

# The **GREENHOUSE** Beet

Dear Friends,

As we gather this month, let us take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude—not only for the delicious meals that grace our tables but also for the invaluable lessons we learn from the garden. Let us appreciate the earth, the sun, and the rain that nurture our growth, and cherish the bonds we share with one another and with the land. Each meal we enjoy is a tribute to community, love, and the beautiful cycles of life.

Thanksgiving is a time to unite and celebrate the abundance that surrounds us. May we cultivate a spirit of gratitude that lasts throughout the year.

Wishing you all a joyful and meaningful Thanksgiving!

Natasha Lewis

President





## Garden Plot Points >>>

### November 2nd Member Meeting Summary

Thank you for joining our first gathering for the 2024-25 season! Here's the scoop:

- Don't forget to grab an Expense Voucher/Reimbursement Form from the amazing Sandra for all your invoices!
- A big high-five to everyone who helped with the soil delivery—three pallets are snug and secure!
- Let's roll out the red carpet for our newest member, Saundra Warren-Givens!
- We're also tossing around the idea of carpooling to the Philadelphia Flower Show—let's chat about it!
- Oh no, a case of bleach has pulled a disappearing act! If anyone has some extra, your generosity would be fab!
- Anne and Robyn are on bug patrol for the benches, so please give those pesky plants some TLC if needed. (Stay tuned to our December edition for a feature on Common Greenhouse pests and how to identify them!)
- On the 501c3 front, Anne and Roslyn are back in the game with a reapplication; we might need to tackle some back taxes.
- Let's keep those gates and doors locked up tight to keep the deer from crashing our party!
- If you notice anything missing, give a shout and remember: no food or personal stuff left in the shared areas!
- Holiday Open House Alert: We're diving into the Gilded Age theme, and we need volunteers! Check out Page 6 for the details!
- Great news—the Town Council is feeling positive about greenhouse funding, and new recycling bins are on the way!
- Plant orders and geranium growing are just around the corner!
- We've given the green light for a memorial walkway for our cherished members—the club will cover up to five bricks to use as samples.
- Our website is due for a makeover, any ideas? Contact us (info on [page 9](#))
- We are committed to reducing plastic and single use items at our events. Let's achieve this together!

That's a wrap for now! Can't wait for an amazing season ahead! 🎉

Plant of the Month:  
Gryphon Begonia



## Plot Notes

Please cleanup your garden plots by December 1st.

All dead vegetation must be removed and all stakes taken down and stacked neatly.

Review [Rutgers Master Gardeners Report](#) for more detailed information

Exciting times ahead, green thumbs!

Let's keep the garden magic alive.

## scraps into Soil

Composting transforms kitchen scraps and yard waste into nutrient-rich soil.

Here are key tips to begin:

*Choose Your Bin:* Pick a suitable composting method (bin, tumbler, DIY pile).

*Gather Materials:* Maintain a 2:1 ratio of green (fruits, veggies) to brown (leaves, cardboard) materials.

*Mix Regularly:* Aerate the compost to speed decomposition and control odors.

*Maintain Moisture:* Keep the compost damp but not soggy.

*Turn the Pile:* Rotate materials every few weeks for oxygen and faster breakdown.

*Be Patient:* Composting may take months to a year, but the results are rewarding.

*Harvest:* Use finished compost in gardens or potted plants.

*Get Creative:* Try methods like vermicomposting or community projects.

Organizations like the [Bergen County Utilities Authority](#) support residents in composting. With [bins available online](#), it's a great time to start.

Happy composting!

*Want an easy compost option?  
Check out "Leave the Leaves" on page 8!*





## Soil Health Part II:

### ORGANIC VS SYNTHETIC FERTILIZERS

By Dr. Marilyn Figueroa

#### Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!

Should you get organic or synthetic fertilizers? Will your plants know the difference? Which one is a healthier alternative for the environment? Read on...

Though these fertilizers differ in several ways, the main difference is where they come from, or how they are made. Organic fertilizers come from organic materials such as dead and decaying plants and animal parts. Non-organic fertilizers are processed and made in a factory (nitrogen for synthetic fertilizers is mostly obtained from petroleum). Plants can only absorb nutrients in certain forms, regardless of which fertilizer it comes from. For example, nitrogen is only absorbed as nitrate ( $\text{NO}_3^-$ ) or ammonium ( $\text{NH}_4^+$ ) ions. Water-soluble synthetic fertilizers provide nutrients in these forms. Organic fertilizers such as manure or compost have to be broken down by microorganisms and released into the soil as ions, these are then absorbed by the plant. This means that though it will not be available to the plant immediately, it will be available in the soil longer (long-acting or slow release).

#### Organic Fertilizers:

Fertilizers from organic sources may not be as readily available as water-soluble synthetic ones. However, the nutrients from organic sources are gradually released, thus ensuring a season-long supply. Because they are slow release, there are fewer nutrient losses in the environment and less plant injury. Organic fertilizers are not just N-P-K (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, see previous newsletter), but a combination of macro and micro nutrients. Organic fertilizers have the advantage of amending the soil by adding organic matter, improving the soil structure and ability to retain moisture. Additionally, you can make your own by making compost!

#### Synthetic Fertilizers:

These fertilizers are quick release, high in specific nutrients, and gardeners/farmers can measure exactly how much to use. Though these provide the needed nutrients to plants, they do not contribute to soil fertility or soil health. Beware of labels, just because a fertilizer says organic does not mean it is 100% organic. Make sure it reads "Certified Organic" product.

As a nutrition professional, I compare this issue to the difference between eating a carrot or taking a Vitamin A pill. Yes, both supply my body with vitamin A but with the carrot I get so much more!

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[Organic Land Care-Rutgers](#)

[What Organic Fertilizers Mean to Plants and Soil](#)

[The Advantages of Organic Fertilizers Over Chemical Fertilizers](#)

[Here's the Scoop on Chemical Organic Fertilizers](#)



## **FEATURED RECIPE:**

# *Rustic Vegetable Pot Pie*

As the golden hues of autumn blanket the landscape and the air turns crisp, there's no better way to celebrate the bounty of the harvest season than with a comforting and hearty meal. One such dish that captures the essence of this time of year is a savory Harvest Vegetable Pot Pie. This recipe is a delightful blend of seasonal vegetables and herbs encased in a flaky, golden pastry crust, making it the perfect centerpiece for your fall dining table. Whether you're gathering with family or hosting a cozy dinner with friends, this dish offers a warm embrace of flavors that are both rustic and refined.

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 parsnips, sliced
- 1 cup butternut squash, cubed
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 1 cup kale, chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 sheet of puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)



### **Instructions:**

1. Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, sauté until translucent.
3. Stir in the carrots, parsnips, butternut squash, and mushrooms. Cook until the vegetables are tender.
4. Add the kale, thyme, and rosemary, and season with salt and pepper.
5. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir to combine. Gradually add the vegetable broth and cream, stirring until the mixture thickens.
6. Transfer the vegetable mixture to a baking dish. Cover with the puff pastry, trimming any excess and pressing the edges to seal.
7. Brush the pastry with the beaten egg for a golden finish.
8. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the pastry is puffed and golden brown.
9. Allow to cool slightly before serving.

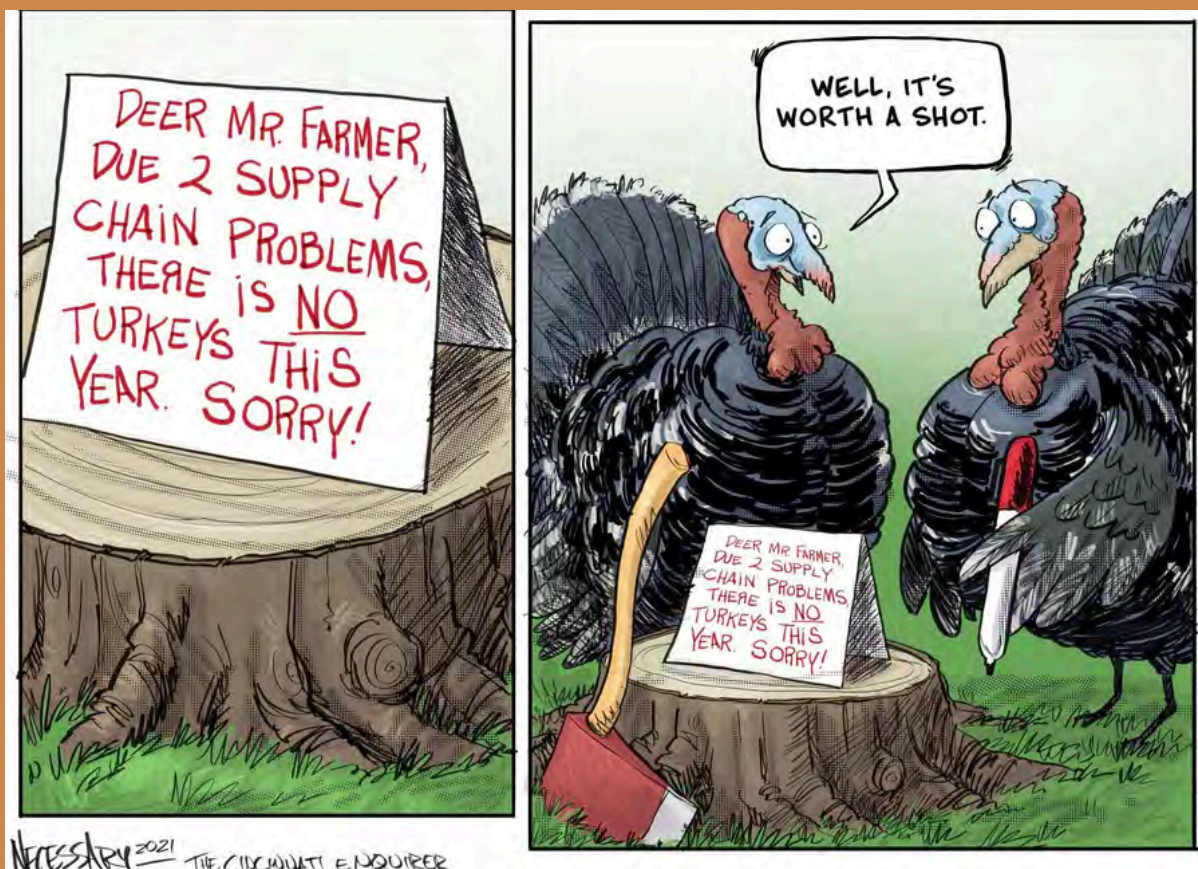


# Garden Giggles

WELCOME TO OUR "GARDEN GIGGLES" PAGE,  
your go-to source for gardening humor!



I shot my first turkey yesterday.  
It scared the hell out of everyone in the frozen food section.



Got more garden jokes for us? Lettuce know!



# Skylands Holiday Open House

Once again, the Garden Club of Teaneck will be adorning a room at the Skylands Holiday Open House. The theme for 2024 is "A Gilded Age Holiday," and we have decided to present "A Botanical Soiree." Our area will be styled like an elegant holiday party, featuring attire and accessories crafted from flowers.

We need YOUR HELP to craft another breathtaking masterpiece this year. Join us in this creative endeavor and enjoy the fulfillment that comes from designing a space that is truly stunning—it's definitely worth the effort and a whole lot of fun!

Volunteers needed as follows:

Decor Creators - Wednesdays at 7pm

Delivery to Skylands Team - Dec 1, Sunday

Setup Team Dec 2, 3, 4 10a-4p (as available)

Docents (greeters) Dec 5,6,7,8

(2 shifts available [9:45a-1:30pm and 1:30p-5p])

For more information contact Robyn Lowenthal at  
201-314-4462 or [catboat3@gmail.com](mailto:catboat3@gmail.com) OR  
Sign up on the bulletin board in the greenhouse

CHECK OUT OUR HOLIDAY ROOMS FROM  
PAST YEARS



2023:

"Holiday in the Highlands"



2017:

"A Fantasy Holiday"



2022:

"A Holly Jolly Holiday"





*You're Invited to a Jolly Holiday Gardening Bash!*

Prepare to immerse yourself in a celebration of seasonal joy, as you are cordially invited to our Holiday Gardening Bash!

Join us for an enchanting evening filled with merriment, laughter, and a touch of horticultural magic on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 7:00 PM.

The event will take place at the Rhodda Center, where you can indulge in delightful refreshments, enjoy lively holiday melodies, and partake in a vibrant gardening community. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to celebrate the festivities with you!

Be sure to RSVP to [Altagracia Tolentino](#) by December 10, 2024, so we can prepare a blooming good time just for you. Your presence will make our celebration shine even brighter



# Garden Reading

## 8 Plants You Should Prune Now

Pruning is an important gardening task that can seem overwhelming. According to website [Gardening Know-How's](#) article [8 Plants You Should Prune In October – Don't Miss The Fall Trimming Window](#), Most trees and shrubs benefit from pruning in late winter, spring, or right after blooming. Many perennials can be pruned in the fall, though not all need it.

While fall isn't the typical pruning time for many plants, some thrive when pruned then. Consider making a pruning calendar to stay organized. Remember, just because you can prune in the fall, doesn't mean you must; leaving foliage until after the first frost helps plants store energy and can add winter interest.

If you choose to prune this fall, use clean, sharp tools, compost healthy material, and dispose of diseased parts properly. Here are some plants you can prune in Oct/Nov:

*Peonies*: Cut back to 2-3 inches above the soil to prevent mildew.

*Knock Out Roses*: Trim one-third in late fall; other roses should only be pruned if overgrown.

*Bee Balm*: Trim some stems for airflow but leave others for winter interest.

*Southern Magnolia*: Prune after blooming to remove unhealthy branches.

*English Lavender*: Cut back by one-half or one-third after flowering.

*Hostas*: Trim old leaves to about 2-3 inches above ground to protect the crown.

*Bearded Iris*: Cut healthy leaves to 6 inches to prevent disease.

*Phlox*: Remove all plant material in before frost to prevent mildew.

## Leave the Leaves



As fall arrives in North Jersey, consider the initiative "[Leave the Leaves](#)," which encourages homeowners to let fallen leaves remain on their lawns for ecological benefits. October is recognized as National Leave the Leaves Month by the National Wildlife Federation. Many people typically remove leaves, but they provide natural nutrients to the soil, reducing the need for fertilizers.

Leaves also block sunlight, helping suppress weed growth. Additionally, they serve as habitats for wildlife like caterpillars and bumblebees during winter. Leaving leaves can save municipalities money on collection services.

For optimal use, you can mulch leaves to help them decompose faster while being mindful of insects that may inhabit them. If leaf accumulation is excessive, consider retaining a portion and composting the rest to create nutrient-rich soil.

## WANT MORE GARDENING ARTICLES?

[When to Deadhead Hydrangeas](#)

[When to Plant Dahlias for the Most Beautiful Blooms](#)

[How to Grow Garlic: the Complete Guide](#)

[How to Help Your Tropical Plants Survive the Winter Blues](#)



# What's Growing on Around Us?

local gardening events

## Rutgers school of Agriculture and Environmental studies

Rutgers Master Gardener Program Training Information Session Tues, Online 9A-10A  
Nov 14, 20, 21, and 27th

Enroll in a free, no obligation information session to learn about the Rutgers Master Gardener Program. This is required before enrolling in the 2025 training.

## Wildly Floral Co. South Orange, NJ

### Holiday Centerpiece Arranging Workshop

- Thursday, November 21, 2024 6:30 PM 8:30 PM

Learn how to style your own centerpiece and individual bud vases. No experience necessary; all materials will be provided.

### Winter Wreath Workshops

- Mon, Dec 2, 11:00 AM Mon, Dec 9, 7:30 PM

Learn to create your own nature-inspired winter wreath using seasonal greenery and foliages. No experience necessary - all materials and supplies will be provided.

## New York Botanical Garden Bronx NY

### Holiday Train Show Nov 16 -Jan 20

Experience the enchanting Holiday Train Show with stunning train displays celebrating seasonal traditions. Enjoy outdoor model locomotives and the Haupt Conservatory featuring sparkling plant-based replicas of local architecture in a vibrant miniature cityscape.

## Upcoming Garden Club Events:

- Garden Club General Meeting:  
Sat December 7th, 10am  
Rodda Community Center

- 4th Annual Pottery Show and Sale,  
Sun Dec 8th  
Warwick Pottery Studio

Holiday Open House at NJ Botanical Garden:  
Dec 5-8, 10a to 4pm,

Garden Club Holiday party at the Rhodda Center  
on December 18 at 7 PM

Plant sale dates are Set:

May 1 (members only),

May 2-4, and May 9-11 (open to the public).

Can't see these links? Make sure you're in our Garden Club of Teaneck Facebook Group!

Reach out to sow your stories, feature your favorite plant, or sprinkle some wisdom and insight to all members!

Let's grow together!

## GARDEN CLUB CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: [the Garden Club of Teaneck](https://www.gardenclubofteaneck.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/GardenClubofTeaneck](https://facebook.com/GardenClubofTeaneck)

Email: [gardenclubofteaneck@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubofteaneck@gmail.com)

Location: [Directions and Map](#)



Thank you for taking the time to read our latest issue!

Stay tuned for our next edition, where we delve into the fascinating history of the poinsettia and provide information on identifying common pests that plague our greenhouse.

We look forward to sharing more insights with you soon! Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving!