing carbon footprint, and beautify public spaces. As years pass, we are so pleased to see the amount of involvement increase and dedication towards a more



Christine Cebula, Board Member, receiving a Key to the City for her work with VINES

sustainable future evolve and expand. Consider renting a plot in a garden near you today!

Throughout the pages of this newsletter are articles that discuss some of the ways in which we're growing.

Happy planting and we hope to see you this spring!

VINES First Annual Fundraising Event

VINES will hold its first annual fundraiser dinner and after party on Earth Day, Monday, April 22, 2013 at Remlik's Grille and Oyster Bar, 31 Lewis St., Binghamton in the historic Kilmer Building in downtown Binghamton. Remlik's is an elegant restaurant and also a strong supporter of farm-to-table food sourcing; they already buy several trays of greens a week from the Binghamton Urban Farm run by VINES! We are delighted to have them as a sponsor of the event.

The evening will start with a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres at 5:45 pm, followed by a buffet dinner featuring local food. Following dinner there will be dessert and a short program to discuss VINES' plans for the next year and to celebrate our achievement of independent not-for-profit status, a true milestone for the organization. There will also be a silent auction featuring donations from a number of area



Local band Driftwood

merchants, offering the chance to sample our local products while supporting VINES.

The dinner will be followed by an after party starting at 8:30 p.m. at the Lost Dog Café and Lounge, located at 222 Water St, Binghamton, another venue sponsoring this event. We are delighted that Driftwood has donated their time to perform at the after party. Driftwood started locally but now tours nationally and has several albums recorded. They

play a great mix of old-time roots music with rock elements. Willie Nelson's record producer Eric Paul says of Driftwood: "This is a fantastic discovery, there is something great here."

Tickets to the dinner are \$45 each. Entire-event tickets at \$55 cover the dinner, the After-Party and \$2 off your first drink at the after party. Tickets to the After Party are \$10-\$25, pay what you can afford.

We welcome all members of the community of all ages to this great evening. Tickets are on sale at Laveggio Roasteria, RiverRead Books, Lost Dog Café and Lounge (ask for Nicole), Remlik's, the SUNY Binghamton Food Co-op and on our website: <http://vinesgardens.org/events>. For information, or to become an event sponsor, donor or silent auction merchant please call Lauren at 607-205-8108 or email at lauren@vinesgardens.org

Gregory Lane and Mather Street Community Garden Updates

I look out over the Gregory Lane Garden, blink a few times, and find it hard to believe I'm standing in the same spot that just a year ago was a barren, weed-infested lot. The garden now boasts 16 raised beds – 15 were rented out last summer and one is a "community bed", free for the pickin'.

Thanks to the huge effort of garden members and coordinators, plus many truck-loads of soil and compost, the beds were built, compost bins erected and a large, "work in progress" perennial bed has taken shape for the upcoming season. Last years dry summer meant frequent watering, leading to increased opportunities for enjoyable interaction between garden members, truly bringing the community together. We are all excited about future improvements and what this season has in store for us.

Countless passers-by have stopped to compliment the



(Above) Gregory Lane in full bloom last summer
(Below) Gregory Lane

improvement to our neighborhood. Gardening, whether observing or participating, can benefit the whole community!
-Kathy Cronin



With the help of local neighbors, VINES volunteers, the Southern Tier Young Professionals, Safe Streets Binghamton, and Design Your Own Park 26 Mather Street has been successfully transformed into a prolific green oasis, just waiting for you to rent a garden bed or two.

Last year neighbors grew tomatoes, beans, squash, and several herbs including chives, oregano, parsley, thyme, sage, and lavender. There are 12 beds available for rent, and all tools necessary are supplied (except seeds).

Early spring is a great time to plant peas, spinach, onions, radishes... the list is endless and the money saved by growing your own, organic produce is worth it. All that's required is some time and care for your plants. And feel free to involve the kids! Working together in the garden can be a wonderful

opportunity to teach them about our planet, resources, and where food comes from. Come visit the garden this spring and help with our continued planning process. The garden would like to add fruit trees to the back of the lot and still has room for potential



Workday last July at Mather Street

beautification projects. Get into contact with us and share your ideas! For more information call 607-205-8108 or email vinesvolunteers@gmail.com.

VINES Now Accepting Online Donations

We are happy to announce that you can now make donations to VINES online. Just visit our website at vinesgardens.org and click the "Support" button or go directly to our donations page at vinesgardens.org/donate. While we are utilizing PayPal for online donations, you don't necessarily need a PayPal account to donate, just a credit or debit card. Currently we are setup to accept one-time donations, but we are also exploring the possibility of recurring donations where you can donate a fixed amount automatically each month or every few months.

Please consider making a donation today. 2013 will be a



Greens Growing at the Binghamton Urban Farm

very active year for VINES so your support is greatly appreciated.

Binghamton Urban Farm Update

This coming growing season is sure to be a bountiful one. Not only have the gardens at the Binghamton Urban Farm expanded allowing us to grow even more food, But VINES is expanding as an organization. We are happy to have an Americorps member, Natalie Hughes, and two Youth Market Garden Assistants helping to manage the growing season and supervise the Summer Youth Employment Program. This extra help will surely be needed!

This season the urban farm is expanding to new markets. Don't worry. You will still find us at the outdoor Otsiningo Farmers Market, but we will also be working to strengthen the urban farm's farm stand.

This year the farm stand hours at the urban farm will be held at 126 Susquehanna St. We have also been breaking into the restaurant business growing micro-greens for Remlik's Grille and Oyster Bar. This spring we will be providing Remlik's with fresh herbs and some produce.

The urban farm is also venturing into the production of shiitake mushrooms. But don't get too excited just yet. Shiitakes take some time to mature and will not be available until the next growing season. Until then you'll just have to eat your veggies, see you at the farmer's market!

BUF: Youth Interview



Shi-Asia Lawton participated in the VINES Summer Youth Employment Program on the Binghamton Urban Farm for six weeks this summer. Youth Program Supervisor Lauren Tonti interviewed Shi-Asia about her experience with the program.

Question: Why did you apply to the Summer Youth program?

Shi-Asia: I applied because I thought it would be a new experience and I wanted to learn about agriculture. I also wanted to learn how the Urban Farm supplies food for others at a reasonable price.

Question: What skills did you gain?

Shi-Asia: I gained agricultural and communication skills. I also learned to work with others and more cooking skills.

Question: What was your favorite part about working at the urban farm?

Shi-Asia: My favorite part was harvesting and planting.

Question: What is your favorite fruit or vegetable?

Shi-Asia: Tomatoes!

Question: Are you interested in being involved with gardening in the future?

Shi-Asia: Yes, very interested. I thought it was really great working here!



(Left) Shi-Asia Lawton holding a beet at the Binghamton Urban Farm

(Above) Two Leaders harvesting carrots during the Summer Youth Program

Barrier-Free Gardening

"Disabilities are transformed into abilities when persons who are disabled have the opportunity to work with plants, flowers, vegetables, trees, and shrubs." — The Enabling Garden; National Council for Therapy and Rehabilitation through Horticulture
It's that time of year again, the growing season is just around the corner. But if you are in a wheelchair or struggle with back pain, bad knees, or arthritis, gardening may seem impossible.

Don't give up on this fun hobby just because your body doesn't work as well as it used to. Change how you do it. An accessible garden eliminates the physical barriers often associated with gardening and is a great place to relax and relieve stress.

For those of us who use wheelchairs to get around, the key is bringing the soil and plants to your level and within your reach. Containers, raised beds, and vertical trellises all accomplish this objective.

Raised beds planted in high boxes—24" to 30" usually works well—put flowers and plants within easy reach. This

method is more costly but offers greater accessibility, and is more efficient and productive than scattered sites.

Container gardening may be the answer for gardeners who have limited space or budgets. Since virtually anything that holds soil can be used for a container, you don't have to spend a lot to get your garden off the ground. You could use anything from well-drained 5-gallon buckets, olive oil cans, whiskey barrels, to pots made of wood, clay, or plastic. Recycled containers like stacked tires, old wash-tubs or children's wagons, even an old barbecue grill can be used. These are more practical approaches when ground space is limited or non-existent. It's best to start small. A 5-gallon bucket will hold a single, accessible tomato plant.

For many vegetables and larger flowers, the container should hold 5 gallons of soil, while many herbs and smaller flowers do well in 3-quart containers. Containers are especially good because they can be moved around and even started indoors before

the weather is warm outside.

Window boxes work well for the individual who does not have an accessible outside area in which to work. Annuals, herbs, and salad greens are popular plants for window boxes. Hanging baskets normally are inaccessible to gardeners with physical disabilities, but a pulley system easily solves that problem.

For people who are visually impaired, design a walkway, which should provide direct routes through the garden and have clearly defined beginnings and ends. Include wind chimes or other objects you can hear to orient yourself in the garden. Path edges should be distinctly differentiated in texture from the garden beds, such as grass, bricks, or mulched beds. This way you can easily detect the edges. Avoid raised edging, which can create a tripping hazard.

Lastly, look for specialized tools and equipment that can take maximum advantage of your abilities. Look for ergonomically designed tools that allow you to work comfortably. Cultivating tools are avail-

able that are easy to control, easy to grip, and have cushioned handles. Specially adapted tools can also be purchased or made with little expense.

For further reading on barrier-free gardening, check out Janeen Adil's Accessible Gardening for People with Disabilities. It is a comprehensive guide to gardening methods, tools and plants. It covers everything from building basics to kid-friendly planting activities (the author's daughter Rachel was born with spina bifida and was the inspiration). Or look at Gene Rother's The Enabling Garden, which features tips on tools, techniques and creating barrier-free gardens and offers an extensive list of national resources.

If you would like more detailed information on how to construct a raised bed, make or purchase adapted tools, or any other information in this article, please contact Danny Cullen here at STIC, at 724-2111 ext.325.

-Danny Cullen, featured in AccessAbility, Southern Tier Independence Center