

greenguerillas

2014 Accomplishments

Green Guerillas engaged in an array of activities to support community gardeners and strengthen community gardens. Our staff, interns, and volunteers:

Distributed plants, soil, and materials to community gardeners

Spring Giveaways: Green Guerillas organized giveaways in May in the East Village, Bedford Stuyvesant, and the Bronx. 100 community garden groups received over 50 varieties of organic vegetable and herb seedlings specially selected to thrive in the growing conditions typically found in New York City community gardens. Seedlings included tomatoes, hot and sweet peppers, eggplants, okra, kale, cabbage, broccoli, collards, calaloo, swiss chard, mixed lettuces, mustard greens, leeks and onions, cilantro, parsley, chives, thyme, oregano and epazote. We also distributed seeds and tip sheets on how to build healthy soil and organic gardening techniques. Light refreshments helped gardeners enjoy the day as they socialized and planned for the upcoming season.

Fall Giveaways: We held giveaways in October in the East Village and Harlem. 15 community garden groups chose from a selection of perennial shrubs and bushes, flower bulbs, garlic bulbs, and cover crop seeds. Community gardeners also came together to celebrate the closing of the growing season and share stories.

11th Street Garden: Green Guerillas provided lumber, hardware and tools for a rebuilding project of the 11th Street Garden in the East Village. We worked with the garden leaders to develop plans to protect the garden from rodents and pests, as well as make the garden more resilient against weather-related events.

Provided organizing, fundraising, and organizational assistance to garden leaders

Central Brooklyn Gardeners Coalition: Green Guerillas helped Bedford-Stuyvesant community garden leaders meet, develop fundraising applications, organize garden workdays and events, and bring resources into their neighborhood.

Neighborhood Advisory Community Garden: We provided lumber, hardware, and tools and organized volunteer workdays to build 5 tree pits surrounding this South Bronx community garden.

Fundraising assistance: Our executive director helped 9 community garden groups raise and manage funding from the Citizens Committee and the NY City Council. Groups include: Phoenix Community garden, Davidson Avenue Garden, Bruce Reynolds Memorial Garden, La Perla Garden, Serenity Garden, Hope Steven Garden, Convent Garden and Harris Garden.

Bronx and Manhattan Land Trusts: Our staff provided organizing and organizational assistance to these two grassroots land trusts and their 32 members gardens. We helped them engage in effective property management, manage water systems, organize fundraisers and volunteer workdays, and lead community garden walking tours.

Helped the Youth Farm at the HS for Public Service thrive

We helped the Youth Farm raise and manage funds, do outreach, and strengthen their program. This dynamic group of farmers and youth managed a 1 acre farm that provided fresh healthy food to 100 Crown Heights/East Flatbush families through a CSA and a weekly farmers market. They engaged more than 500 youth in classes and farm activities to help them gain skills, learn where

their food comes from and learn to eat and cook healthier. Hundreds of community residents and youth from other schools engaged in farm workdays, visits, and workshops.

Helped central Brooklyn community gardeners grow more food, produce more compost, and harvest more rainwater

We distributed organic fruit and vegetables seedlings and organized Youth Tillers workdays at the following food growing community gardeners to help gardeners adopt organic practices and grow more organic food:

- Hull Street Garden: Repairing and rebuilding raised beds, weeding and watering.
- Farmers Garden: Weeding and clearing to make room for more raised beds
- Phoenix Community Garden: Weeding, watering, general garden maintenance, clearing paths, planting organic vegetables from both seed and seedling, tending and harvesting crops to be donated to local soup kitchen, training tomatoes
- Vernon and Throop: Weeding, watering and garden maintenance
- Tranquility Farm: Weeded, watered, designed and created slate pathway into garden to increase accessibility for elderly and disabled community members
- Shiloh Garden: Weeded, watered, spread mulch to act as organic weed control around garden, planted organic flower and vegetable seedlings.
- Central Bainbridge Garden: Spread woodchips around garden for organic weed control, weeding, and watering
- Ralph Lincoln Garden: Weeding, watering, trash pickup, painting of raised beds and garden furniture to encourage membership
- A Better Community Garden: Weeding and garden maintenance
- PS 262: Planted organic vegetables from seed, planted blueberry bush, weeded, watered, painted beds and built benches
- Madison Street Block Association: Garden maintenance, weeding, watering
- Green Acres Community Garden: Pruned trees, chopped weeds for assimilation into compost, watered, and improved function of solar panel for electricity in garden

We installed and enhanced rainwater harvesting systems at:

- Tranquility Farm: Designed and built a comprehensive rainwater harvesting system that will serve as a model for other gardens in the years to come.
- Hart to Hart: Designed and built a smaller-scale rainwater harvesting system. Youth Tillers led project from start to finish based on skills acquired from the Tranquility project.
- PS 262: Installed 2 rainwater harvesting barrels to be used to collect rainwater, educate school children on rainwater harvesting, and reduce reliance on janitorial staff for garden sustainability
- Imani Garden: Improved upon current rainwater harvesting practices by designing and installing a rain garden as a second system for catchment of overflow from the current system, improving moisture levels of the garden's soil and reducing runoff.
- GreenAcres Garden: We improved and repaired a rainwater harvesting system that was very underutilized.

We installed and repaired compost systems at:

- Phoenix Community Garden: Helped design and install an innovative plastic lumber "hot box" composting system (benefits: long-lasting, composts material more quickly, rodent-resistant)
- Vernon T&T: Designed and built a large 3-bin compost system
- Shiloh Community Garden: Designed and built a large 3-bin compost system
- Jane Bailey Garden: We co-hosted a composting workshop for community gardeners at start of season, improved current compost operations through turning, sifting and finishing current contents and prepping bins for new material.
- Clifton Place Memorial Park and Garden: We made important repairs and improvements to the current composting system.

We also distributed six tons of organic soil to: Tranquility Farm, Vernon and Throop Garden, Vernon T & T Garden, Hart to Hart garden, Green Acres Garden, Clifton Place Memorial Garden, and Jane Bailey Memorial Garden.

Through our Summer Season Extension Giveaway we distributed organic fruit and vegetable seedlings to 12 Bedford-Stuyvesant community gardens in August to help them extend the growing season and grow hundreds of pounds of extra food for their families and neighbors.

We stepped up our efforts to get good educational information to community gardeners and Bedford-Stuyvesant residents by organizing 3 mini conferences:

Mini Conference 1: Composting

Green Guerillas organized, did outreach for, and held a mini-conference at Jane Bailey Community Garden where we distributed educational materials, held a workshop and demonstration on vermicomposting and compost sifting, and heard a presentation from the Youth Tillers on the various compost activities they have experienced over the summer and how they can apply what they've learned to improving compost in community gardens.

Mini Conference 2: Organic Gardening

Green Guerillas organized, did outreach for, and held a mini-conference on organic gardening at Shiloh Community Garden. The event included educational materials on organic gardening, season extension and cover crop seeds for soil amendment. We distributed organic vegetable and herb seedlings to gardeners to be planted late in the season to boost and extend their harvests.

Mini Conference 3: Rainwater Harvesting

Green Guerillas organized, did outreach for, and held a mini-conference on organic gardening at Tranquility Farm. The Youth Tillers presented the rainwater harvesting system they built in the garden and gave rainwater harvesting tips and facts to the group. We distributed educational material, seeds, and had a roundtable discussion. We also distributed 148 fruit and vegetable seed packets at the mini conference to community gardeners from Tranquility Farm, Jane Bailey Garden, Abib Newborn Garden, Clifton Place Memorial Garden, and Vernon Throop Community Garden.

Information dissemination: We distributed 250 rainwater harvesting tip sheets by mail and at the mini conference, 250 composting tip sheets by mail and at the mini conference, and distributed 200 organic gardening tip sheets at our plant giveaways, a workshop at Phoenix Community Garden, and at the mini conference.

Engaged 9 youth in internships

Young adult interns: Green Guerillas engaged 2 college-aged interns to provide organizing assistance to community garden groups, lead volunteer workdays, support community farmers markets, and mentor our youth tiller interns.

Youth Tillers: We hired 5 teenagers for paid urban agriculture internships in Bedford-Stuyvesant that challenged them to build compost bins and rainwater harvesting systems, cultivate fruits and vegetables, and organize mini conferences. An auxiliary team of 2 youth tillers pitched in on all of these activities and also promoted community composting in Bushwick and community greening in Western Queens.

We organized field trips to give the tillers the opportunity to experience large scale organic gardening and composting operations and ask questions of experts in the field. We organized 3 field trips to McEnroe Organic Farm, Brooklyn Grange rooftop farm in Long Island City, and the Earth Matter educational compost facility on Governors Island.

Eleven workshops helped the youth tillers team get information and start to think critically about environmental issues. Workshops covered organic gardening, environmental justice, recycling, community organizing, and safe carpentry practices.

Organized youth-powered community arts activities

Our *Youth Mural Project* put paint brushes in the hands of dozens of children and challenged them to create: a colorful mural painted on the water tank of Mo’Pals Community Garden in Harlem; colorful mini-murals on garden pots at Davidson Avenue Garden in the Bronx; and colorful mini-murals at a children’s day at the Vernon Throop Community Garden.

Engaged garden stewards

Our annual meeting and our benefit party served as energetic, educational, and celebratory opportunities to inspire our members, supporters, and board of directors to support the work of community gardeners. GGs also helped gardeners in the East Village and Harlem hold walking tours of community gardens.

Measured the effectiveness of our work

GGs staff used formal and informal methods to monitor the effectiveness of our work and ensure that our programs met the needs of community gardeners. We utilized meetings, phone interviews, and one-on-one discussions with garden leaders. Our board of directors closely monitors the organization’s fiscal and programmatic efficacy.

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