

Douglas Library of Hebron

# LIBRARY GARDENING IN 2017

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*The garden on June 21st being tended to by volunteers*

The library garden in 2017 was bountiful with produce! Volunteers tended the garden for about 62 hours total, which enabled them to pass high school requirements, be accepted into academic societies and colleges, and learn the value of community service. All of our produce was donated to our neighbors, The American Legion, for their weekly luncheon. The fresh ingredients brought their already phenomenal cooking to the next level! Read on for a month by month break down of our gardening activities.

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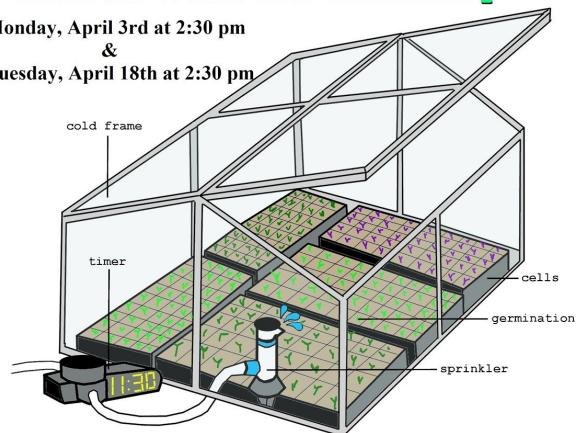
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## April: Infrastructure and Seeding

# Library Garden

## Season Starter Workshop

Monday, April 3rd at 2:30 pm  
&  
Tuesday, April 18th at 2:30 pm



This is a hands-on vegetable garden workshop. We will plant seeds, use season extension techniques, and set up an automatic irrigation system right beside the Douglas Library. Attendees will benefit from experiencing a proven low-maintenance germination technique that can be applied in their own gardens. All ages are welcome.



**Douglas Library of Hebron**  
22 Main Street  
Hebron, CT 06248  
860-228-9312  
[www.douglaslibrary.org](http://www.douglaslibrary.org)

The Douglas Library's first garden workshop was held on 4/3/17 as soon as it was warm enough to start seeding into a cold frame. We set up 2 automatically irrigated germination chambers, which included a \$40 plastic cold frame, \$10 of 50 cell seed trays, a \$10 sprinkler, a \$90 automatic irrigation timer, a \$40 garden hose, and about \$20 of seed packets.

These cold frames increase the temperature by just a few degrees through the greenhouse effect, but it is enough to make a difference in seed germination. An important factor in germination is keeping your soil moist, and the automatic sprinkler positioned inside the cold frame does just that. Setting up this system allows the gardener to grow seedling plants with little maintenance until May.

In the seed trays we planted lettuce, kale, kohlrabi, broccoli, and swiss chard. These crops have high germination rates even in cool conditions and the sooner you get them in the ground, the sooner you will be harvesting.



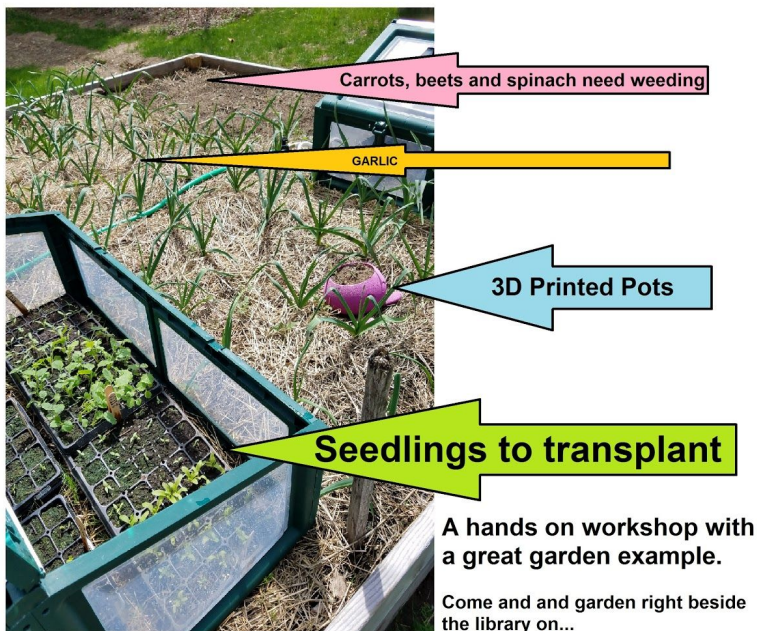


Another component of this early season workshop was directly seeding carrots and beets into the raised bed garden. April 3rd is a little early for direct seeding, but carrots and beets are tolerant of cool weather, and raised beds are slightly warmer than the ground.

On April 18th, we seeded more crops into a second automatically watered cold frame. 15 days in Spring makes a significant difference in temperature, so it was the time to plant warmer weather crops such as tomatoes, squash, peppers and eggplant. We also directly seeded peas, spinach and potatoes into the ground. Now that our seeds had been seeded and our automatic infrastructure was operational we only had to wait for our seedlings to be large enough to transplant in May.

## May: Microweeding and Transplanting

# Library Garden Season Starter Workshop



**Wednesday, May 17th 2017**  
**4 :30 pm - 6:30 pm**



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To the left, you can see the results of our April work. The root crops are tiny and surrounded by even tinier weeds. It is crucial at this early stage in plant development to microweed, which is the practice of removing the crops' competitors pinch by pinch. By removing competitors early on crops can milk the Spring for all it's worth.

Notice the substantial size difference between the crops in the cold frame and the carrots and beets, which are barely visible. A few degrees does make a big difference!





*Volunteers transplant lettuce on May 17th next to garlic and spinach*

During the May workshop we also transplanted everything that had been growing in the cold frames. We then disassembled the cold frames and returned them and the trays to storage. We repositioned the automatic sprinklers so that they would water the whole garden. We had placed hay down over the whole garden in an attempt to keep weed growth down and, while it did help, there was still plenty of grass to pull in the garlic patch, which had been planted in October 2016. At the conclusion of this workshop all 132 square feet of our gardens were full of crops, and were being automatically watered on a daily basis.



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**June, July, August, September:**

# Harvest

During the summer months we harvested from the garden every week. A typical harvest day would go something like this: Volunteer arrives around 2:00 pm, and we take a crop walk to decide what is ready for harvest. The volunteer fills a bucket with fresh water to wash the crops, and then bags the crops up for the donation. When the crops have been packaged, the volunteer performs some routine maintenance on the garden, such as weeding, or repositions the sprinklers which sometimes shift. Another important duty of our volunteers is the weekly application of fish emulsion fertilizer. Fertilizer should always be applied after harvest is complete because if applied before harvest your veggies will taste like old fish. Fish emulsion is a nitrogen rich liquid that, when mixed with water and applied via spray bottle to the soil makes our crops grow larger and faster.



*A volunteer harvests on June 14th. She cleverly suspends the chicken wire gate between the raised bed and the attached post. She then allows washed leafy greens to drip dry on this sunny spring day, before being packaged for donation.*





*Left: A Volunteer marvels at the fruits of her labor. Lettuce, Kale, Beets, Carrots, Garlic, and Broccoli were donated to our neighbors on this July day.*

*Below: Two friends harvest garlic together on July 19th. Pulling the garlic is the first step. Next they will lay the garlic out on tables in a hot dry place (the library's attic) so that it can cure.*







*Volunteers in August holding kohlrabi the size of their heads!*



*The garden as it looked on August 23rd. On the right is a large tomato plant that is just about to ripen. The lettuce and spinach has all been harvested, and peppers, broccoli and kohlrabi have been planted in its place. Look closely and you can spot a woodchuck hiding behind some chewed up turnip greens.*





*Above: A volunteer yanks harvested broccoli out at the roots. There were so many seedling broccoli plants and not enough space but they still produced. When one was harvested it's remains needed to be removed to make room for its struggling neighbors. Planting broccoli too close together isn't the best practice, but we did get a good harvest anyways.*



*Left: A devastating beast leaves a trail of skeletal kohlrabi in his wake. He stands tall in the satisfaction of knowing that he has decimated the turnips and butternut squash. Many tomatoes were also devoured. At the time of this writing, this thief remains at large.*





*A volunteer trims the stems off of the cured garlic bulbs. This garlic has been curing in the hot attic for a month. It can be stored unrefrigerated for at least a year. These are some very good sized garlic bulbs! She then packaged the garlic for donation, along with some other fresh crops.*



*Tomato harvest on September 19th*



*A root vegetable heavy harvest on August 30th*



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## October: Cleanup and Garlic Planting

# Garlic Planting WORKSHOP

**Hands On Learning at the Library Garden**  
**Wednesday, October 25th 3:00 - 5:00 pm**

Garlic is a crop that overwinters, so now is the time to plant for a July harvest. We will be outside right beside the library doing light garden work, so come prepared to get your hands dirty. We had an amazing garlic crop in 2017, and with your help we can grow even bigger bulbs for next year at the Douglas Library of Hebron.



By October there was not much left to harvest. Crops were done growing and the first frost was not far away. The library gardening season concluded with a garlic planting workshop. The work included clearing any old plants from the garden, taking in all of the hoses and sprinklers, applying some bone meal fertilizer to replenish the soil and planting the garlic. Each garlic clove is a seed, and when planted in Fall, it grows overwinter. Garlic is a very cold hardy crop. Little green garlic sprouts can be seen growing as early as December. Covering them in mulch hay keeps them insulated and is good for reducing weed growth in the next growing season.



*The garden gets tucked in for the winter. Some pepper plants were still slowly growing in late October, but we could not remember the variety. We were surprised to discover they were habaneros when we tasted them. SPICY!*