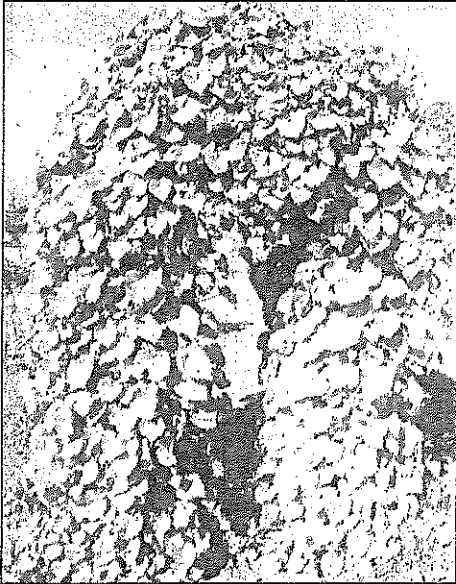


Gone Gardening

with Sheryl Popp



Washington County Community Garden - The Results Show!



Peek-a-boo! Can you spot Mary Reilly-Kliss? This arbor was one of the community garden's success stories.

In April, I printed a story about the new community garden plots sponsored by Ozaukee Master Gardeners in West Bend. Mary Reilly-Kliss, OMG, plots coordinator and point person on the story, called me to ask if I wanted to do a follow-up. I guessed regular readers might enjoy

finding out how the program fared this summer. In a word, splendidly. Mary had hoped to rent 10 25'x15' plots, and rented 22. At the initial meeting she arranged in the spring, only seven had rented, so yes, Mary was very pleased. People signed up from all over, some living right in the neighborhood of the gardens, located behind

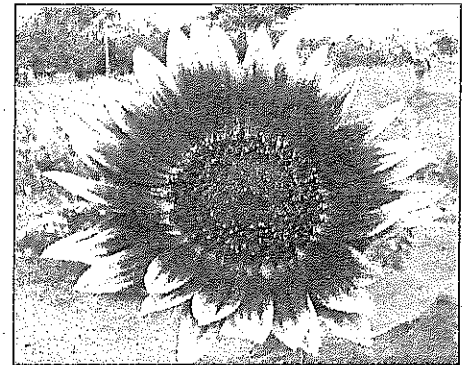


The gardens during peak growth. Photo Mary Reilly-Kliss.

the Public Agency Center, to the rear of the corn field. They arrived to plant with a vast range of experience, from beginner to pro, and sowed everything from the standard veggies to flowers to herbs to heirloom seeds to the unusual, like soybeans. Those were planted by Daily News reporter John Buchel, who looks forward to enjoying some edamame. John writes a column for the Daily News dubbed "The Occasional Gardener." A story on the community garden inspired him to

work his own plot, but care of the plot is a wee bit harder for him than some of the others - since he commutes from Milwaukee. Some people rented multiple plots, Mary herself has two and one woman with seven children has three. One of the three was completely devoted to cabbage. I'd bet my bottom dollar she makes her own kraut! "I had not planted vegetables in 25 years," said Mary, "so I had a lot to relearn. I took a clue from someone here and planted pole beans. I think

they're my favorite now because you can pick them standing up! On top of that, the bugs don't chew on them. I



One of John Buchel's gorgeous sunflowers.

toes, squash, beans and onions. Their tomatoes, at least, did very well. Mary tells me Gene Schultz from Mayfield Nursery volunteered his time to help them get started and provided advice. "It was really a great learning experience for them," she said.

"Everyone had some sort of surprise," Mary continued. "One fellow grew celery for the first time and it really came up nicely. I put in blue potatoes, fingerling potatoes and Yukon gold potatoes. Taking them home and making a complete dinner from the garden was really exciting. We've been grilling a lot of vegetables too this year."

Another one of the really great things has been trading for things you didn't grow. Now, we're pretty much just getting out our late crops and cleaning up. Once we're done, Ozaukee Master Gardeners will purchase and spread manure for next year out of our budget. We're also hoping to get in a winter garlic bed."

think they don't climb up."

Mary went on to say that some of the first time gardeners became periodically frustrated due to mainly two things, weeds and watering. The OMG program has provided a water tank for the gardens, but lugging it is still tough. Mary and her husband David hauled about 425 gallons to their two plots every third day or so during the dry June and July weather. "If you're not prepared for the reality of weeding and watering, it can be hard," she sympathized.

A group of kids from Nova Services had a plot too. They planted toma-

There were, of course, issues. Vine crops did badly due to squash beetles and bugs. Many tomatoes were hit by blight. The much dreaded and greatly hated red rooted pig weed and velvet weed made quite a showing as well. (The darn seeds of these plants can live 40 years, said Mary, so get rid of it!) But everyone learned some things, and hopefully they'll be back next year to try again. Those who had plots this year have first dibs next year. To get your name on the list, or learn more, call 262-335-4479 or email communitygarden@co.ozaukee.wi.us. Additional reading on the importance of supporting locally grown food (either by doing it yourself or by visiting farmers' markets) can be found in a book by Barbara Kingsolver titled Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life. I had read a review of this book, and vowed to obtain it. Mary R.K. has renewed my interest in it. She says it's a marvelous read.