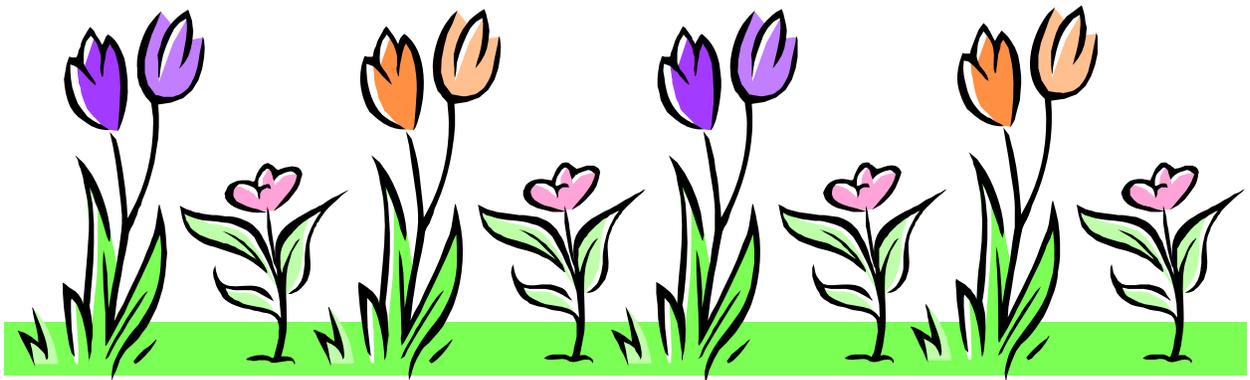




Manhattan Community Gardens



It's Spring Clean-Up Day

We need your help!

Saturday, March 29th

9 am - noon

We need help to clean up and improve the commons area, please join us at the large shed. We will have a variety of tasks for gardeners of different skills and capabilities. This is a great opportunity to meet your fellow gardeners, and enjoy coffee, juice and donuts.

In the event of light rain, please dress appropriately... we will still meet on March 29th as planned. In the event of heavier rain, we will postpone the Clean-Up Day for one week, to Saturday, April 5th.

New and returning gardeners are welcome to attend a garden orientation presentation by Chuck Marr at 10 am at the large shed. He will cover gardener responsibilities, using shared tools and equipment, gardener events and activities, sources of gardening information, and his brief primer on gardening in Kansas will feature planting times, soil preparation and fertilization, general pest control practices, harvesting and garden 'questions and answers'.

A Message from the President

If you've never gardened in a community garden before, you can look forward to more than fresh fruits and veggies. Cultural exchanges sprout and new friendships grow among diverse groups of people.

Our community garden is a common ground for growing plants that feed, heal and give aesthetic pleasure. It is a civic space where people work and recreate to nourish themselves, their families and friends. Our community garden is a collective effort of people with the patience and determination to make things grow.

Our community garden takes a lot of work to run well, and everyone is expected to participate (many hands make light work). Some examples of group responsibilities are mowing the common areas, maintaining paths, tilling plots, fixing hoses, maintaining equipment, record keeping, turning compost, dead-heading perennial flowers, organizing educational workshops, contributing to the newsletter, enforcing garden rules, and organizing social events. The Manhattan Community Garden is run by nine committees comprised of gardeners; each according to their ability to keep our garden growing. Please join your fellow gardeners on March 29th, for Spring Clean-Up, and help our garden to thrive.

Community gardening brings together people and encourages interaction. By choosing to be in our community garden, you'll be gardening in close proximity to others. You can learn from these folks either actively (by asking questions) or passively (by observation). This is one of the great pleasures of community gardening. Gardening is based on science; but it is also an art form, there is not one way to grow your garden.

Welcome to the Manhattan Community Garden, I hope you enjoy this special way to garden.

→ *Patty Zehl, President Manhattan Community Gardens*

Dates to Remember

Spring Garden Cleanup & Orientation – March 29th, 9 am to noon

All gardeners are invited to join us for workday projects to improve our commons area. Chuck Marr will also be repeating his *Garden Orientation Presentation* for any new or returning gardeners by the large shed at 10 am. If there is heavy rain, the Clean-Up rain date is Saturday, April 5th.

Spring Plant Swap – April 26th, 11am to noon

Rejuvenate your flower garden by dividing your perennials and then trade them for something else. The Swap is from 11 am to noon, at UFM. You can also bring herbs, houseplants, seeds and gardening magazines to swap.

Community Garden Social – May 17th, beginning at noon in the MCG

An informal gathering, to enjoy good food and the company of fellow gardeners.

Garden Tour – June 1st, noon to 5pm

This yearly tour, sponsored by the Riley County Master Gardeners includes six beautiful sites to visit. Tickets will be available in May.



2008 MCG Board Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Patty Zehl, President	Newsletter & Education	537-8306	pzehl@ksu.edu
Susan Peterson, Vice President	Records	537-0372	slpete@sbcglobal.net
Pam Been-Redeker, Secretary	Flower Bed Maintenance	537-8298	donredeker@sbcglobal.net
Linda Teener, Treasurer	Finance	539-8763	lteener@ksu.edu
Lynda Bachelor	Garden Socials & Crop Walk, Flower Bed	539-9508	bachelor@ksu.edu
Brad Debey	Rules & Safety	587-8183	bdebey@yahoo.com
Jennifer Guilford	Compost & Mulch	443-2769	jlguilfo@ksu.edu
Chuck Marr	Newsletter & Education	539-6825	cmarr@ksu.edu
Bruce McCallum	Grounds Maintenance & Tilling	539-1016	brucemacks@yahoo.com
Stoner Smith	Equipment Maintenance	539-3821	sbsinks@aol.com

(Please do not call MCG Board Members after 9pm)

Valuable Information from Past Newsletters

Manhattan Community Garden newsletters from 2006 and 2007 issues are available online by visiting the "community garden" section of the UFM website at www.tryufm.org

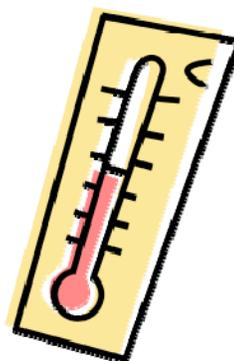
There are many articles that I would love to reproduce in future newsletters, but I simply don't have the space. To help you locate articles that are pertinent to what is happening in your garden as the season progresses; I will include a summary of a few topics from past newsletters.

April/May 2006 Issue:

- Checklist of good gardening practices
- Useful Horticultural Internet web sites

March/April 2007 Issue:

- Soil temperature and vegetables
 - Temperature chart for seed germination
- Recommended garden books
- Compost fence



How to Work the Shed Locks

To unlock: Check the 2008 registration form you received at the garden sign-up session for this year's code. Line up the numbers even with the depressed/engraved line to the side of the numbers. Pull down on the lock and it should open. If pulling down doesn't work, try pushing up and then pull down.

To lock: Make sure the numbers are still lined up correctly, push in on the lock, and then roll the numbers so that they are different from the code while still pushing up on the lock. Double check to make sure that the lock is indeed locked before leaving by tugging on it!

Upon exiting the sheds, if you are not close to them, please lock the doors to prevent theft.

Woodchips for Weed Control on Paths



For those who want to eliminate the Bermuda grass which grows in a lot of our paths, and may spread to the garden plots, the following information was provided by Don Lambert on the American Community Gardening Association website.

Step one: Cut the Bermuda grass as close as possible to the soil. A heavy-duty string weed-eater works best. For best results, if you have spare time, dig the weeds out, removing the root system.

Step two: Take newspapers, using only the black and white pages, 8-10 pages thick, and if it's a windy day, wet them in a tub of water or with a hose to prevent them from blowing away. Apply the wet newspaper layer totally covering the weed area; with good overlapping, and extending up the sides of any wood raised beds or plot borders. This newspaper layer is an effective weed block, and will smother the weeds. Cardboard is even more effective, use it in trouble areas.

Step three: Apply a 6-8" deep layer of wood chips, chopped tree trimmings, on top the newspapers, packing well using a rake, foot stomping, and watering to get a dense mulch.

Step four: You will have zero weeds in the pathway for quite a while. Eventually some will grow here and there. Dig them out, which will be easy because the roots are now in the soft wood chip layer. Re-mulch all weeded areas. Add new woodchips each season as needed.

➔ Please note, the Manhattan Community Garden allows newspaper to be used for this purpose. It is not allowed as mulch in your garden, because it may blow around the gardens and cause a litter problem. The MCG rules do not allow carpet for use on paths or anywhere else in the garden. Grass can also be used in the pathways if kept shorter than four inches in height. It must be mowed by gardeners from adjacent plots. Woodchips are provided at no charge; they are located in the community garden commons area when available.

Mowing Schedule:

Gardeners are responsible for mowing the grass/weeds in the commons areas of the gardens **ONE TIME** during the scheduled period. If for some reason you are not able to mow during your scheduled time, you will need to switch with someone else or ask a garden neighbor if they would be willing to do it for you. **If you are confused about where your area is, check out the map located in the glass case on the front of the large shed.** If you have questions about the mower, call the Equipment Maintenance Chairperson – Stoner Smith.



<u>WEEK OF:</u>	<u>Southeast</u>	<u>Southwest</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
Apr 13 – 19	Susan Oviatt	Karen Hawes	Sang Yu Yi	Malley Sisson
Apr 20 – 26	Sylvia Beeman	Jenny Chang	Sang Yu Yi	A. & M. Anderson
Apr 27 – May 3	Sylvia Beeman	Jenny Chang	Gary Naughton	Dean Zollman
May 4 – 10	Ana Franklin	Marvin Moorman	Gary Naughton	Dean Zollman
May 11 – 17	Jack Rader	Marvin Moorman	Sheryl Cornell	Kellan Kershner
May 18 – 24	Chris Feit	Al Schmaderer	Sheryl Cornell	Roger Hinkle
May 25 – 31	Robert Brown	Al Schmaderer	Jean Squires	Roger Hinkle
June 1 – 7	Richard Smith	Karen Hawes	Sandra Lobianco	James Coover

REMINDER: All gardeners who are not on the Board of Directors are required to mow a commons area. Gardeners with one plot mow one time; gardeners with multiple plots must mow at least twice during the season. Gardeners who did not sign up for mowing (or not enough mowing times) at registration time have been placed in the schedule where there was an empty slot.

Why Use Mulch?

Wondering why some gardeners use mulch on their plots? There are many reasons to use a mulch like straw, marsh hay, or shredded leaves. (Wood chips are good for paths, not for the garden.) Look at the soil in the woods, which has leaves as a natural mulch. It's dark, rich, moist, cool, loose, and full of worms; all things we're trying to attain by using mulch in our gardens. The soil life is fed in an ongoing, slow release way that helps the smaller organisms that build and maintain soil aggregate structure as well as providing additional organic matter as it is incorporated by worms.

KEEP THE WEEDS DOWN. Once you've weeded your garden, you probably don't want to spend that much time weeding again. Putting a mulch down greatly reduces the need to weed your garden. Weeds that do poke through are easier to pull as the ground stays loose and moist (more on that below). Weeds compete with your plants for soil nutrients; help the good guys win!

RETAIN SOIL MOISTURE AND MODERATE SOIL TEMPERATURE. While it generally rains a lot in the spring, it can go weeks in the summer without raining at all. Mulch will greatly help the soil retain water, since it won't evaporate as easily. The deeper you pile it, the more moist it will stay. During dry periods minerals are not as available to plants; keeping the soil moist solves that problem. In addition, mulch helps to regulate soil temperature. This is especially important for shallow-rooted plants. An added bonus: earthworms love a moist environment, and will multiply. They're good for the soil because they help loosen it up, and their castings are food for your plants.

PREVENT THE SOIL FROM BEING COMPRESSED. When it rains, it can come down with brutal force. This compresses the soil, which makes it harder for tender young roots to penetrate. Also, root crops like potatoes and carrots like loose soil since they need to displace a lot of dirt. (For these same reasons, it's a good idea to avoid walking in your garden when it's muddy.)

INHIBIT VEGETABLE ROT. Cucumbers and other vegetables that touch the ground can partially rot. Put a little mulch under the cuke, and it will be happier. It's best not to mulch a whole area where viney things grow; they often need to put down roots along the vine, and this will be hard to do if the whole area is mulched.

WINTERIZE YOUR GARDEN. OK, it's a little bit early to be thinking about this, but some perennials like strawberries need a four to six inch blanket in late November to keep them from getting too cold, and/or to prevent premature thawing in the spring. Mulch carrots, parsnips, and leeks and you can harvest them partially into winter!

⇒ *Jim Winkle, University of Wisconsin Extension*

Be careful, applying it too early in the spring to heat-loving plants can slow their growth. I personally mulch early in the spring to prevent early weeds from taking hold in my garden. I'm a gardener with very little spare time, and I prefer to spend very little of it weeding. However, to encourage germination and early growth of my vegetable seeds I leave a mulch-free space in the germinating rows, which I cover with mulch as soon as it begins to warm up. (Patty)

Articles written by Patty Zehl, unless otherwise noted. Please send any suggestions for future articles to: pzehl@ksu.edu

Can you Apply Organic Matter in the Spring?

We normally encourage gardeners to add organic matter in the fall because of increased availability of many sources of organic matter and the option of adding organic material that is not fully decomposed. Adding organic matter in the spring is fine, but we need to be a bit more careful. Be sure any material you use will not burn plants. For example, rotten silage may not have broken down enough over the winter and may release fumes that burn plants. If you can detect an ammonia odor from any material, it is too fresh to use.

Good sources of organic matter for spring use would include peat moss, finished compost and well-rotted leaf mold. The next question is how much to add? The short answer is to add 2 inches of organic material to the surface of the soil, and then till as deeply as possible. Actually, I till as deeply as possible first, add the organic matter, and then till again. This gives a couple of extra inches of prepared soil. Just be sure you don't till too much. If the soil ends up looking like flour, the structure of the soil has been destroyed. A well-prepared soil should have peds (particles) about the size of grape nuts or a bit larger.

⇒ *Ward Upham, Extension Associate - Horticulture 2008 Newsletter, March 19, 2008*

To view newsletter: <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=764>

Woodchips, Composted Manure, Hay and Straw Available

These items, when available, are provided throughout the growing season for the use of the Manhattan Community Gardeners. They are kept in the "commons" area, in two or three separate areas for you to use in your community garden plot, or along your paths. Please ask a fellow gardener if you are not clear what is available for your use.

Wheelbarrows for transportation of these items are available in the large shed. Please **do not** take the wheelbarrow along the railroad tracks – as this usually results in flat tires. If you have questions about our supply, contact Jennifer Guilford, Compost Committee Chairperson.



Is That Old Seed Good?

If you have old seed you want to use in your garden, there is an easy method of determining how good the seed is. Place ten seeds on a paper towel moistened with warm water and cover with a second moistened towel. Roll up the towels and place inside a plastic bag with enough holes for air exchange but not so many that the towels dry quickly. Place the bag in a warm place such as the top of refrigerator. Remoisten towels with warm water as needed. After the first week, check for germination; then remove sprouted seed and check again after another week. Add these numbers together to determine the percent germination. Example: if six of ten seeds germinate, this is a 60% germination rate.

⇒ *Ward Upham, Extension Associate, Horticulture 2008 Newsletter, January 9, 2008*

Economic Value of Garden Crops

Judging the economic value of crops grown in the vegetable garden is difficult due to the different lengths of time they require for maturity and harvest, the availability of varieties and vegetable types not generally found in the marketplace, and the lack of comparison values for vegetables that are not acceptable by commercial standards (cracked tomatoes, crooked cucumbers, etc.), but which are perfectly useable for the home gardener.

Nevertheless, several studies have attempted to determine which crops bring the most value per square foot of garden space, partly to aid small-space gardeners in making decisions about what to plant. Of course, if no one in the family likes beets, there is no point in growing them just because they are economically valuable, but this list may help you determine which vegetables to plant and which to buy. Perennial crops are not on the list below because each of the studies was on a one-season basis. However, asparagus, rhubarb, horseradish and other perennial crops have considerable economic worth.

TOP 15 VEGETABLES IN ECONOMIC VALUE¹

Tomatoes	Beets
Green bunching onions	Carrots
Leaf lettuce	Cucumbers
Turnip (greens + roots)	Peppers
Summer squash	Broccoli
Edible podded peas	Head lettuce
Onion storage bulbs	Swiss chard
Beans (pole, bush)	

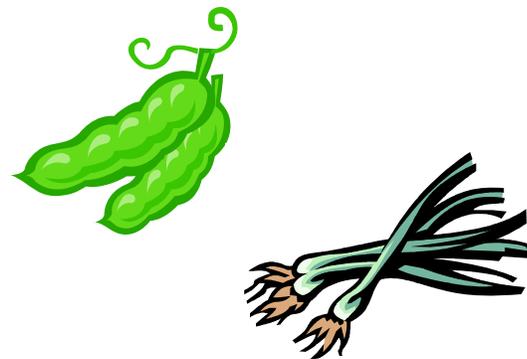
¹ Values based on pounds produced per square foot, retail value per pound at harvest time, and length of time in the garden.

⇒ *Alex X. Niemiera, Extension Horticulturist, Virginia Tech*

LOW-VALUE CROPS²

Corn	Winter squash
Melons	Pumpkins

² Not recommended for small gardens; however, miniature varieties or trellising may increase value per square foot.



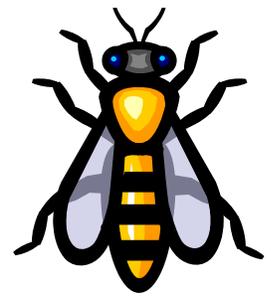
Save \$780 on Groceries

A family in Madison, Wisconsin tracked the value of produce they grew in 2007 from two 20'x20' plots. They grew 350 pounds of produce valued at \$780, (based on retail prices for the same organic produce at the local food co-op). They grew potatoes, onions, green beans, sweet corn, butternut squash, strawberries, eggplant, peppers, garlic, and leeks.

⇒ *Information from the American Community Garden Association listserv*



Bees in the Garden



In the mid 1980s there were 2 types of mites that began to take their toll on colonies of domestic and wild bees. Treatment measures have been implemented for domestic bees but many wild bee colonies still have not gained their original strength. Bees provide the primary fruit producing mechanism mainly for 'vine crops' (cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, and melons) in the garden. The number of bees needed to pollinize well depends on the number of flowers produced by the crops- greatest for cucumbers, least for pumpkins.

Bees work from their hives based on sensing the location of the sun. Thus, bees work only on sunny days. On clear days bees begin to work early in the morning and finish in late afternoon. There is very little bee activity in late evening or at night. Flowers of all the vine crops close in mid afternoon and remain closed all night. Any pesticide application made to vine crops should be made when the flowers are closed. Bees move into and out of flowers and will not come in contact with pesticide residue that may be on the outside of the flower if you spray late in the day.

Bees are not necessary to pollinize any of the spring garden crops or tomatoes, peppers, corn, beans, or okra. There are a number of commercial vegetable growers located near the Manhattan Community Gardens and areas where wild bees can maintain themselves. There should be, in normal circumstances adequate bees to pollinize your crops in the community garden area. Bees may work 2-3 miles from their hive or even longer in some circumstances.

So, take care of our bees- honeybees and others. They provide an important service to gardeners in pollinating some garden crops.

Note: you may have noticed that I used the term 'pollinize' in this article rather than 'pollinate'. Pollinize refers to the scattering of pollen onto flower parts by insects while 'pollinate' refers to pollen fertilizing the egg of the flower. It is possible that pollinizing can occur but pollination fail to occur (during stressful weather or some abnormality of the plant flower structure).

⇒ *Dr. Chuck Marr, Emeritus Professor of Vegetable Crops at KSU and Manhattan Community Gardener*

Wanted: Zucchini

The Manhattan Community Garden is a 2008 sponsor of the "Plant a Row for the Hungry" campaign. This national organization, through local sponsors, has helped to donate over 12 million pounds of fruits and vegetables to local people in need since 1995.

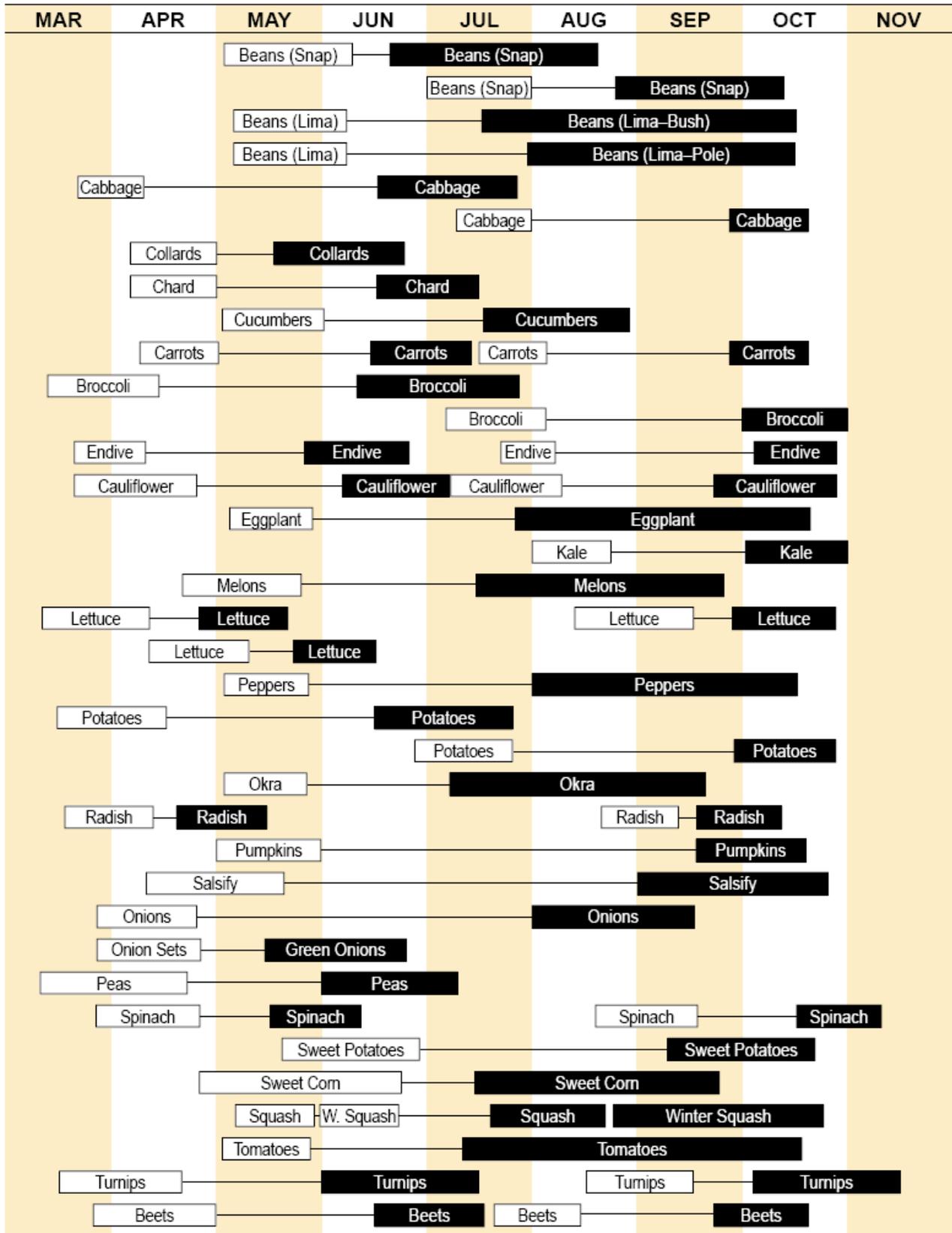


You can participate by planting an extra row in your garden to donate to the Flint Hills Breadbasket, or simply giving what you have left after sharing your harvest with friends and family. To simplify sharing your donation, local PAR volunteers will pick-up extra produce at the community gardens on advertised dates and times; and they will deliver the produce to the Breadbasket.

Sharing the bounty of your garden with those who really need it has never been easier! More information will be in the next newsletter.

Vegetable Garden Calendar

Plant **Harvest**



⇒ Source: K-State Research and Extension

Manhattan Community
Gardens c/o UFM
1221 Thurston Street
Manhattan, KS 66502

What's Inside?

- It's Spring Clean-Up time!
- Dates to remember
- Shed locks
- Woodchips for weed control on paths
- Mowing schedule



- Why use mulch?
- Applying organic matter in spring
- Is that seed old?
- Economic value of garden crops
- Bees in the garden
- "Plant a Row" for the hungry
- Vegetable garden calendar