

# MCGA Monthly Newsletter



OCTOBER 2022

Website: [Marymoorgarden.org](http://Marymoorgarden.org) Email: [mcgaboard@gmail.com](mailto:mcgaboard@gmail.com)

## *A Note from the President...*

MCGA Gardeners! It's that time of the year when we start closing down our gardens. It is also a time to harvest everything we worked so hard for this year. Our newsletter crew has worked hard this year to share valuable tips and knowledge. I encourage you to read this newsletter in full to see what they recommend for a successful end of season. Now is the time to take preparations to avoid lots of weeding in the spring.

Registration will be open soon for those who want to return to the garden and are in good standing. We hope you will join us next year. If, however, you already know you plan to leave the garden, please reach out to [mcgaboard@gmail.com](mailto:mcgaboard@gmail.com) to let us know. You must leave your plot in rentable condition, otherwise you may have to pay an invoice up to \$100 - ouch! If you would like guidance about how to close out your plot, please reach out. We are happy to help!

-Michael L.

## *Featured Board Member -Michelle R.*



Well, it's fall glamor on parade once again at the gardens! I have had the privilege of gardening at Marymoor for 24 years. Our area was originally a "pea-patch" operated by King County Parks - I was so thrilled to find sunny space for vegetables which was not an option at home! When the Park opted to close the pea-patch due to slashed budgets, my friend Jack MacKinnon and I decided to find a way to save these organic garden spaces and our Food Bank donation work. In 2004 we rallied fellow gardeners and the wider community to found MCGA as a non-profit corporation and gardening club. I am proud to have served multiple terms as President, V.P., and on the board of directors. I serve on Food Bank Management, this Newsletter, Finance, and as a Mentor. It is a blessing to have the opportunity to work with so many passionate and dedicated members! Over the last 2 years growing flowers has been a little obsessive, but I'll return to more vegetables next season. Please come visit any time in A20-22 and at the Food Bank!

## *Gardener Spotlight! Maryam N.*



I've long dreamed of having a garden, but living in an apartment makes that impossible. After applying to every community garden in the area with no luck, my sister Hannah suggested applying here as

co-gardeners and now, with luck on our side, we became proud cultivators of plot I13.

As new gardeners we've enjoyed throwing seed (ling)s in the ground to see what sticks. I'm disabled so flexibility is a must in my approach to gardening. We are growing carrots, tomatoes, eggplant, onion, peppers, cruciferous veggies, pumpkin, butternut squash, cilantro, lemongrass and more. Our plan for next year is to include South and Southeast Asian veggies and herbs, like bitter melon, garlic chives, rau ram (Vietnamese Coriander), ngo gai (culantro), and diep ca (fish herb), as we're half-Pakistani and my partner is Vietnamese. We also love flowers-Peonies happen to be both of our favorites-and want to tuck them in wherever possible.

Aside from gardening, I'm thrilled to join the MCGA community. My partner and I frequent the Hopelink food bank, and I can personally attest that the food MCGA grows is delicious! Produce is the highlight of the Hopelink trip, and during lockdown when we received pre-boxed groceries, we'd find joy in unpacking our garden goodies and cooking with produce we might not normally have access to. We are so thankful to the MCGA for providing us those moments of joy and I'm excited to volunteer in the Hopelink garden when my disabilities allow.

## *Feature Article: Food Preservation-Robin B.*

This month we asked Robin to share some information and resources she uses. Robin is a past MCGA President and long time gardener. She's been preserving vegetables, fruits and herbs for many years. She and her family garden in plots A 9-11.

It's great to preserve our harvest so we can enjoy it all year. That said, the safety rules for food preservation can be daunting for anyone new to the process.

### Where to find guidelines:

The National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) has instructions about how to freeze, dehydrate, cure/smoke, ferment and pickle. It also has instructions about storage items and how foods might become contaminated under certain conditions.

### [National Center for Home Food Preservation \(uga.edu\)](http://nchfp.uga.edu)

This is my favorite preservation safety site, and I use it all the time when I preserve food. The site is easy to understand.

### What about botulism?

Botulism is not the only food storage hazard, but it is a nefarious and deadly one.

- The bacteria that causes botulism, *Clostridium Botulinum* (CM), grow in low oxygen environments. This is a known hazard with improperly canned food, but the bacteria can also grow in oil and honey preparations. If you make flavored oils or honey mixtures with the intention of storing, take care to be sure that you are doing so safely. Check the link below for instructions about oils.

[Bulletin #4385, Safe Homemade Flavored and Infused Oils - Cooperative Extension Publications - University of Maine Cooperative Extension \(umaine.edu\)](#)

- Acid inhibits this CM bacteria growth, so there are safety guidelines about which canning technique to use depending on the food's acidity. They recommend water bath canning, follow those instructions to the letter, even if they seem counterintuitive.

For example, the NCHFP site only lists instructions for pressure canning cubed winter squash. Why not pureed? That is because the food must tumble in the jar during the canning process. The mixing ensures all the squash reaches the required temperature needed to kill any CM bacteria. A thick puree like winter squash might not mix well and could leave sections in the jar where bacteria remain.

If you want to take up canning, Ball's Canning Guide has a large collection of recipes and instructions that adhere to the NCHFP guidelines. Ball canning books are easy to find online.

A lot of people on the internet teach about canning. Please - follow only the people who are fastidious about safety practices. **Beware** of techniques that are non-standard or controversial so you can avoid unsafe canning practices.

Enjoy your harvest!



## *What to harvest now: Celebrate Fall!*

Well, it's time to tug those last tomatoes off the vines! You can still ripen many indoors on your windowsill and remember that green tomatoes are delicious fried, sauteed, and included in stews & roasts. Don't leave spent tomato plants in your garden over the winter. Pull out the vines, being careful to rake up and dispose of old foliage. This helps us all minimize tomato blight for next year!

If you planted lettuce, spinach, bok choy, radish, and cilantro seed back in August and September, you still have bountiful fresh greens coming in. Later-planted beets, turnips, rutabagas, cabbage, and broccoli are ready for your table this month.

All those lushly robust Kale plants will keep you in greens most of the winter, even after the first freezes. Some sharp cold will turn your brussel sprouts and parsnips sweet and flavorful.

Continue digging potatoes. Store them in a dark, dry, cool place like an unheated garage or basement. The cooler, the better.

Here come all those beautiful winter squashes and pumpkins we've been waiting for. It's a delight to walk the gardens and see the huge array of varieties, colors, shapes and sizes that our members grow - time to enjoy!



## Yes, you CAN keep planting!

October is the perfect month to plant garlic and shallots. \*See the following links for good places to buy seeds. This is also the time to seed cover crops after you have cleared spent plants, weeds, and debris. Read on for more information about cover-cropping and for WSU Extension resources.

If you're feeling intrepid or just like to push the envelope, it's time to install a hoop house, row cover, or clear frame in your garden. You can protect those established young lettuce, spinach, beets, and even carrots that you planted back in Aug. or Sept well into winter.

Sowing new vegetable seed in Oct. is not generally recommended for our area but it's a great time to sow some beauty for spring. Consider casting some annual poppy seed, blackeyed susan, larkspur, forget-me-nots, Coreopsis, and Nigella.



*\*IT'S TIME TO ORDER YOUR GARLIC, SHALLOT, TULIPS, DAFFODILS, AND OTHER FALL BULBS!*

Some **FB** favorite sources:

<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/vegetables/garlic/>

<https://www.harrisseeds.com/collections/shallot-sets>

<https://territorialseed.com/collections/hardneck-garlic>

<https://territorialseed.com/products/shallot-french>

<https://irisheyesgardenseeds.com/#>

(Irish Eyes is a long-time local FB favorite located in Thorp WA - check them out for potatoes too!)

*Follow the Food Bank: WE STILL NEED YOU!*

*Thank you all for your continued participation in the FB work parties. Special thanks for joining us even when you've already completed your "hours"...we'll keep working through October. We've still got hundreds of pounds to harvest and will be concentrating on putting the fields to bed for the winter. As the final crops are harvested, we clear spent plants and weeds, then lay thick layers of straw to smother emergent weeds and provide an insulating layer against topsoil freeze.*

*Please keep DONATING from your garden bounty and come help us to prepare the FB garden for winter!*

## PREPARING THE GARDEN FOR WINTER:

Fall brings harvest time to an end. It is time now to think about how to prepare your plot for wintering over.

Straw bales are perfect for laying on your garden plot at the end of the season to protect soil structure by preventing compaction, to reduce erosion, and nutrient loss and to prevent weeds from taking over during our mild winters.

Cover crops are another consideration for fall. Planting can help replace some organic matter, supply nitrogen (legumes only), protect from rain and wind erosion, help break up compacted soil and reduce disease and nematodes. The link below gives more detail and can help you decide the best seed product to enrich and protect your soil.

[WSU Extension Publications|Cover Crops for Home Gardens West of the Cascades \(Home Garden Series\)](#)

*Watch our DONATION poundage to local Food Banks grow! Will we make our goal this year of 4 TONS?*

## Upcoming FB Work Parties

Watch for individual emails as others are added. To sign up directly, go to [SignupGenius](#), which is also linked on the front page of our [website](#)

- FB Tuesday 10/4 10:00-12:30
- FB Tuesday 10/11 10:00-12:30
- FB Tuesday 10/18 1:00-3:30
- FB Saturday 10/29 10:00-12:30

## Garden Reminders (PLEASE READ)

- ❖ **IMPORTANT REMINDER:** K.C. is issuing parking tickets again! Your “MCGA watering can” sticker only allows you to park in our garden parking lot. You must still get a \$1.00 daily pass. Even better, BUY a seasonal parking pass from K.C. It's easy online: <https://kingcounty.gov/services/parks-recreation/parks/parks-and-natural-lands/popular-parks/marymoor/marymoorparkingpermits.aspx>
- ❖ Return all tools and wheelbarrows after use DO NOT leave them in your plots.
- ❖ Be kind to the wildlife here. Bird netting is not recommended. We have seen several birds caught in the netting. PLEASE don't use it if you don't have to.
- ❖ Did you notice the new Bulletin Board and Kiosk? The parks dept. swiftly installed it. Amy C., board member, is our new Bulletin board captain and she will keep flowers growing and post the newsletter as well as other timely notices.
- ❖ Please remember to accurately enter your work party hours (either for FB or Grounds) on **BOTH** the **sign up sheet and the website**. If you need assistance, please ask!

## GARDEN THEFT-from the Editors

This is not a subject that we like to talk about, but it is happening. We have noticed and been told that there are people who have been coming to the garden and taking veggies (the back wall tomatoes etc) and in some individual plots. Hoses, partial vegetable beds and some individual veggies have gone missing. Visitors are all welcome, but not to take things with them! Many of us share with strangers and other gardeners, but be wary of people walking through with bags and backpacks. If you see a car parked in the back or on the road without a garden sticker, they may be pilfering. We actually tried to speak to one such person about getting help from Hopelink but they were not receptive. Thank you for being vigilant. It is very upsetting to go to your garden and see that someone had been there taking things that took you months to cultivate.

## Fun Facts: The Marymoor Pheasant

Have you seen or perhaps heard of our park pheasant? This month we contacted gardeners, King County Parks staff and Marymoor Birders group and asked the following questions:

Do you recall what year he arrived?

- ❖ 2006 (Christy C-KC)
- ❖ 12 - 13 years ago (Jamie B-KC)
- ❖ About 7 years ago (Michelle R-Gardener)

What is your name for him?

- ❖ Steve (Christy C-KC)
- ❖ Phez (Jamie B-KC)
- ❖ Phil the Pheasant (Betsy G/Gia P-Gardeners)
- ❖ Lonesome George (Carol J-Gardener)
- ❖ Lonesome George II (Marymoor Birders)

Is he the same pheasant, year after year?

- ❖ I like to think so (Christy-KC)
- ❖ We believe this is the second pheasant to reside at the park (Marymoor Birders)

Do you have a memorable story to share about him?

- ❖ One year I noticed a pile of feathers and I thought he'd been killed! Someone told me they shed all their tail feathers in the fall. (Gia P-Gardener)
- ❖ I noticed his tail feathers were gone, I was fearful and happy as I thought perhaps he'd made a narrow escape from a predator! (Carol J-Gardener)
- ❖ My favorite memory of Steve is him coming to the cottage to visit us during work. (Parks Dept.) He loves peanuts!! He loves them so much that he followed me on my walk, all the way to Clise Mansion and beyond. I have a video of him running with me! He is so funny! (Christy C-KC)

- ❖ Every spring I look forward to hearing his distinctive call and hope soon to see him wandering the garden plots. It makes me smile. (Carol J-Gardener)
- ❖ He first came to my garden eating the bird seed I had tossed out. It is always a thrill for me to see this beautiful bird so close by. His feathers are so vivid and he walks calmly and regally with a smooth strut. He continues to visit me. I'm always happy to see him. (Sue O.-Gardener)



One thing is for certain; he is our famous resident pheasant and loved by many!!

## Mentors By Section:

Carol	pinecreekgal@hotmail.com	Mentor Coordinator
Kirby	kirby.cartwright@marymoorgarden.org	A and B
Betsy	betsygraham57@gmail.com	C
Michelle	interscapesinc@hotmail.com	D and H
Hilary	hacartwright@gmail.com	E and F
Barbara	bbmoo@icloud.com	G and Z
Didi	didemnokta@gmail.com	I
Anna	Asczan@gmail.com	X and Y

## Produce Poundage Data

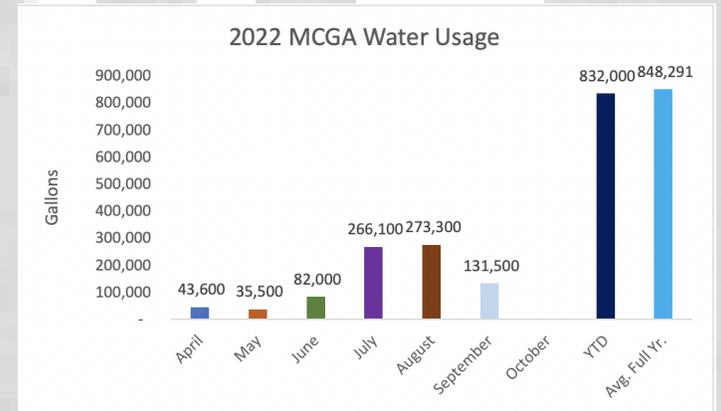
-Compiled by John T.

### 2022 Food Bank Donations to date:

May	19.0 lbs
June	428.5 lbs
July	475.5 lbs
August	2504.25 lbs
September	1779.5 lbs
YTD	5206.75 lbs

## MCGA Water Usage

-Compiled by John T.



## Historical Water Usage

- Data compiled by John T.-THANKS!

### September YTD Water Usage 2019-2022 (gallons)

2019	642,900
2020	697,000
2021	973,407
2022	832,000

### 2022 Water Usage by Month (gallons)

April	43,600
May	35,500
June	82,000
July	266,100
August	273,300
September	131,500
YTD	832,000

## HELP WANTED:

- ★ Tech Specialists! We need you and your expertise! Please contact Michael at:

[mcgaboard@gmail.com](mailto:mcgaboard@gmail.com)



*Wishing you all a very fruitful fall. Enjoy the cooler temps, beautiful sunsets and great harvest.*