



NEWS TO GROW BY!

## May 2022

### 2022 Registration

We have been registering gardeners since January 1st and have confirmed more than 455 gardeners! We are full for the season!

Here is hoping that 2022 will be another great gardening year for everyone!

### Thank you People's Food Co-op and Donors!

For the month of March, Project Grow was the focus of the People's Food Coop Round Up for Community fundraising program. The organization asked shoppers at the Kerrytown area market to donate in support of Project Grow's Reduced Fee plot program. The shoppers ended up raising over \$1200 in just one month! Please feel free, if you're nearby throughout the season, to stop into People's Food Coop, thank them for supporting our organization, and maybe do a bit of shopping! Their address is 216 N 4th Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.



## 2022 Plant Sale

The 2022 Project Grow Plant Sale has been **delayed a week and will be held on May 14th** from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm (note the reduced hours) at the hoop house at Dawn Farm, 6633 Stoney Creek Rd., Ypsilanti, 48197. Project Grow's 2020 and 2021 sales were greatly modified because of the pandemic. Most of those changes will still be in effect in 2022.

If you ordered seeds through the Seed Share and designated the Plant Sale as your pickup location, please plan on picking up your seeds between 10a and Noon. You will find the orders close to the checkout area.

### What's the Same

Every year Project Grow offers hard to find heirloom tomatoes, peppers and basil. This year we are offering 80 varieties of tomatoes, 25 varieties of peppers, and 2 varieties of basil. In addition, we will be offering two ornamentals, lisianthus and sweet peas.

The peppers and basil will be started at the end of February and the tomatoes in mid-March. These are large, husky plants sold in 3.5" pots. We are growing them in our hoop house at Dawn Farm so they are already acclimated to cool temperatures, outdoor sunshine and spring breezes.

Tomatoes, peppers, and basil cannot tolerate freezing temperatures and must be brought inside or protected from late spring frost. Lisianthus and sweet peas are both cold hardy and should be planted out right away.

### Advance Ordering

- We reached our limit of 100 advance orders and are not taking more for this year.
- Pick up your order on **Saturday May 14th between 10am and 12 noon at Dawn Farm** 6633 Stony Creek Road in Ypsilanti, 48197. This is the only day and time orders may be picked up.

There is always the possibility of disasters and crop failures with plants, but we will try to keep the list up to date if this happens.

## Additional Vendors at the Plant Sale!



**Dawn Farm** and **The Cooperative at Dawn Farm** will both be selling other items at our plant sale this year.

Dawn Farm will have canna and dahlia tubers.

- Dwarf Canna \$5 each. They grow approximately 36" tall; mixed bloom colors orange/red; sold in 1 gallon pots, 2-3 rhizomes per pot
- Heirloom Canna \$6 each. These grow to approximately 64"-84" tall with orange blooms; sold in 8" pots, 2-3 rhizomes per pot
- Dahlia \$7 each. They grow approximately 48" tall. Varieties include - dinner plate pinks, pom pom deep red, and grab bag mixed; sold in 8" pots, 1 large tuber per pot

The Cooperative at Dawn Farm will have:

- Strawberry plants
- Oyster mushroom logs
- Gooseberry and currant plants
- Potted flower arrangements and/or potted culinary herb arrangements.

Each vendor will have a separate cashier (like a Farmer's Market).

## Tilling Has Begun!

We're always biting our nails in late April and early May. April showers bring May flowers but they can also delay our ability to get the gardens tilled. Kevin was able to get out to County Farm on April 28th and it's been tilled! The site still needs to be staked out. For stake out, the site coordinators put labeled stakes on the corners of each plot so gardeners know how to find their plot. The coordinators will be in touch with you via email about this.

The soil conditions at each site are different. County Farm tends to dry out first while Greenvview and Chapel Hill dry out last. It's good sign that County Farm has been tilled, but please be patient! Your site coordinator is just as anxious to get started as you are, and will be in touch as soon as the garden has been tilled and staked.

***Below: County Farm Section A and County Farm Section B after tilling on Thursday April 28th.***







## Project Grow's 2022 SEED SHARE

We have wrapped up the online order option for the 2022 Seed Share. Thank you to all who ordered and who helped make it happen. We filled over 300 orders this year. We're hopeful that next year will allow us to again gather and share in person as we did in pre-pandemic times.

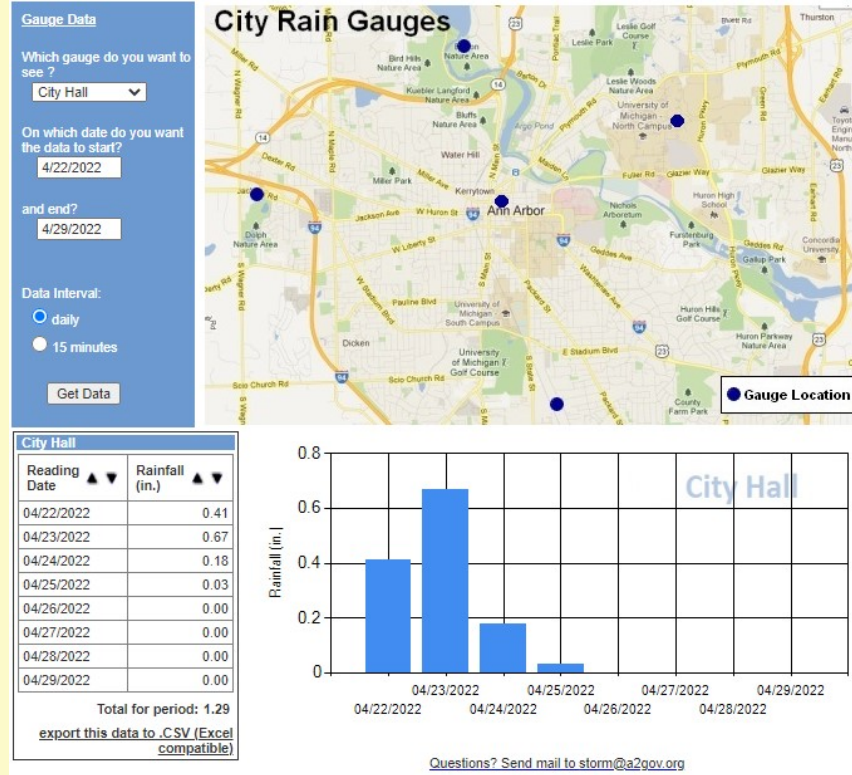
We will be out and about this spring and summer with seeds in hand. Look for us at various events around town with direct sow seeds for you to try and hopefully enjoy!

**A BIG shout out to Downtown Home and Garden and ACE Barnes Hardware.** We wouldn't be able to offer the variety and quantity of seeds we have if it weren't for their generosity. They both offer a majority of the supplies needed to start your seeds early and have staff on hand to help answer questions.

## Wonder if you need to water your garden?

Gardens need about an inch of rain a week. That's enough to saturate most soils down about a foot. During Michigan summers, we average about 3/4" per week. More importantly, though, we can go for weeks without rain.

So you go to: <https://www3.a2gov.org/RainGauges/>



and see it's been a week since we got any rain, and none is forecast for the next week. You decide you want to put an inch of water on your full Project Grow plot. For a full plot, that's about 60 cubic feet of water. If you're at one of our sites with hydrants, look at the meter before you start to water. Those meters are in cubic feet so water until you've used about 60 cubic feet (that takes about 40 minutes with a typical garden hose).

A few of our sites without hydrants have meters. Those meters are in gallons; 60 cubic feet is about 450 gallons.

For sites with no meters at all, see how long it takes to fill a five gallon bucket with the hose and nozzle you're using. If it takes 30 seconds to fill the bucket, you'll be watering at the rate of about 10 gallons a minute. A full plot needs about 450 gallons to be covered with an inch of water, so you need to water for about 45 minutes.

The actual time watering will be less because you don't need to saturate your paths or any other areas which are not planted.

Remember that Project Grow doesn't allow unattended watering. You can use a sprinkler, but you have to be present while it's running. Want to help your garden maintain moisture so that your plants thrive? Keep reading!

## Mulching

*Hello! My name is Alyce Machcinski. My husband and I garden a couple plots with a small group of our friends at the County Farm location. This will be our fourth year gardening with Project Grow as a group, and the sixth year for me and my husband.*

*I started sharing bits of what we've been learning in the newsletters last year. You can find our thoughts and tips on planning, layout, etc. here:*

**[Project Grow: Planning, Layout, Pests, and More](#)**

### Why Mulch?

Mulching helps retain moisture in your garden soil. This really helps cut down on the watering needed during the season, and more consistent soil moisture helps support consistent growth of the plants themselves and the development of your actual produce. One of the biggest reasons why tomatoes split is because of inconsistent



watering, or a sudden surge of water after drought. Mulching helps keep that moisture level more stable!

Laying a thick layer of mulch around your plants will also suppress weed growth...which means less weeding! It also means your plants have less competition for the nutrients and water in the soil.

Transplanted seedlings really benefit from the protection of mulch around them. The weed suppression and water retention really help give them a leg up when just getting established in the garden.

As the material you have mulched with breaks down, it also enriches the soil and adds back nutrients needed by your plants. The additional organic matter in the soil improves the structure and quality of the soil over time.

### Types of Mulch

- **Green Mulch** is one of the easiest ways to mulch in your garden! Green mulch is freshly pulled or pruned plant matter. So all of the weeds you are pulling in your garden and any pruned plant material (unless it is diseased), can just be laid in your paths and around your plants to mulch. Anything diseased should be removed from the garden to help prevent the disease from spreading. This method is great because it is free and it uses materials that are already in your garden space. As the season progresses, you are continually replenishing the top layer of your mulch as the bottom layer breaks down.
- **Hay** is really great for early mulching. Some garden sites coordinate a hay purchase and delivery. Laying down a thick layer of hay early in the season helps cut down the weeds before many of them get a chance to start growing. As weeds do pop up, they are much more manageable if mitigated early. To maintain the benefits of the mulch, this method does need a refresh during the season. The easiest way to do that is by adding green mulch from your garden, but you can add another layer of any type of mulch.
- **Leaf Mulch** works great if you have access to fall leaves from last year. To maintain the benefits of the mulch, this method also needs a refresh during the season. The easiest way to do that is by adding green mulch from your garden, but you can add another layer of any type of mulch.
- **Paper and Cardboard** can also serve as mulch in your garden. They are great for weed suppression in your pathways more so than your planting areas as it is less permeable. Make sure you use cardboard and paper without a glossy finish as those can leach harmful chemicals and don't break down the same way as unfinished matte materials do. Make sure to remove large pieces at the end of the season.

### How to Mulch

Once you have decided on what type of mulch you would like to use, actual mulching is pretty easy. You want to make sure to spread a thick layer; 2-4 inches is needed for full effectiveness. Make sure to leave a small space around the base of your plants so you don't accidentally choke them out. As the season continues, replenish mulch as needed to keep coverage.

## Leaf Mulch

Leaves for mulching are available for pickup at our Ellsworth garden site behind Community Mental Health at 2140 E Ellsworth. They are in the back of the parking lot next to the dumpster enclosure. You will need to bring something to put them in (garbage/leaf bags, buckets, etc), maybe a shovel/pitchfork and work gloves.

## Are Gardeners Different?

by Kirk Jones

I was trading emails with someone writing an article about our 50th Anniversary and was asked,

**"Is there some personality trait or quality that gardeners have in common that non-gardeners often don't?"**

How would you answer this question? Send your thoughts to [info@projectgrowgardens.org](mailto:info@projectgrowgardens.org) and we will print

them in the next newsletter.

## Spring Classes Through Rec and Ed

Project Grow is offering two classes in May and June through Ann Arbor Rec and Ed. All the classes:

- Last 2 hours from 7pm-9pm.
- Cost \$15.
- Will be held online.
- Are for ages 18 and up.

### **The Pillars of Ecosystem Gardening**

**Thursday May 19th**

This course will explore the five pillars of ecosystem gardening:

1. Duff layer maintenance.
2. Mindful water management.
3. Promotion of biodiversity and ecological succession.
4. Development of ecological resilience.
5. Enrichment of pollinator habitats.

The study of ecosystems can provide insight into your gardening style and techniques and can help increase the productivity of your garden. Instructor: Joet Roema

[Register here!](#)

### **Integrated Pest Management**

**Thursday June 2nd**

How do you protect your garden from all the creatures large and small that want to share in your harvest? Find out who they are and what you can do to control them without resorting to pesticides. The four strategies of Integrated Pest Control - cultural, physical, biological, and chemical will be discussed in detail. Topics will include maintenance of plant and soil health, the benefits of crop rotation and companion planting, the importance of garden hygiene, and the role beneficial organisms play in keeping your garden growing. Learn what it takes to keep pest outbreaks from occurring and how to get along with rabbits, deer, squirrels, chipmunks, and groundhogs. Instructor: Royer Held

[Register here!](#)

## Project Grow's 50th Anniversary

This year is Project Grow's 50th Anniversary and we are so excited to celebrate and preserve the legacy that Project Grow has built over the last 50 years! Read on to learn more about our plans for 2022!



### **\*\* Anniversary Events & Volunteers**

We will be celebrating throughout the year with seasonal events (Plant Sale, Tomato Tasting, Opening Weekend) as well as unique events created specifically for our anniversary! Events will be announced in upcoming newsletters, so stay tuned! If you have an idea that you'd like to put in the suggestion box or perhaps you'd like to help volunteer with this year's events, please email [anniversary@projectgrowgardens.org](mailto:anniversary@projectgrowgardens.org) with the subject line "Events and Volunteers":

### **\*\* Legacy Video Series**

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebration, we're featuring our past and present growers in a series of videos, telling the stories of those who have made our community what it is today! Whether you're a current gardener or haven't gardened with Project Grow since the 70s or 80s, we're inviting all gardeners to take part in answering the following three questions:

- **How / When did you join Project Grow?**
- **What are one or two of your fondest memories with Project Grow?**
- **What has inspired you the most about Project Grow in your time with us?**

If you'd like to be a part of the project, please send the following information with the subject "50th Anniversary Legacy" to [anniversary@projectgrow.org](mailto:anniversary@projectgrow.org) with the subject line "Video Series":

- **Name**
- **Contact Information (email/phone)**
- **Your answers to each of the questions**

We look forward to hearing from you and will be in touch to schedule a short video interview.

## **Project Grow Gardens Around Town**

Left to right like text:

- Perennials and hardy kale get growing at Catholic Social Services.
- Entrance to Food Forest adjacent to the Matthaiei garden.
- Garlic coming up at Matthaiei.
- Daffodils at Matthaiei.
- New rhubarb plant at Catholic Social Services.



