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VINES is an all volunteer organization which supports and promotes urban food production. Our work is made possible by the hard work of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors.

Please consider donating to VINES to help our projects thrive!

VINES Donation Levels

Garden Angel (\$1000+)
Steward (\$500-\$999)
Cultivator (\$250-\$499)
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~ All donations to VINES are tax-deductible ~

All donors will be recognized on our website and in our newsletter. Donations over \$1,000 will be recognized on a plaque at the garden of the donor's choosing for two years.

**Support VINES by sending your donation to:
VINES P.O. Box 3104 Binghamton, NY 13902**

VINES Meetings

VINES meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm
RiverRead Books, 5 Court St in Binghamton (www.riverreadbooks.com).

Call 245-6208 to confirm meetings.

All are welcome!



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Mission Statement

VINES is an organization committed to developing community food systems primarily through establishing community gardens, parks, and other collective green spaces as well as economic micro-markets and niche networks that strengthen and increase empowerment and enhance the quality of life within neighborhoods and surrounding communities.



VINES' Farm Stand at the Binghamton Urban Farm

NEWSLETTER OF VOLUNTEERS IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENTS

COMMUNITY GARDEN TIMES

Volume 2, Issue 2 Oct 2010

Greetings from the Chair

At the end of another successful and very busy year, VINES is in the process of preparing the community gardens for the winter months, reflecting upon our accomplishments and areas for improvement, and planning for 2011. Originally, we had planned on 2010 being a year to focus on our existing gardens and on taking a year off from building new sites. However, when all of the pieces came together for the creation of the Binghamton Urban Farm Project, we knew we needed to in-

vest our time and resources into breaking ground on this exciting initiative.

2011 will be another busy and productive year for VINES, and we are excited about the prospect of bringing on an Americorps member, expanding our youth programming, and developing a new community garden in Binghamton, all of which is discussed further in the below article. I am inspired by what has been accomplished by VINES in just four short years. If you are inspired as

well, I hope you will do what you can to support our work with a financial contribution for this coming growing season. Creating and maintaining our growing sites requires a significant amount of volunteer labor but it cannot be done without financial resources as well. Please consider making a donation to VINES and know that your contribution will help support a more sustainable, equitable food system for Binghamton.

~Amelia LoDolce, VINES Chair

Planning for a Sustainable Future for VINES

As we look ahead, VINES envisions 2011 as a year to strengthen and improve all of our projects and our organization as a whole. To do so, we are launching our largest fundraising initiative yet. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 for 2011.

These funds would allow us to fund an Americorps position through the Rural Health Service Corps (RHSC, sponsored by the Rural Health Network), build at least one new community garden, expand the Binghamton Urban Farm Project, and continue to purchase our garden sites.

We also plan to construct an Orchard Park on Liberty St on a vacant lot donated to VINES by Opportunities for Broome, Inc and to expand our youth programming. In addition to working with the City of Binghamton on the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), we anticipate launching our Build-a-Garden program, which will involve youth during the school year in building garden beds at the homes of income eligible residents. Modeled on a similar program of the Food Project in Boston, the Build-a-



Tomatoes and herbs growing at the Urban Farm on Tudor St.

Garden program will provide youth with job skill training while providing residents with the ongoing support needed to grow their own fresh food at home. We have applied to the City for a grant to provide funding for both youth programs.

To date, VINES has operated primarily through the work of volunteers, but our projects have expanded such that we need the assistance of full time workers to keep things running smoothly. VINES is at a critical point in its evolution. The RHSC member will lead in supervising VINES youth programming and help to build the organization's capacity.

While we purchased two of our sites this year, we have informal agreements or leases for the

remaining sites. As we learned in 2008 when we lost the original Pine Street community garden due to the sale of the land, ownership of the garden sites is very important. We invest a tremendous amount of energy, time and funds into developing each garden. The loss of a garden site is a blow to the community and VINES, and we are working to prevent this from happening again in the future.

Our fundraising goal may seem ambitious, but it certainly isn't large considering the amount of work we will accomplish with it. VINES has achieved a tremendous amount on a relatively small budget over the last few years, thanks to the support of volunteers and those who have donated funds, materials, and services. With your support, we can reach this fundraising goal and make further strides toward our mission of building a more sustainable and equitable food system while improving our neighborhood environments. Please consider making a donation today. Find out how to do so on the back page of this newsletter.

The Binghamton Urban Farm Project's Summer Youth Employment Program

Through collaboration with the City of Binghamton and Cornell Cooperative Extension, over 20 local youth were employed at the Binghamton Urban Farm Project for six weeks this summer. The youth spent most of their time at the Tudor St farm site. They contributed to our mission of increasing access to nutritious, local, and affordable food and assisted in transforming a former vacant lot into the productive farm site you can now visit on Tudor St.

Throughout the summer the youth participated in many stages of the farming process, including preparing the soil, planting seeds and transplants, weeding, watering, harvesting, and selling produce. They also worked on other projects on the farm including erecting a hoop house frame, designing and executing site beautification projects, and building and painting a farm stand. Several of the youth employees also had the opportunity to develop skills in public speaking and interacting with the media, and a few of them were quoted in

local media, including YNN and the Press & Sun Bulletin.

We ended our summer with a celebration of all that the youth accomplished. On the evening of our last day of work, youth, family, and friends gathered for some great food and conversation. Most of the food was made by the youth and BUF members with food from the farm and local gardens, and the youth's family and friends were able to see the results of all the hard work put in by the youth.

Through this program, the youth were engaged to think about where their food comes from as well as the impact of the choices they make when purchasing food. Through group activities, guided discussion, and informal conversation, they were exposed to issues and information about food security and food justice, urban farming, agriculture, composting, hunger, poverty and homelessness. Even those who ultimately decided that farming is not for them gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the amount of work that



SYEP Participants with Supervisor & VINES Board Member Lauren Tonti (Left)

goes into growing and selling produce as well as some of the reasons why local food production is so important.

Next year we look forward to collaborating with youth through another summer youth

employment program. We greatly enjoyed having youth be part of our urban farm and are learning so much from them.

Corbett Avenue Community Garden Member Feature: Shelley Lay

Shelley Lay has been a member at the Corbett Avenue Community Garden for two years in a row. Carol Miyake, VINES Board Secretary, interviewed Shelley about her experience as a member of the garden.

Question: Had you tried growing your own vegetables previous to growing at the Community Garden?

Shelley: I've tried to grow vegetables in the past, but the deer gobbled them up. The deer fence at the garden has helped to keep my plants safe this year.

Question: What has changed about your food buying habits since becoming a garden member?

Shelley: I like to buy organic produce, and I love shopping at farmers' markets. Now when I visit the farmers' market, I don't mind the higher cost of the organic vegetables because I know how much work it takes to grow them.

Question: Have you met more of your neighbors by getting involved with the garden?

Shelley: I've been living on Corbett Ave for the past five years, but only recently got to know Dick Andrus, my neighbor, who is the garden site coordinator.

Question: What was your most successful crop this year?

Shelley: Okra.

Question: What have you enjoyed most about being a garden member?

Shelley: I've enjoyed the exercise, the produce, and getting to know my neighbor better.



Shelley Lay standing with her plot at the Corbett Ave Community Garden.

How to Plant Garlic

October is here. This means it is time to plant garlic! Garlic is very easy to plant and maintain.

First, you must determine how much garlic you would like to yield and how much space you have available. The space you choose will be devoted to garlic for about 9 months. Garlic should be planted right before the first frost which is typically towards the end of October.

For your first time, try growing a small amount of garlic. One clove of garlic can be planted to yield one head. Each clove should be spaced out by about 8-10 inches. For more fertile soil smaller spacing is appropriate.

The cloves should be planted about 2 inches deep.

When you plant garlic from the clove you *must* remember to plant the clove with the scab ends facing down! After planting, pat the cloves so they make proper contact with the soil and give them some water. The garlic will need to be mulched over winter. Straw or oak leaves can be layered on top of the soil as mulch. Once there is no longer a threat of frost the mulch can be taken away during spring.

You will begin to see the garlic sprout once it begins to get warmer. You can fertilize in the spring after there is no frost if necessary. Around June your garlic will produce a flower head which is called a scape. The scape is a long stem that protrudes from the leaves (see photo). You will want to



A garlic plant with the scape, which must be removed.

cut these off at the base of the stem when their pointy heads form. If you leave them on, the plant's energy will be directed to the scape, which is the

plant's flower, rather than to the garlic bulb—resulting in small garlic bulbs.

Harvest your garlic in late July to mid August when the leaves begin to brown and die back. You will need a spading fork. If you attempt to pull the garlic by its stem you will break it off. Place the spading fork along the side of the garlic, push down and pull the fork handle towards you to loosen the garlic heads from the soil. Pulling them out will now be easier.

Once you have harvested your garlic you can hang or lay them to dry. Keep the stems attached to the garlic bulbs. They will be storage-ready once the stem dries out completely and the garlic skins are dried.

Season Extension—A Primer

Thinking about extending the growing season of your garden? If you think you need a heated greenhouse, think again.

To be able to extend a growing season of crops anywhere in the world, the climate surrounding the crops must be modified, which can be done with some simple techniques.

To grow vegetables in the winter months, one must create a "microclimate" in a focused growing area. Choosing locations with good southern exposure is the most important part in creating a microclimate. An easy way to optimize this exposure and potential heat gain from the sun is to orient rows from east to west, and pile the soil up on the northern side of the row, tapering down to the southern side, effectively creating several south-facing slopes. The darker the soil and more perpendicular it is to the sun's



Left: A coldframe

Right: A low tunnel hoop house

rays, the more heat is absorbed. If an area is not sheltered from the wind by trees or hedges, fences or temporary fabric windbreaks may be used to shelter the growing area.

The next step to creating a microclimate is to build a structure over the plants to trap heat while allowing for maximum sun exposure. You needn't build a greenhouse. Instead, you can use a small structure that is designed to fit only the plants within such as a cold frame, a box or raised garden bed with a glass or

clear plastic lid, or a plastic row covering suspended by hoops. Row coverings are an effective and economical way to harvest crops in a season extended from the summer well into the fall and winter. Some crops (such as lettuce, cabbage, brussels sprouts, kale, collards, broccoli, cauliflower, swiss chard, spinach, beets, carrots, and turnips) can survive all winter long or be started several weeks earlier than normal in the spring. On some warm winter and spring days however, the air within the structure may be

come too hot and must be ventilated.

Resources: If you are serious about extending your growing/harvest seasons into the winter, *Four Season Harvest* and *The Winter Harvest Handbook* by Eliot Coleman are essential books on this subject. These books can be purchased locally at the River-Read Bookstore, 5 Court St Binghamton. More information on Eliot Coleman's techniques is available at: <http://www.fourseasonfarm.com/>.