



Dowling Garden Spring Cleanup is Saturday, May 1

10 AM-NOON If your service commitment assignment is to help out at Spring and Fall clean-ups, this event is for you! Come meet your gardening neighbors and help prepare the common garden areas for a new season. We will clean up debris, organize and make any needed repairs to the shed, prepare school garden plots, and complete other seasonal chores. Meet at the shed.

Bring garden tools (rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, pruners), weed trimmers, lawn mowers, trash bags, garden gloves.

WATER BARREL FILLING DEMONSTRATION Have you signed up to fill water barrels this season? A demonstration will be given at 11 AM on Cleanup Day showing how to access water spigots, flush the system and fill barrels.

FREE SEEDS AVAILABLE Attend Spring Cleanup and select from vegetable and flower seeds donated by Minnesota State Horticultural Society's Minnesota Green program.

Spring Planting Date: JUNE 6

Make sure your garden is planted by June 6. Unplanted plots will be assumed to be abandoned, and you may forfeit your plot if your garden is not planted in a timely manner.

IMPORTANT Insurance Notice

Our insurance provider has a safety policy we must follow. Please read the notice posted in the new shed bulletin board regarding this policy.

NO PESTICIDES/HERBICIDES are allowed in the garden, to comply with Minnesota state law and our insurance policy.

SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

Your service commitment assignment is enclosed in this newsletter. Please make sure you follow through with your chosen task; it takes all of us to make this garden successful.

REPORT YOUR SERVICE HOURS Remember to keep track of your service hours and report them. Call the Dowling phone line and let us know your name, activity performed and date it was completed, and time spent. All service hours must be completed by November 30, 2004. The Dowling phone line number is 651/255-6607.



SPRING GARDENING TIP

Apply a thick layer of **mulch** around your plants after the soil has warmed. It will conserve moisture, reducing the amount you'll need to water; smother weeds; and keep the soil cool when summer heat sets in. Suitable mulches include leaves, straw, dried grass clippings, compost.

SURPLUS PRODUCE Program for 2004

PLANT EXTRA PRODUCE Dowling gardeners are encouraged to share the bounty a garden provides with members of our community who are unable to easily procure fresh produce.

Plant a few extra vegetables in your plot or designate part of your regular harvest to be shared. Pick your vegetables often, and donate what you cannot use (each season, too much produce spoils in the garden because it is not picked).

Garden volunteers will pick up donated produce a few times per week from a central garden location and deliver it to local food distribution sites. Some of the most requested vegetables are tomatoes, peas, green beans, corn, salad and cooking greens, and cucumbers. Vegetables used in Asian or African cooking are also needed.

Look for a notice on the shed about pick-up days or check the web site; we'll also send details via email. For more information about this program, contact the surplus food coordinator, Emilie Liepa, at 612/724-9065.

GOOD REASONS TO PLANT A ROW FOR THE HUNGRY

33 million people (including 13 million children), or one in ten U.S. households, experience hunger or the risk of hunger.

3.1% of U.S. households, or 8.5 million people (including 2.9 million children), experience hunger: they skip meals, eat too little, or go without food for a whole day.

Millions of poor children under-consume essential nutrients and food energy. Nutrient deficiencies can lead to problems like impaired cognitive development, growth failure, weakness, anemia and stunting.

Dowling Garden Wins AWARD

On February 21, at the Minnesota State Horticultural Society's State Awards program, Dowling Community Garden was given the St. Paul Garden Club Award for "Excellence in Community Vegetable Gardening". A photo, and information about the garden, appeared in the March issue of *Northern Gardener* magazine. The April issue of *The Longfellow/Nokomis Messenger* features a story about our award, and interviews with several gardeners.

Gardening for WILDLIFE

By Emilie Liepa

Dowling Community Garden has committed to improving wildlife habitat within the garden space. This spring several bird nesting boxes will be installed, as well as a bat house. These were constructed as part of people's service projects for 2003. Please keep your eyes open for them in the garden, and respect any future occupants.

What does urban wildlife need? Just like us, they want water, food, shelter, warmth, and a suitable place for a family. Here are a few things you can do to create a garden habitat that is a safe haven for wildlife: You may want to:

- Set aside a place to grow larval and nectar plants for butterflies (They particularly like plants that have flat pads, umbels, cones or spikes. The flower heads of all these plants are made up of tiny flowerlets. A butterfly can probe each one without moving about very much and using unnecessary energy) or

seed and fruit bearing plants for birds;

- Build a rock pile for small mammals;
 - Create a spot for toads; provide a shallow water dish which you clean and refill regularly;
 - Attract beneficial insects. [See article on attracting beneficials in the April/May 2004 issue of *Organic Gardening* magazine.]
- The possibilities are endless, and the wildlife will thank you.

For more information, and a list of plants that attract wildlife, pick up the information sheet in the shed or visit the web site (www.dowlingcommunitygarden.org) and click on "Wildlife".

Bio-film MULCH EXPERIMENT

By Eric Hart and Joan Krey

This last season we discovered a black seasonal mulching film made out of corn starch. It's a thin black material that lasts nearly to the end of the season. We chose to put it around our tomatoes and enjoyed a nearly weed-free bed all season. The heat from the black film helped us get tomatoes earlier and all the tomatoes ripened before the frost. It also helped to reduce the blight that normally splashes onto the lower leaves. The mulch works best in weed-free plots (especially those clean of quack grass), and you can't walk on it. The film comes in 5-by-30-foot rows, so you should design your beds accordingly.

It works best if you mound the bed slightly with trenches around the edges so you can bury the sides of the film and pull it tight over the bed. After the film is down you can slit small holes in it for your transplants. (It appears that the film works best for transplants.) "Garden Bio-Film" is available at Mother Earth Gardens and in 2003 cost \$9.99 for a 150 square foot roll. Even though the cost might seem high, we thought it was a bargain since it seemed to improve yield and required much less weeding. More information is available at: <http://www.biogroupusa.com/biogarden.htm>.

DOWLING SCHOOL gets a New Garden!

The Garden has been asked by Dowling School to design and install a garden at the main entrance off Edmund Avenue.

Garden planning is underway, with installation scheduled for late spring. We are looking for gardeners willing to help out with preparing the garden site, planting the garden, and

GARDENING ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Cans for Sam" Plant Sale Saturday May 15, 8am-2pm at 3608 38th Avenue South. Proceeds support low-cost pet spay/neuter programs.

Friends School Plant Sale Friday May 7, 11am-8pm; Saturday May 8, 9am-8pm; Sunday May 9, 9am-4pm. 1365 Inglewood Avenue, St. Paul.

Longfellow Garden Club Plant Swap is May 12 at 7PM, Epworth United Methodist Church (3207 37th Avenue South). Bring perennials and extra flower or vegetable seedlings to share with other gardeners.

Midtown Farmers' Market opens on July 10.

Manure Dowling gardener Steve Dosch will deliver manure to a spot near your garden. Contact him directly to discuss quantity and cost: 612/729-1865.

Needed: Skilled carpenters to help repair the shed. Leave your name and number on the garden phone line, and someone will get back to you with more information.

weeding it over the summer. We are also looking for donations of perennial plants – if you or your neighbors have shade or semi-shade loving plants to divide this spring, we are interested! Call Susan at 612/722-8022 to volunteer to help out, or to let us know about plants you may have available.

MINNEHAHA FALLS NURSERY

offers a 10% discount on plants. Identify yourself as a Dowling Gardener at time of purchase.

MOTHER EARTH GARDENS

offers a one-time 10% discount on plants with this coupon. Good for 2004.

Thank you to our local Garden Centers!

GO TO WWW.DOWLINGCOMMUNITYGARDENING.ORG FOR SEED-STARTING INFORMATION, GARDENING TIPS, RECIPES AND WEBSITE LINKS!

Dowling Community Garden

PO Box 6757
Minneapolis, MN 55406
651/255-6607

**YOUR SERVICE ASSIGNMENT
IS INSIDE!**

Forward and Address Correction Requested