



Long Beach Organic Inc.

Spring 2010 Newsletter

On the web: www.longbeachorganic.org

Long Beach Organic Inc. (LBO) is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 and dedicated to promoting sustainable organic gardening practices and local food production in an urban environment.

The six community garden spaces currently operated by Long Beach Organic are located throughout the city. Members pay annual dues and participate in regular work days to improve the grounds. All gardening is organic.

LBO's future goals include establishing additional garden spaces around the city, as well as expanding membership, outreach activities and donor opportunities.

To get involved, contact LBO at (562) 438-9000 or info@longbeachorganic.org.

LBO Board of Directors

Julie Bolton

Joe Corso

James de Boer

Spencer Langdon

Dale Maul

Darwin Thorpe

WIN-WIN

Just how do you convince property owners to let a bunch of strangers garden on their land for free? It sounds impossible, but believe it or not, the answer is not always, "No."



Gardeners Debbie Flynn and Steven Woodruff, with property owners Francisco and Jerry de los Santos, on the future site of LBO's South Forty Community Garden.

Francisco de los Santos had bought a parcel of land on South Street five years ago, planning to build a warehouse for his family's construction business. With the recent economic downturn, those plans have been put on hold. The property sits idle, requiring regular cleanups and continuing liability. When Long Beach Organic approached the family with the idea of leasing it for a community garden for a mere \$1 a year, their curiosity was piqued. We assured them that we would maintain and insure the property, relieving them of those headaches, in exchange for a long-term lease. We settled on a three-year term, and made plans for our new South Forty Community Garden, opening April 1!

There are tax advantages as well for property owners who donate the use of their land and, we hope, pride in the fact that they are making a vital contribution to their community. A thriving green space in an urban area, where more than 40 families will be able to grow organic produce for their tables, is a priceless gift that benefits everyone.

Last summer, at the opening ceremony of the Wrigley Village Community Garden on Pacific Avenue, the owner of that property, Annette LaBarca, put it very simply: "All I had to do was say yes. If you've got a lot in Long Beach that they can turn into a community garden, that you're not doing anything with, all you have to do is say yes!"

We are extremely grateful to Ms. LaBarca and the De los Santos family for saying yes to Long Beach Organic. We hope to make them proud with the gardens we create on their properties. For more information about the South Forty Community Garden, contact us at info@longbeachorganic.org.

Joe Corso
Garden Director

Sign up on the citywide garden waiting list at www.longbeachorganic.org



2nd Annual Summer Solstice Celebration

When: Saturday, June 19th, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: Wild Oats Community Garden

Join us for sun and fun!

- Tour the Long Beach Organic garden
- Artisan Market focusing on homegrown and handmade
 - Enjoy delicious organic food by Primal Alchemy
 - Live music, kid's activities and more

For more information, visit: www.longbeachorganic.org

To volunteer, email joe@longbeachorganic.org - volunteer time counts toward community work hours for Long Beach Organic members

Temple Israel Volunteers



Rabbi Steven Moskowitz gives volunteer Carol Beckerman a breather.

Temple Israel of Long Beach (www.tilb.org) chose LBO as one of several charities it sponsored for its annual day of volunteering in February. Several families came to the Wild Oats garden to pull weeds and turn compost. Parents and kids both enjoyed learning about organic gardening and feeding the chickens. The day was finished off with a potluck barbecue.

Tree People Donates 50 Fruit Trees to LBO

Thanks to the generosity of Tree People (www.treepeople.org), Long Beach Organic was able to plant orchards at the Wrigley Village and Saint Luke's Community Gardens, and provide the Wild Oats Garden with a citrus grove.

Adriana Martinez (<http://www.anarchyinthegarden.com/>), who manages our Wrigley Village Garden, arranged the donation, which included bare root stone fruit and citrus seedlings. Extra trees were taken home by LBO gardeners.



Adriana downloads planting tips for newly acquired trees.

Growing beets, turnips and rutabagas by Ken Yliniemi

Beets: Beets are popular in the home garden because they are relatively easy to grow and practically the whole plant can be eaten. Beets can be grown for their root qualities which include different shapes and sizes as well as red, yellow or white colors. The tops or greens, when young, are excellent in salads and when the plant is older, can be cooked. The greens are even more nutritious than the roots. Beets provide a rich source of folate - and the greens - either cooked or tossed in salads and provide a rich source of calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, and vitamin A.

Climatic Requirements: Beets prefer a cooler climate although they are tolerant of heat. Temperatures of 60 to 65 F and bright sunny days are ideal for beet plant growth and development. They can withstand cold weather short of severe freezing, making them a good long-season crop.

Soils: Beets prefer loose, well-drained soils but will tolerate a wide range. Remove stones and debris since this will hinder growth. In high clay soils, add organic matter to improve soil structure and to help avoid crusting after rainfall. Beets also make an excellent raised bed crop since soils are generally less compacted and there is less foot traffic. Beets are also sensitive to soil acidity. A low soil pH results in stunted growth. They prefer a pH of 6.2 to 6.8 and will tolerate 6.0 to 7.5.

Establishing the Planting: Beets can be harvested at any time in their growth cycle. Greens are best when four to six inches tall. Beet roots are generally most tender after growing for 40 to 50 days. The best size is between 1-1/2 to 2 inches in diameter. As beets get larger, they tend to become more fibrous. When harvested, leave at least one inch of foliage on the root to avoid bleeding during cooking.

Below are some varieties and their characteristics.

* Burpee Golden - Round type with a unique yellow-orange color.

* Pacemaker III - Uniform, smooth a tender round beet, cercospera leaf spot tolerant, high quality tops.

* Red Ace hybrid - Exceptional weather tolerance, cercospera leaf spot tolerant, early maturity.

* Little Mini Ball - Sliver-dollar sized round roots.

* Detroit Dark Red - Excellent canning, pickling quality, tender & sweet, good boiling greens.

Turnips: These are a cool-weather vegetable crop. They are grown in the fall, winter, and spring in the South, and in the spring and fall in the North. Leave the middle of the summer for the heat loving vegetables. Turnips need soil that's high in organic matter and well-drained but able to hold moisture. While Turnips will tolerate poorer soils, they will grow better in richer garden soils, and



be less likely to take on a woody texture. Too much nitrogen in the soil encourages the plant to produce leaves and a seed stalk rather than a good-size root. Work the soil and add compost. Make sure to remove any large rocks and stones.

Turnips don't transplant well, so grow from seed sown directly in the garden. Sow seeds 1 to 2 inches apart in single or wide rows. Turnips sprout quickly, in about a week. When the seedlings are large enough to handle, thin to 3 or 4 inches apart; if you're growing turnips for greens that are edible, just like beets, thin to 2 to 3 inches apart.

Water before the soil dries out; water is important to keep turnips growing as fast as possible. If growth is slow, the roots become strong-flavored and woody and the plant will often send up a seed stalk.

Harvesting Turnips: Pick turnips when they are 2 to 4 inches in diameter--before they get pithy and bitter. Pull them easily when the soil is moist. Pick greens when they are young and tender; use thinned seedlings for greens.

Types of Turnips: There are round varieties as well as long cylindrical and flat types.

* Purple Top White Globe matures in 58 days.

* Tokyo Cross Hybrid, 35 days, is an All America Selection that produces 2- to 6-inch pure white roots.

* Hakurei, 38 days, is also pure white. Days to Maturity: 35-45 days

Insects and Pests: Turnips are bothered by a variety of insects and pests. The insect world knows that this vegetable is tasty and nutritious. They include slugs and snails, aphids, beetles, cutworms and root maggots. Because they grow and are harvested quickly, large infestations are not often a problem in the home gardens. By the time you spot a problem, it is time to harvest.

Disease: Occasional mildews and a white blister disease can affect the crop. However, it is infrequent.

Rutabagas: Growing rutabagas is not much different from growing a turnip. They are a cross between the turnip and the cabbage plant. The difference is that growing rutabagas generally takes four weeks longer than growing cabbage or turnips. This is why fall is the best time to plant rutabaga plants.

The rutabaga or Swede turnip is thought to have originated in the Middle Ages. While the rutabaga resembles the turnip, there are distinct differences. The rutabaga has smooth, waxy, blue-green foliage. The thickened root of most varieties is yellow-fleshed. Most turnips are white-fleshed and have rough, hairy

leaves.

The rutabaga is a cool, long-season crop. It performs best when planted in summer for a fall crop. Sow seed at a depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Rows should be spaced 18 to 24 inches apart. After germination, thin rutabagas to 6 inches apart.

'American Purple Top' and 'Laurentian' are suggested rutabaga varieties for home gardens. Both varieties produce globe-shaped, light yellow roots with purple tops. Their flesh is yellow.

Rutabagas require 1 to 1 1/2 inches of water per week (either from rain or irrigation) during the growing season. Water weekly

during dry weather. Control weeds in the area with frequent, shallow (less than 2 inches deep) cultivation.

The rutabaga can be harvested when the roots reach 2 or 3 inches in diameter. However, it's best to harvest rutabagas when the roots are 4 to 5 inches in diameter and the plants have been exposed to several light frosts. Light frosts sweeten the flavor of the roots. The foliage may also be harvested for greens.

Rutabagas require approximately 90 to 110 days from planting until harvest.

Cooking from the Garden by Joe Corso

HUMBLE ROOTS

Root vegetables are often boiled and bland, but with some special treatment they can become the star of wonderful dishes. Here turnips are browned in butter and sugar then simmered in stock, and beets are perfumed by roasting them with shallots and rosemary.

CARAMELIZED TURNIPS

Based on a recipe from Simply French by Patricia Wells and Joel Robuchon, which gives lowly turnips the royal treatment.

1-1/2 lb. turnips, white purple top, about 2" in diameter
3 Tbs. butter
Salt and pepper
2 Tbs. sugar
1 cup chicken stock or water

Peel turnips and cut into rounds 1" thick. (If you have older winter turnips, blanch them in boiling salted water to soften the flavor. If you have young spring turnips, no blanching is necessary.)

Melt the butter over medium heat in a 12-inch skillet with a cover. Add the turnips, season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with sugar. Cook slowly, turning from time to time, until browned, about 10 minutes.

Add 1/4 cup of the stock, cover and continue to cook over moderate heat until most of the liquid has been reduced, about 5 minutes. Continue adding stock and reducing it, until all the stock has been used and the turnips are evenly golden brown and meltingly tender. Can be set aside in the skillet and gently reheated before serving.

ROASTED BEETS

This method of flavoring beets by roasting them in foil with herbs comes from Alton Brown. Enjoy them as is, or prepare his pickled beets, below.

Roasted Beets:

6 medium beets, cleaned with 1-inch stem remaining
2 large shallots, peeled
2 sprigs rosemary
2 teaspoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

In a large bowl toss all of the ingredients. Place into a foil pouch and roast in the oven for 40 minutes. Cool slightly and peel. Toss warm with a little more olive oil, salt and pepper, or cold with vinaigrette.

PICKLED BEETS

Peel the roasted beets and slice thinly. Slice a large red onion and layer beet and onion slices in two 1-quart jars. In a small pan, bring to a boil 1 cup tarragon vinegar, 1 1/2 teaspoons Kosher salt, 1/2 cup sugar and 1 cup water. Pour over beets and seal jars tightly. Refrigerate from 3 to 7 days before serving.

