

The Cooperative Gardens *at* *Farmington Woods*

August/September 2025

DOG DAYS

John Sahm, Cooperative Gardener

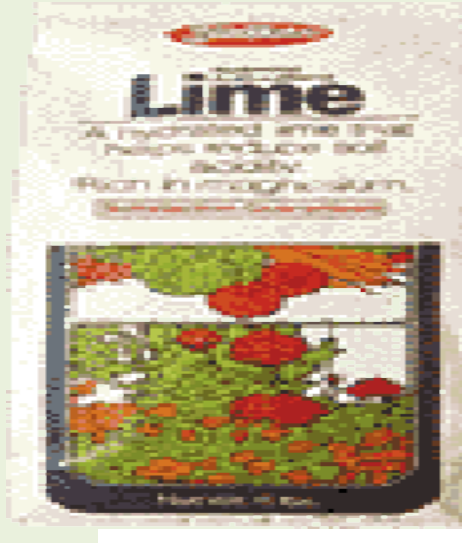


It's August. You wouldn't know it because it has felt like Fall, not end of summer. Why "dog days". When I was growing up my mother told me it was because animals couldn't stand hot, sticky weather like we can get in August, and it would result in animals getting rabies. Way not true, although it did keep me from petting strange dogs. It's because Sirius, the Dog Star, is ascendant in August. Nothing crazier than that. So, where are we with our gardens at this point. Waiting. At least I am.

Based on where you are in the garden you are either harvesting tomatoes or still waiting for them to ripen. Don't wait too long; the squirrels and chipmunks are waiting, too. Peppers, beans, squash and cucumbers are also doing pretty well at this point. But it is time to anticipate next steps.



September is here so fall is very close. That means some of your prize vegetables are on the verge of fading away. Please review the list of garden responsibilities and you will see an important date – November 1. By that date, unless it's a Fall crop, all the dead stuff should be removed. The date is there because it's healthy for your garden to eliminate mature (read "dead") plants. If not removed, it's prime nesting material for pests and rodents. Since you currently have some plants producing while others are dying out, there's a perfect opportunity to make plant clearance a manageable process. Do a little at a time by clearing out that which is now non-producing.



As you clear a section or, if you're wholistically inclined, after you've cleared everything, it's a perfect opportunity to jump ahead and think Spring. Consider turning the cleared soil and refreshing the nutrients by raking in some slow-release, balanced fertilizer AND some garden lime. Some very experienced and successful gardeners sprinkle a healthy dose of lime over the garden plot to sweeten the soil in anticipation of next Spring. (It works!).

But some very canny gardeners have crops growing for a Fall/late Fall harvest. This is good to note for next Spring's garden plan. Swiss Chard will be growing well into Fall and will taste great even after a light frost. For those folks who adventured into Brussels Sprouts, that harvest could very well be available for Thanksgiving. I also hate to say anything positive about kale, but it's a great Fall green. It's purported to be particularly sweet after the first frost. Couldn't prove it by me. Now is also the time to find out where your winter squash is heading.



Winter squash can be very productive. That's good (mostly) but can be annoying. Like unruly children, you don't know where it's going or what it's doing. Track the vines! You might find

it in someone else's garden or over the edge of the hill. Remember The Garden unspoken rule – if it's in someone's garden, then it's theirs according to our version of the homesteading law. Like children, winter squash can be trained by re-directing the vine so it's where you intended it to go. Unless planting it was an accident. That's happened to me.



Don't forget that October is coming. October is the month of planting garlic. Have you ever baked Elephant Garlic? It's huge, it's a treat, and it's surprisingly sweet rather than pungent. Look up the recipe – it's easy. Spread it on pita chips or toasted bagel medallions. The Rule of Thumb is to plant your garlic on Columbus/Indigenous People's Day and harvest it in August/September. So easy to plant; 1st thumb joint deep, root side down. One bulb and you have garlic for a year.



Back to the current harvest! We want to thank the folks who have donated their excess harvest to the cooler designated for the Food Pantry. That produce has been greatly appreciated and certainly helps people who have the need. Great job folks. Everything is appreciated. Did you realize that so far, through August 26th we have contributed 40 lbs. of fresh produce to needy folks. And we anticipate there will be more coming as the season presses on. **THANK YOU!**

August is the month for our Annual Garden Party. It was held on August 14th and if you missed it, you should put the second Thursday in August in your calendar for next year. It was great fun and we had a great turnout. What a great opportunity to meet other gardeners, share gardening secrets, and share a Chef Mario buffet.

Our very own Christine Arena is contributing some very useful information on flowers and vegetables that you can use when planning for Fall and for 2026. I'm including Christine's handiwork as a separate attachment in case it doesn't display correctly within this Word doc.

FALL PLANTING and OTHER STUFF

The concept of fall planting is really that of fall harvesting...in other words, what can you plant now to harvest on or before Nov. 1st when our gardens must be cleaned up.

If you have already picked your garlic, or some of your plants need to be pulled up, you have some space. In August and September, you can plant lots of veggies that will be ready to harvest by Nov. 1st. Plants that grow well in cooler weather (if we ever get some) are beets, kale, bok choy, mini pumpkins (check number of days to mature), radishes, peas, beans, lettuce and spinach.



In mid-October you can plant garlic (the Granby Garlic Farm closes around Oct. 15th, so check the date if you want to buy elephant garlic to plant). Lettuce seeds planted now will give lettuce to harvest, and I have found that some even comes up in the Spring.

Now is also a good time to plant broccoli, parsnips, cabbage and cauliflower.



Flowers to plant in fall include perennials like the ubiquitous chrysanthemums, coneflowers, asters, and black-eyed Susan. Among perennial herbs to plant are borage, chives, thyme, mint (only in pots, please as it is very aggressive), sage and tarragon. I have read that one can also plant lavender in the fall, but I have never had good luck with that.



September is a good time to plant bulbs that will flower in the Spring. The last frost in central Connecticut is around October 12th, so you would want the bulbs to have a bit of time to grow roots. Check the instructions on the package for time and depth.

If you are like me and need to see green things growing in the house during the winter, you can cut rosemary and basil to root in a glass of water. I have always had good luck with putting them in a north window as they don't need a lot of sun in the winter. (More about that in the winter newsletter.)

Of course, there are other chores in the fall that are more about maintenance: cleaning up the remaining plants, weeding, readying your garden for winter by ensuring that any fencing is stable, stakes are piled neatly and trellises either taken home or secured from wind, and cleaning tools.



HAPPY GARDENING!



Tips and Tricks

2025 Committee

John Sahm, Chair
Robert Gwizdak
Linda Papertsian
Stefanie Lang
Brenda Larkin
Dick Adams
Pat Figliola
Wendy Gill
Pam Prindle
Chrstine Arena
Bill Nicol

Important Dates

- **Next service Day – Oct. 25.**
- **Nov.1 – clear gardens except for growing crops.**

Help Your neighbors!

The Food Pantry cooler is still going to be available for weekends for that excess harvest. 40 lbs. of donations and counting!

Decide early!!!!

If you're interested in your garden or another garden for 2026, please let us know! To keep things straight, please submit your request via email to Pat Figliola. It's first come; first served. (Pat Figliola - pmfigliola@gmail.com).

Looking ahead.

For 2026 we're planning to continue selling and delivering soil products and to continue our workshops. Adding to the workshops there will be a garden orientation to give our new gardeners a better handle on our support services and an orientation on where things are in the garden.

Communication!

The intent is to continue the newsletter. We do want to reach out to the community in several ways so there's an awareness of the Garden among all the residents. Along that line we will try to circulate the newsletter to the community at large. Last winter the Open House was successful, so we're looking to hold one again next year.

Volunteer Thank You!

Our August Service Day was successful again! Thanks to Linda Papertsian for organizing the tasks. We had 30 folks participating again. That means we've had 90 volunteers over our three Service Days. With an average of 2 hours donated per person that means 180 hours of garden task work. That's PHENOMENAL! Thank you!

Garden Party Aug. 14th – 2025 Winners!

The 2025 Garden Party was very successful. A huge thank you to Brenda Larkin, our events coordinator, and her team Wendy Gill and Pam Prindle. Great job! Attendees, don't forget to download the photo booth pics.

Our 2025 winners: Golden Shovel recipients – Joan Wooster for the lower garden and Cheryl Chester for the upper garden. The New Gardener Award went to Kathy Bellingham. Tough voting this year; so many really good gardens. Remember! There's always next year – it seems to get tougher to decide each year. Great job, folks!