

# COMMUNITY GARDEN TIMES

Spring 2014

## Inside this issue:

Binghamton Urban Farm Update	2
Sign up for a Farm Share!	2
Volunteer in 2014	3
10 Tips for Growing Great Tomatoes	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 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](mailto:vinesvolunteers@gmail.com).

## Greetings from the Board

The members of the Board of Directors of VINES are proud of the accomplishments of 2013 by our staff members and community volunteers.

We are excited to be moving into our own office in the lower level of the United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton! Our partnership with the Church has already begun as we tilled land for a vegetable garden to help them with their community meal program. It is a terrific extension of our mission as we will, in a direct fashion, help provide healthy, nutritious food to those in need. Our team is incredibly thankful to the church leaders for their generous assistance.

Our Urban Farm is already producing some food for us to sell at market. Did you know that we grew over 3,000 pounds of vegetables at the Farm last year? Our urban Farm Manager, Sean Cummings, has done a remarkable job planning and managing the site, as well as helping to lead the 12 youth we employ to

work the farm in the summer. It is gratifying to see many of the same youth apply for the program year after year, and to see them gain the knowledge, ability, and positive outlook from seeing the fruits of their labor.

This year we will sell our vegetables every Friday at the Downtown Farmer's Market off Court St. With our mission to make this food easily available, this location makes good sense for us as it is so easily accessible to city residents and allows us to expand the Farm Share Program.

This will be the second year for our Farm Share program. Rebecca Heller-Steinberg, our program Coordinator, has done an incredible job managing the acquisition, distribution, and promotion of this program that offers a low-cost box of vegetables at a very affordable price in areas without easy access to fresh food. Feedback from last year's participants was wonderful, as they noted they could get a better variety of food for less money

than they spent previously.

Our Community Garden and Youth Program Manager, Lauren Tonti, has done a terrific job organizing gardening workshops, overseeing our seven community gardens, fundraising, and community outreach. Together with our incredible assistant, Natalie Hughes, they form a dynamic team handling all of our administrative needs, proving a positive image to the area at large, and guidance for our team of volunteers, garden members, and youth employees.

As a new organization, we continually learn where we can get better. We value your input, and would love to have your help. An area of focus for us is bringing in a Board member with solid financial experience. Could this be you?

We thank you all for your support, and thank our incredible staff and volunteers for doing so very much with our limited resources. Have a wonderful spring season.

## Green Thumbs Educational Series for 2014

We have a great series this year! Check our website for more details and updates. Please register on our website as space is limited.

**Register today!**  
[vinesgardens.org](http://vinesgardens.org)

**Composting and Soil Health:** Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 1:30-3:30pm, Schoolhouse Apts, 144 Clinton St, Binghamton

**Building Your Own Birdhouse:** Saturday, May 10, 2014, from 2:00-4:00pm, 16 Tudor St, Binghamton (Family Friendly and a great Mother's Day Activity!)

**Attracting and Preserving Pollinators:** Saturday, May 31, 2014 from 1:30-4:00pm, Columbus Park Garden

**Urban Food Foraging:** Saturday, June 28, 2014 from 1:00-5:00pm, start location at Laurel Ave Community Garden, 126 Laurel Ave, Binghamton

**Composting and Soil Health:** Sat, Sept 20, 2014 from 1:30-3:30pm, 108 Liberty St, Binghamton

**Season Extension:** Sat, August 16, 2014 @ 10:30am, Mather St Community Garden, 26 Mather St, Binghamton



**Freezing Vegetables:** Wed. August 20, 2014 @ 6:00pm, Location TBA

**Canning Tomatoes:** Salsa making! Wed. September 3rd @ 6:00pm, location TBA

## Binghamton Urban Farm Updates: Moving to Downtown Farmers Market

This summer the Binghamton Urban Farm heads into its fifth growing season. Although the weather has been slow to warm up we are already well on our way with onion, tomato and pepper seedlings waiting for their day in the sun.

Cold weather crops like kale, collards, broccoli and chard have begun to develop their first set of true leaves and peas, radishes and arugula have been direct seeded.

All together we will be growing thirty-five different varieties of fruits and vegetable.

We have also decided to move to the Binghamton Downtown Farmers Market for the season— visit us Fridays from 9am-2pm on Collier Street, next to the Court House. The Otsiningo Park Farmers Market has been a great experience for us, but we would like to make our produce more available to the



neighborhoods next to the urban farm.

In addition to the Downtown Farmers Market, Urban Farm produce will be available through the Binghamton Farm Share Program.

Along with the excitement of a new growing season has come a number of farm improvements. Our greenhouse production this year will benefit from a new plastic covering, and we have added a small shaded hoop house for produc-

ing shitake mushrooms. We will be working with our summer youth employees to prepare the Varick side of the urban farm for plantings of perennial fruit trees, shrubs and herbs. The Varick perennial garden will not only produce food, but will demonstrate the benefits of perennial plants in an urban environment.

This season is already shaping up to be the most productive yet. If you have not had a chance to visit the urban farm

during the growing season please do so. All are welcome. For more information about the Binghamton Urban Farm please contact

[sean@vinesgardens.org](mailto:sean@vinesgardens.org).

## Binghamton Farm Share

Bringing healthy, fresh produce from local farms directly to Binghamton neighborhoods

The farm share is a weekly box of tasty vegetables grown by local farmers. Easy payment plans and convenient pick-up locations available. Sign-ups are open now.



- Healthy
- Fresh
- Affordable
- SNAP/EBT accepted
- Weekly pick-up
- Free recipes and food prep demos
- Discounts
- Open to all
- Family friendly



**Sign up today!**

Like us on facebook at [facebook.com/binghamtonfarmshare](https://facebook.com/binghamtonfarmshare).

## Volunteer with VINES in 2014!

VINES was created by dedicated volunteers and continues to thrive with the help of an active volunteer base. Volunteering with VINES is a great way to meet great people and learn new skills, all while making good food more accessible in Binghamton!

This year, we have a number of opportunities for individual volunteers, students, and organizations to get involved.



### Individuals

We've created volunteer position descriptions to make it easier for people to figure out where they can fit in. Multiple volunteers can fill each position. The position descriptions are designed to give the volunteers an idea of what responsibilities are included in the position, but are ultimately flexible given the applicant's interests, skills, and availability. Some of the positions available are:

- Marketing & Outreach Volunteer
- Fundraising Volunteer
- Farm Share Distribution Volunteer
- Urban Farm Harvest Volunteer
- Susquehanna St Garden Coordinator
- VINES Photography Volunteer

For position descriptions, visit [www.vinesgardens.org/get-involved/volunteer/](http://www.vinesgardens.org/get-involved/volunteer/) or call 205-8108.

### Internships

We have several summer and fall internships available to Binghamton University and SUNY Broome students, who can earn college credit through their service with VINES. If interested in an internship please send resume and cover letter to [vinesvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:vinesvolunteers@gmail.com).



### Groups

If your organization, institution, company, class, or community group is interested in a workday or a tour of VINES urban agricultural sites, please contact the Urban Farm Manager at [sean@vinesgardens.org](mailto:sean@vinesgardens.org) or 607-205-8108.

If you have a skill or interest please fill out the volunteer sign-up form on our website and let us know how you would like to help!

## 10 Tips for Great Tomatoes

There's nothing better than a homegrown, vine-ripened tomato, but we've all had frustrating tomato failures. Here are our top 10 tips to help you enjoy a healthy tomato harvest this year:

**1. Find a sunny spot:** tomatoes need 6-8 hours of full sun.

**2. Start small:** only plant what you can use. Start with just a few plants before you start planting tomato forests.

**3. Give them air:** space plants 1 1/2 to 2 feet apart. Thinning the leaves of the plants will give them more air, which helps prevent disease. Pinch off the suckers as they grow—a quick web search will show you how. Also prune off leaves touching the ground to prevent disease.

**4. Feed them, but not too**



**much:** use a fertilizer specific to tomatoes and follow the directions, or give them extra compost when planting and throughout the season. Don't over fertilize with nitrogen or you'll get lots of leaves but not much fruit.

**5. Water the SOIL deeply every 5-7 days:** don't water the leaves—this will create the perfect landing pad for fungal

diseases. Soak the soil deeply in the morning once a week or so, rather than frequent shallow watering.

**6. Give them support:** cage or stake your tomatoes to prevent them from falling over or invading the space of your other plants.

**7. Learn how to identify the basic diseases:** take a look at some pictures of early blight, late blight, Septoria leaf spot and end blossom rot so you can detect and address problems early.



Septoria Leaf Spot

**8. Give them company:** marigolds, basil, carrots, lettuce, and onions are good neighbors for tomatoes. They can repel pests and help cool the soil. Find more information on the web.

**9. Canning isn't the only way to store:** you can freeze tomatoes whole when you have a few extra on hand.

**10. Start your own or buy local plants:** Large scale production of plants in greenhouses has led to major tomato disease outbreaks. Buy from a local producer or start your own to reduce that risk. You can find varieties that are resistant to common tomato diseases in online or paper catalogs, such as Fedco and High Mowing Seeds. Tip: start your plants on April 15<sup>th</sup>, but not sooner.



### Board Members 2014

Connie Barnes, Chair  
David Levenson, Vice Chair  
Robert Bullock, Treasurer  
Amelia LoDolce  
Gail Kovac  
Amy Shapiro  
Jon Yerger  
Christy Cebula

Interested in learning more  
about the all volunteer  
Board?

Want to be a pioneer in  
Binghamton's Food System?

Volunteer with VINES and  
maybe you will become one  
of VINES' newest board  
members!

***Please consider donating  
to VINES to help our  
projects thrive!***

*~ All donations to VINES are  
tax-deductible ~*

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Listserv:  
<http://groups.google.com/>

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## VINES Sponsors 2014

### Garden Angel (\$1000+)

(Your name here)

### Steward (\$500 Up to \$999)

Michael Sharp

Southern Tier Young Professionals

### Cultivator (\$250 Up to \$499)

(Your name here)

### Sponsor (\$100 Up to \$249)

Gail kovac

Fiske Hanson

David Levenson

### Land Sponsors

Angela Testani (Pine St Garden)

City of Binghamton (Tudor/Varick St Urban

Farm Site, Mather St. Garden)

### Grants

NYS Department of Environmental

Conservation ([www.dec.ny.gov/](http://www.dec.ny.gov/))

City of Binghamton

([www.cityofbinghamton.com](http://www.cityofbinghamton.com))

Community Foundation of South Central NY

Esther Couper Foundation

### Special Thanks

United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton

Remlik's Grille and Oyster Bar

Lost Dog Café and Lounge

Upstate Office Furniture

City of Binghamton

([www.cityofbinghamton.com](http://www.cityofbinghamton.com))

CHOW ([www.broomecouncil.net/chow.asp](http://www.broomecouncil.net/chow.asp))

Laveggio Roasteria

United Way of Broome County

Natural By Nature

Cook's Portable Toilet

Restaurant Week/BingSpot

Stacey Miller Alice's Closet

Choice Tree Care