



August 2023 News

Volunteers meet at Eden Garden for weekly work parties March/April through early November. Work parties meet each Friday from 9:00 to 12:00 except for the third Friday when we meet on Saturday that week. We appreciate any time you might want to spend at Eden Garden. If you want to be added to the Eden notification and reminder list, contact garden@crosswindschurch.org

The Covid restrictions of past years have been lifted.

Our year started with cleanup

Our work in the garden this year started with storm cleanup in early March. Can you believe how much rain we had this winter?!? During the early atmospheric rivers, we didn't experience flooding like other places in town. But eventually we had more flooding than we had ever experienced in the 15 years of this garden. The storage barn next to the creek flooded and the floors were covered with mud, as has occurred in prior years.

The surprise this year was that the pollinator garden and the expanded part of the garden were flooded a couple of times. Graham found the lid for one of the irrigation boxes in the orchard in another part of the garden! Mulch in the fruit orchard and around the raised beds was washed away. We lost quite a few plants in the pollinator garden because the flooding left mud over the crowns of the plants and some of the plants couldn't recover. Volunteers spent a couple of weeks cleaning up that area and bringing new mulch in the new garden area.



This picture shows the pollinator garden in March 2023 with the raised beds in the expanded garden behind it. We spent the spring time cleaning out the expanded garden and bringing in new mulch. And we replanted in the pollinator garden. Both areas recovered!



This summer 2023 photo is the same flower bed in the pollinator garden that was devastated in the floods.

Donation sites

The problem of food insecurity in our community and who is impacted has become even more apparent during these last years of Covid. As a result, this year we are donating our produce to some different donation sites than we have in the last 3 years.

Our primary donation site this year is Tri-Valley Haven in Livermore. We are also donating produce to a group home and anyone in need. Although Goodness Village isn't a primary donation site this year, Goodness Village residents can pick up produce for themselves.

Our produce

After a slow start to the planting year due to weather, we're on track for a great harvest this year. Every planting bed is full. Our biggest harvests will be from mid-August through September.



We've been asking our donation sites which produce they need the most. Carrots, potatoes, and onions are high up on the list.



This beautiful bunch of carrots that Tina is holding is ready to go to Tri-Valley Haven.

We are growing a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. Our early August harvest included eggplant, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, and more. Beans and squash will be ready later.



We've learned that the food banks have a lot of demand for Asian vegetables. So, this year we planted more Asian greens. Here's Tina in front of a bed of Asian greens.



Tina says: "This spring I tried mustard greens, a stir fry mixture, tatsoi, mibuna, and bok choy. This summer I have Asian eggplants, Taiwan long beans, Thai basil and bottle gourd."

Look at those fruit trees grow!

Our donation sites are delighted when we can provide fruit. It's amazing how fast our fruit trees have grown. They were planted in 2019. Bill Tallon had to get up on a ladder to pick from the top.



Our orchard includes apple trees, plum and pluot trees, pomegranate trees, a fig tree, peach and nectarine trees, pear trees, orange trees, and a persimmon tree. Beside the orchard we have table grapes, also growing well.

As you might have experienced in your own yards, we lose a certain amount of fruit to hungry critters. Bird netting is only partially effective. One of our ideas for the future is to build a cage around the orchard to prevent the birds from getting at the fruit.

Flowers for Culinary Angels

For the last couple of years we have been growing flowers to make small flower arrangements. Last year we provided flower arrangements for Goodness Village residents to sell at their produce stand. This year we are giving the arrangements to the Culinary Angels to distribute to the cancer patients for whom they provide meals.



Terri Muir is creating a flower arrangement to give to Culinary Angels.

Around the garden

A new model for managing the garden

We have entered into the collaborative stage in the management of Eden Garden. We are continuing the successful revolving leadership model for weekly work parties. Now six people trade off being the “garden leader” for the weekly work party. In addition, a core group shows up regularly to harvest and maintain the garden, along with several people who have stepped up to work on garden projects. We all lead busy lives so we are very pleased and grateful to have this more sustainable, collaborative management model.

Finally, we’ve got milkweed!

Milkweed is the required host plant for monarch butterfly caterpillars (female monarchs lay their eggs on milkweed plants). We’ve tried to grow milkweed in our pollinator garden since 2018. We planted seedlings. We threw milkweed seedballs into the garden. We transplanted mature plants into the garden—all to no avail. But a funny thing happened this year. In the spring we discovered milkweed growing in the pollinator garden.



We think that the constant heavy rains this winter provided the right conditions for the seeds we threw in the garden years ago to germinate. So, we might soon be attracting Monarchs to the garden along with our other butterflies.

Seed donation

Many thanks to Renee’s Garden Seeds and Baker’s Creek for their generous donation of seeds for Eden Garden. The box contained vegetable, herb, and flower seeds—all of which we are putting to good use.



Our volunteer list is growing

During the Covid years, the number of garden volunteers dropped significantly. We’re now seeing volunteers from the past returning and new volunteers. Volunteers are from Crosswinds Church, the Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club, and the community. We hope companies like Kaiser will again contact us to have their staff volunteer. In the past we could tackle large projects with their help.

Resuming educational talks

You might remember the interesting garden talks that we had at each Saturday work party before Covid. We’re ready to start our talks again at the Saturday work parties.

Thanks to Sarah Holstra, the Eden Garden is now on Instagram! Check out our recent short video with our friends from Tri Valley Haven.
eden_garden_CW Follow us!

We wish you all a healthy and happy 2023.

Barbara, Graham, and Bill