



Gardening for Community

The March 2021 Newsletter of the UFM Manhattan Community Gardens

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President's Message

Welcome to another and new season of gardening in 2021! My name is Lucas, and I think I've gardened every year of my life.

Years ago, I started on my grandparents' farm garden growing up near Wakefield and Green, Kansas with my extended family. From there, I worked in a greenhouse and nursery through high school for my 4-H and FFA projects in Clay Center. I've taught school and gardened in Kansas City, Topeka and Abilene. Now that I live in the heart of the Flint Hills, the very best Little

Apple, I'm so glad to call the Manhattan Community Garden home!

I believe that gardening and agriculture can be beneficial to the environment, and to the health and wellbeing of our entire community. Gardens reduce the impact of food deserts and allow residents greater access to high-quality local food for a healthy, balanced life.

Gardens strengthen family and community ties (even if my son and I sometimes get into a dirt clod war), reducing environmental hazards (limit those chemicals, my friends) and creating a more sustainable system (we all need to be so much more connected to our local only-found-here resilient Kansas environment).

The research, science and my experiences align to clearly promote community gardens:

- Help improve air and soil quality
- Increase biodiversity of plants and animals
- Reduce "food miles" that are required to transport nutritious food
- Can reduce waste through composting
- Positively impact the micro-climate
- Increase access to fresh foods
- Improve food security

- Increase physical activity through outdoor activities
- Improve dietary habits through education and community
- Increase fruit and vegetable intake
- Improve mental health and promote relaxation

Social and community ties are important to our wellbeing since they can bring positive health effects and team involvement, especially needed in a time of COVID. Gardens allow stronger social ties and build a greater feeling of community to empower residents and allow more to feel safe.

As we come out of this COVID era, we can reflect on the power of gardens to the many cultures in history. During past wars, victory gardens were an important source of food for American families - like for my grandparents' era. But now recently, there has been a resurgence of community gardens to help mitigate the impacts of isolation and find ways to safely provide fresh, healthy produce for residents and allow them to reduce their food bills. Keep on strong this season my friends.

Lucas Shivers – lshivers@hotmail.com

Great Gardening: A Twice a Month Guide to Kansas Vegetable Gardens

Come to the gardens on Sundays at the schedule below with a come-and-go timeframe between 2-3 pm. Join us with a twice a month educational and support series to learn from experts.

Never garden alone! Our month-by-month informal demonstrations are the perfect companion to take the guesswork out of gardening. We'll cover what to do each week to have great vegetable gardening success all year. We'll tailor the sessions to issues that affect

your garden the most and find practical ways to support your success!

Open to all ages and anyone. Incentives of FREE seeds and plants for anyone who attends.

Watch emails for final weather details and special locations. Extra seeds and plants will be shared in the sheds following each session.

- Sunday, March 14 from 2-3 pm - Dale @ Collins - Early Spring seeds; Onions, Potatoes & Spinach
- Sunday, March 28 from 2-3 pm - Dean @ Riley - Mid-Spring seeds; Beets and Turnips
- Sunday, April 11 from 2-3 pm - Lucas @ Riley - Late-Spring seeds; Sweet Corn
- Sunday, April 25 from 2-3 pm - Frank @ Collins - Summer Seeds and Starts with Tomatoes
- Sunday, May 9 from 2-3 pm - Dale @ Collins - Summer Seeds and Starts with Peppers & Beans plus weeding demo
- Sunday, May 23 from 2-3 pm - Jeff @ Collins - Summer Crops
- Look for more soon

Be a Good Garden Neighbor

All gardeners agreed to abide by the MCG rules by signing the MCG Garden Application. For reference the rules are available at:

<https://tryufm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Final-Rules-Sept-8-2020.pdf>

Following the rules is a start to being a good garden neighbor. Using common sense can ensure members get along throughout the year.

Here are suggestions:

- Get to know your neighbor by name. They may help with advice, take care of your plot during an absence, and watch for trespassers.
- Stay out of other plots without permission. Don't drag hoses through neighboring gardens.
- Keep noise to a minimum. The garden is not the place for noisy radios or loud talk.
- If located next to a path take care of it. Control weeds and apply woodchips.
- Keep a tidy plot. Non-garden related structures or articles should be kept to a minimum. Place trash in the proper receptacle.
- Don't encroach on borders. Plan your plantings with sufficient space to not approach boundaries.
- Fences can make enemies. Control weeds that grow in the fence line. If you have a fence, MAINTAIN it!
- Don't roll up hoses. String them out in linear fashion near the hydrant. Don't leave a spray nozzle attached for someone else to remove.
- Consider tilling your plot(s) at the end of the garden season.

Contact – Darin Marti - dmarti7528@gmail.com

Put Away & Lock Up



Security is important at our gardens sites to help prevent theft. Unfortunately Riley Lane is

not fenced so it is pretty easy for someone to just walk in off the street. Collins Lane is fenced and does have a gate with a lock on it. Both sites have equipment sheds with locks. It is very important that gardeners put away the tools and equipment they have used and lock up the sheds before they leave the gardens. At Collins Lane, **please lock the gate!** We do know for sure that some of the thieves at Collins last year, entered through the gate that was not closed and locked. Also, if you bring your own tools, please remove them when you leave. Some of the hand tools stolen were simply left in the plots.

If you are leaving the gardens and you notice a shed open and no one else is around, please lock it. Later in the season when vegetation prevents you from seeing across the gardens to know if someone is still there, lock the gate and sheds just to be sure. Locking someone in isn't all bad! Theft of equipment and tools cost the gardens to replace. Remember, your plot fees pay for that! Keeping any expenses down benefits all of us!

Disposal Costs

MCG pays for dumpsters and trash bins for each garden site. We have roll-off dumpsters, lidded dumpsters and trash totes. New signs have been installed in front of each dumpster that outlines what materials can be placed in each. Please follow the instructions on each sign.

Each dumpster has specific purposes which are as follows:

- Roll-off Dumpsters (the large ones) – to be used **ONLY** for plant materials that come off the garden plots or tree limbs that fall around the garden site.
- Lidded Dumpster (Collins) and Trash Tote (Riley) – need to be used **ONLY** for non-vegetative materials.



This disposal cost the MCG \$100 per pickup plus \$10 per ton of plant material in the roll off dumpsters. Any non-vegetative garbage thrown in the roll off has to be removed by the hauler and he charges an additional \$250 per pickup and \$50 per ton when he has to sort it. Consequently it is imperative that we follow these requirements.

We also ask that you not bring trash from home to put in any of these containers. And no Hazardous material!

Other ways to control disposal cost is to recycle the plant materials. In reality, everything that grows in your plot can be chopped by hand or with a lawn mower and tilled right back into the soil. This saves the MCG money and benefits the soil profile of your plot! Much of the time it is less work than hauling debris to the roll-off! MCG rules state that burning is not allowed in your plot. Burning could certainly create an unsafe situation. In addition, MCG does not have a county burn permit so it is against county law as well.

Operating Expenses

MCG is very similar to any business in that we have income and expenses. Income is derived from plot rental and expenses are generated in various ways. Expense items include:

- Equipment purchase and repair
- Building repair
- Garden hoses and hand tools
- Road rock for Collins gardens
- Trash Disposal
- Compost, Wood chips, & Mulch
- Portable toilets

It is up to each gardener to help control these costs by taking care of the equipment and tools. Using only the amount of mulch and compost that is needed and not wasting it is also a good practice. MCG does have a few dollars in reserve but we can see possible major expenses coming in the next few years so conserving all we can, helps all of us by controlling the amount we charge for plot rental.

Workdays

At registration you agreed to work board designated activities which may have included one workday. John Kobiskie, Records & Communications will be sending email reminders prior to the workday month you chose. You will have the month you selected to complete the task assigned to you for the month. Gardeners need to fulfill their commitments to maintain eligibility for the subsequent year.

John Kobiskie - johnkks@cox.net

Plot Maintenance

All new gardeners should have received a set of rules when they registered for the gardens. Returning gardeners should have a copy of the rules from last year as they were sent out a number of times throughout the year. If you

have misplaced them, they can be accessed from the UFM website. They are printed in somewhat small print but it is **very** important that you read them and know what is in them.

All of the rules are important but rules 8, 9, 10, and 20 pertain especially to plot maintenance. Your garden coordinators spend considerable time reviewing these rules at the gardens. These 4 rules are intended to help keep plots from encroaching and/or spreading weed seeds on neighboring plots and paths and to keep our plots in good condition in the event a gardener leaves the gardens. When a gardener leaves a plot with unwanted vegetation and items on it, other gardeners have to help clean it up so we try to prevent this from happening.

Throughout the year, the garden coordinators will walk the gardens making observations on conditions of the paths and plots. When plots are observed to be out of compliance, emails or letters will be sent to those gardeners, asking for them to take care of the issue. The first notices will of course be as friendly as possible. Rule #20 spells out the procedure the coordinator is required to follow. In the event that you see you are unable to care for a plot due to illness or travel, feel free to contact us at communitygarden@tryufm.org and let us know your situation. We will work with you to find help you find assistance in keep your plots clean. Remember, all gardeners have an obligation to keep the gardens in good condition. We would appreciate your cooperation on this issue. Thank you.

Committee Reports

Compost, Mulch, and Wood Chips

The MCG provides several types of material to enhance garden plots and paths.

MULCH

The MCG provides prairie hay for mulch. It is used to conserve moisture and control weeds. Good quality prairie hay is composed of perennial native grasses and forbs mowed prior to seed production. It should not contain weeds. Reasonable amounts of prairie hay mulch can be tilled into the soil and composted in place.



COMPOST

Most compost comes from the Riley County Transfer Station. This material is derived from grass clippings, leaves, and other herbaceous vegetation. Another source of compost (available only at Collins Lane for the time being) comes from the Kansas State University livestock facility. Its origin is the manures of cattle, poultry, and hogs. The carbon source required in composting is from animal bedding and other available vegetative materials. Composting temperature can reach over 150 degrees Fahrenheit which ensures pathogens, insect larvae, and weed seeds are destroyed. The benefits of using compost are:

- Improved soil tilth,
- Increased soil water holding capacity,
- Enhanced soil microbial action,
- Increased plant nutrients including phosphorus and potassium with some nitrogen in the animal based compost.

Composts from both sources are not considered “organic” by the USDA standards.

WOOD CHIPS

Wood chips are obtained from the City of Manhattan Forestry. They are to be used on the paths between garden plots. Since wood chips do not readily biodegrade they should not be used in the garden plot as mulch.

Contact: John Kobiskie: johnkks@cox.net

Jeff Hellerich:

Equipment

MCG provides power and hand tools for just about any use in our gardens. While the equipment committee provides annual service for our equipment, it is the gardener's responsibility to use tools in the manner or which they were intended. For instance, using a pitchfork or hoe for prying out a stump will probably break a handle or fork tooth.

Mowing at lowest setting is dangerous in that objects can be sent flying and may strike the operator or bystanders. This misuse of mowers is dangerous, but it can damage the equipment beyond repair. Remember, equipment is purchased with your garden dues so proper care and use will keep expenses down. If you have questions about operation of a piece of equipment, please ask someone or contact one of the equipment managers listed at the end of this article.

Cleaning equipment is also important. Tillers and mowers clogged with bindweed, crabgrass, and other materials tends to transfer weed seeds to other plots and gives other gardeners more to do. There are designated areas where power equipment should be cleaned. At Riley Lane, the cleaning of the equipment needs to be done at the hydrant located in the grass near the portable toilet and the Peace Pole. At Collins lane, there are two designated areas where cleaning tables have been built near each of the equipment sheds. Please use these areas to clean the equipment.

Please take time to remove debris from the power equipment and remove that plant material from the area and place it in the plant debris dumpsters. Once the power equipment is cleaned and /or washed, please add fuel to the implement. Remember, it is never safe to add fuel to a hot piece of equipment due to risk of fire or explosions.

Normal wear and tear on garden equipment means that repairs will be eventually needed. Hang tags are provided for you to list any issues with the equipment and should be attached to tool. These tags are the only way that the equipment managers know that repairs are needed.

Note to Riley Lane Gardeners:

The older Husqvarna Rear Tine Tiller has been known to lock up between two gears. Therefore, please be sure when you engage the gears, be sure it is all the way in the gear you desire. Thanks.

Contacts:

Dale Hayden, Collins Lane

dalesmhs@gmail.com

Pat Duggan, Riley Lane

twopats6@juno.com

Records & Communications

The Board communicates with members by email and uses the address you provided at registration. We keep your information secure and send messages to you in a way that does not expose your information to others. A few members have no email, so we call them at the phone number they provided at registration. We use emails to remind members of workdays, social events, equipment use, facility security, gardener responsibilities, and for special announcements. We also maintain records of your plot, payments, workday obligations, etc. to give you credit for your service and keep you in good standing. So please be sure that the email you gave at registration, is **an email**

address you use and check often. Feel free to contact board members with questions or to resolve scheduling conflicts.

John Kobiskie - johnkks@cox.net

Tilling Assistance

Every year anywhere from one to two dozen gardeners at both Collins Lane and Riley pay for spring tilling on their plots. While we have volunteers who are willing to till those plots, it is important to remind people of a few simple things they can do to facilitate this process. Tilling will usually commence once the temperatures warm up in March and the ground thaws so that the tilling can be done. Gardeners must clean everything off of their plots so that they can be tilled. Each tilling volunteer will have a list of plot assignments, and they may do those all of them at one time when they go out to the gardens. We often get questions such as “why can’t I coordinate with the volunteer tiller and be out there when they till, and move my stuff around the plot”. This is difficult if not impossible because the volunteer tillers will do the tilling on their schedules, not necessarily the gardeners’ schedules. The volunteer tillers have regular jobs, families, commitments, etc., and are providing a service to the Garden Board. Even if you pile your stuff in a corner, that affects the tillers, as they have to till around your cages, fences, equipment, which is not easy, anyone who has operated one of the tillers will attest to this fact! Also, in the past people have put their personal property in the pathways to get it off of their plot. That is not a good idea either. So please, if you have requested tilling please remove all of your materials from your plot, preferably by the end of February or early March. You may also receive a similar notice from the Garden Board.

If you wish to do your own tilling, and you have never operated one of the tillers, they do take some practice. We have tillers of different sizes and depending on your skill level and strength, some are easier to operate than others. Even if

you are an experienced gardener you may benefit from a refresher training session on the tillers. If you have not used our tillers, please contact one of the equipment coordinators, Pat Duggan (twopats6@juno.com) at Riley Lane, or Dale Hayden (dalesmhs@gmail.com), at Collins Lane. We will offer an instructional session to learn how to safely use one of the tillers. These tillers are housed and locked the sheds at each of the Gardens, and the same lock combination for the gate will work for the sheds.

If you have paid for and requested tilling and you have any questions, please contact us, Frank Arthur, Mowing and Tilling Coordinator for Collins Lane, fa@ksu.edu, or Hannah Birge, hannah.birge@tnc.org, Mowing and Tilling Coordinator for Riley gardens. We have a list of plots to be tilled, and will assign those plots to the volunteer tillers. You can also view a video on the UFM website, tryufm.org, which will describe what you need to do to prepare your plot for tilling by one of our volunteer tillers.

2021 Board of Directors

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Vice President	Dale Hayden	dalesmhs@gmail.com
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Compost/Mulch	Jeff Hellerich	jeffhellerich@hotmail.com
Communications/Records	John Kobiskie	johnkks@cox.net
Newsletter	Alan Boerger	aboerger@cox.net
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Collins Lane Mowing/Tilling	Frank Arthur	fha@ksu.edu
Riley Lane Mowing/Tilling	Hannah Birge	hannah.birge@tnc.org
Socials	Open	



**UFM Community Learning Center
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