

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼

VERONA COMMUNITY GARDEN

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

April 3, 2026

[For the best reading experience view this email in your browser](#)

In This Issue:

-  **Gardening Events**
-  **Garden Guidelines & Reminders**
-  **Local Nurseries**
-  **Seed-Starting Workshop Summary**
-  **What's Up in the Garden**
-  **Monthly Chores and Planting Guide**
-  **Recipes**
-  **Garden Poems/Humor**
-  **VCG Agreement 2026**
-  **Verona Community Garden and That's My Brick!®**

Gardening Events

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼



Opening Work Day and Orientation for All Members

Our Opening Work Day and Orientation will take place on **May 2nd at 9:00 a.m.** All members — both new and returning — are expected to attend.

Rain Date: May 3rd

Attendance: Mandatory for everyone

Check-In: Please sign in upon arrival

We look forward to seeing everyone there and getting the season off to a great start!

Planning Your Kitchen Garden Workshop

Our next workshop is scheduled for **April 12th at 11:00 a.m.** in the garden, weather permitting.

Rain Date: Wednesday, April 29th at **6:30 p.m.** at the Verona Public Library.

This workshop will focus on planning your kitchen garden and will be presented by the Backyard Garden Company (see bio in the newsletter). We hope you can join us!

Please RSVP for the workshops here: <https://forms.gle/6i3tH8PnaFb6M5VF7>

All Verona residents are invited to attend, so please feel free to share this with neighbors who are not garden members.



The **Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA)** 2026 for the 6th Annual Plant for Pollinators Program is in the works! April 1-21, 2026.

<https://www.greatswamp.org/>

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

108 Orange Rd, Montclair
 April 30th - May 2nd, 2026
 Thursday, April 30th, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 Friday, May 1st, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Saturday, May 2nd, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or until we sell out



Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex (MGEC) Plant Sale 2026 Information

The Plant Sale will be on Friday, May 1st from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday May 2nd from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, 474 Upper Mountain Avenue in Upper Montclair.

The following Saturday, May 9th, the sale will be at the Essex County Environmental Center's Garibaldi Hall, 621A Eagle Rock Avenue in Roseland from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Gloves, a pruner, a snip (small pointed shears), a trowel, a claw rake, string, bags for harvest and bags for waste. A spray bottle of alcohol is very useful for cleaning tools.

Garden Guidelines & Reminders

- The shed will not be ready for general use until **May 2**. If you need to enter before then, please use caution.
- **Shed Lock Instructions:**
 The combination is **2497**. Please do not share it with anyone outside of paid garden members.
 To open: Push down on the shackle (the U-shaped bar), then release.
 To lock: Set the combination, push the shackle down firmly, then scramble the numbers.
 Before locking the gate, please check that no other gardeners are inside.
- **Gate Use:**
 To open the front gate, push down on the handle.
 You may also use the back gate if parking in the gravel lot is more convenient.
Always close gates behind you to keep critters out.
- **Water Access:**
 The water is now on. Hoses will be installed in April.
- **Plot Assignments:**
 Most returning gardeners will have the same beds as last year, though some assignments have changed. Please confirm your bed number.



Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

All refuse and plant waste must be taken home—please do not use the black municipal trash can for garden waste.

- **Stay Informed:**

The shed bulletin board includes bed assignments, a plot map, and planting calendars—check it regularly for updates.

- **Shared Tools:**

Tools and gloves in the shed are available for community use.

Tomato cages, fertilizers, and certain supplies are reserved for the advisory committee, donation beds, and school use only.

- **Community Donation Beds:**

The metal beds in the public park area are maintained by committee members and students. Produce from these beds is donated to residents of Hillwood Terrace Apartments and others in need. Volunteer opportunities to help with these beds will be shared soon—thank you in advance for your support!

- **What to Bring to the Garden:**

Each gardener should have a personal bucket or tote with basic supplies, such as: gloves, pruners, snips (small pointed shears), a trowel, a claw rake, string, harvest bags, and waste bags.

A small spray bottle of alcohol is also helpful for cleaning tools between uses.

- **Tool Kit Option:**

If you prefer a ready-made solution, a garden tool and tote set can be a convenient way to keep everything organized.

Alternatively, something along these lines are useful. [Garden tools and Tote Set.](#)



- **Soil Access:**

Soil is available next to the green shipping container behind the shed. You are welcome to use wheelbarrows to transport soil to your bed.

Help filling the metal park beds is also appreciated—these beds should be filled to about **3 inches below the top.**

- **Student Groups:**

Students will be working in the garden at various times throughout the day. If you are present during these times, please do not engage with the classes so they can stay focused on their activities.



- **Planting Timing:**

Just because plants are available for sale at garden centers does not mean it is the right time to plant them outdoors. Be sure to research appropriate planting times for your crops.

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▾

watering.

You may also consider a soil NPK test kit (typically under \$20) to monitor nutrient levels.

For more detailed analysis, the [Rutgers Soil Testing Lab](#) offers testing services for approximately \$20.

If you complete a soil test, please share your results with Carol or Dan.



Local Nurseries

Nurseries & Gardening Centers

Pleasantdale Nurseries Inc - 240 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange

La Serra Gardens - 813 Union Blvd, Totowa

Metropolitan At Caldwell Nursery - 246 Passaic Ave, West Caldwell

Centre Ridge Garden Center - 652 Centre St, Nutley



Educational Platforms

Wildstead is a design practice and education platform for people who are ready for change — ecologically, aesthetically, and personally. Design services. Self-guided curriculum. And an app coming soon.

Wildstead® replaces authority with agency through design, education, and stewardship of land as a living system. <https://www.wildstead.com/>

Seed-Starting Workshop Summary & The Backyard Garden Co.



The Verona Library’s March 25 “**Seed Starting**” workshop was a great success and warmly received by all who attended. Dani Scannella of Cedar Grove, NJ—owner of The Backyard Garden

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

For many participants, soil blocking was a new concept, but it quickly generated excitement. Gardeners were especially intrigued by its space-saving benefits and its potential to increase both the quantity and success rate of seedlings.

We're pleased to share that Dani will return as the presenter for our upcoming April 12 workshop.

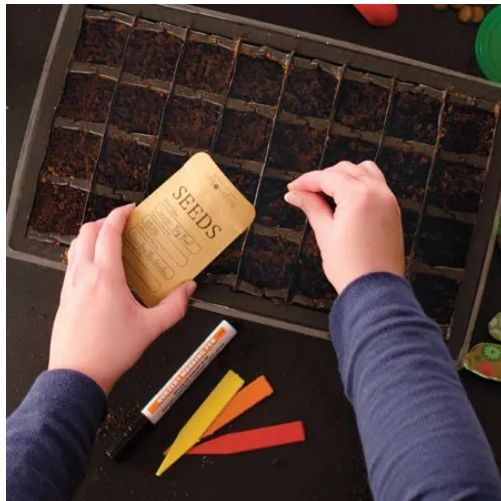
Here is a copy of the handout Dani provided for the workshop:



SEED STARTING SUPPLIES

Seed starting is a terrific way to take your gardening skills to the next level. Starting from seeds gives you better control over the timing and growth of the plants, so you can start when needed and not just rely on nurseries and what's available. It gives you so many more choices of varieties than you might find in stock at the garden center. And (sometimes) buying seeds for a

variety of plants can be more cost effective than starting your garden from all nursery transplants. However, seed starting is an investment in time and in startup supplies. It also takes patience, practice and trial and error.



Traditional seed starting components:

Grow space - shelves or table

Grow lights - a few good parameters: LEDs or fluorescent, full spectrum, 5000-6500 Kelvin Timer for lights

Oscillating fan

Heat mat (for germination)

*Cell Tray or containers to plant in (with drainage holes)

*Non-draining tray that holds water (and the above containers)

Humidity dome, plastic wrap or wide burlap to create humidity for germination

*Seed starting mix - my favorite: Coast of Maine Seed Starting Mix Plant tags (or painters/masking tape) to label+ a marker

Seeds Spray bottle

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Indoor thermometer/humidity gauge \(optional but helpful\)](#)[Translate ▼](#)

On seed-starting day, you will also need:

*Large bowl or container to pre-moisten the seed-starting mix Small watering can or pitcher with warm water

Toothpicks + 2 small dishes

Optional but helpful for clean-up: potting mat & handheld broom



Soil Blocking Components - the above supplies minus the * items, plus:

Soil blocker tool (3/4" or 1.5" iwork for most seeds)

Sifter

Soil blocking mix or finely sifted potting mi)(- my favorite: Fort Vee mix from Vermont Compost Company (sifted)

A container to be used as a "part" for measuring - yogurt container, mason jar, etc Flat bottomed tub for mixing and blocking

Shallow edged, flat bottomed tray to hold soil blocks (ie: styrofoam meat tray or lunch tray)

Potato masher + small spatula or speckle knife

FAVORITE RESOURCES

SOil BLOCKING

Lisa Mason Ziegler at thegardenersworkshop.com

Absolute favorite resource, with everything from soil blocking education (online courses, podcast and blog) to an online store that features every supply you could need.

.. She's the queen! -

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[SEED STARTING SUPPLIES](#)[Translate ▼](#)**gardeners.com**

Great selection of seed starting shelves and lights

epicgardening.com

Curated collection of high quality trays and supplies for home gardeners

bootstrapfarmer.com

The highest quality, made in the USA trays of all sizes. Also great educational resources.

SoilBlocking guide Traditional seed starting guide**johnnyseeds.com**

The industry standard for the highest quality product;; and educational resources.

Starting Seeds Indoors (multiple guides)Johnny.'s Seeds Planting Calculator guide to seed starting dates

*Timing is for traditional cell trays, reduce timing by 1/3 for soil bbcks

LOCAL FREE SEED LIBRARIES Montclair Public Library (Bellevue branch), Glen Ridge Library (native plants),
Montclair Community Farms**FAVORITE SEED COMPANIES**Botanical Interests (sold at Whole Foods in season), Hudson Valley Seed Co., Renee's
Garden, Johnny's Seeds, Baker Creek, Territorial Seeds

Thanks for growing with me!

Dani Scannella, owner-The Backyard Garden Co. | Local Kitchen Garden Coach &
Designer Instagram [@thebackyardgardenco](#)
Email: dani@thebackyardgardencompany.com**Here is Dani's story:***Hi, I'm Dani Scannella. Owner of The Backyard Garden Co. in Cedar Grove, NJ.**I worked in marketing in the city for over a decade, and lived there for many years as well. My husband and I loved the restaurants and the farmer's market, which became the highlight of our weekend routine. But ultimately the allure of our own garden (and a grill!) brought us back to Jersey almost 15 years ago. In 2023, I realized that helping others grow beautiful kitchen gardens was not only a possible career path - it was my dream job. I joined the Gardenary Consultant Certification program with Nicole Burke and started The Backyard Garden Co.**I believe there's something magical and beautiful about growing your own organic food. At TBGCo, it's my mission to share that joy with others. I meet clients where they're at to nurture them through all*

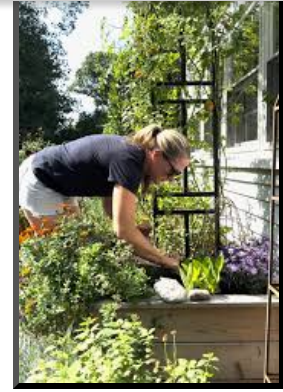
[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

to thrive every day, season after season.

Let's grow healthy food, beautifully. I'd love to help.

Dani Scannella

Owner, The Backyard Garden Co.



🌸 What's Up in the Garden

What is a Community Garden?

Community gardens are about much more than just growing food. By increasing the number of local gardeners and expanding available garden space, families and individuals can grow fresh, healthy produce at very little cost. These gardens help transform underused land into green, productive areas, strengthen local food security, and create opportunities for neighbors to connect and collaborate in meaningful ways.



The success and sustainability of community gardens depend on strong community support and active participation. Local residents—including neighbors, co-workers, students, families, and teachers—work together to maintain, organize, and coordinate these shared spaces. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they are united by a shared passion for gardening, and most contribute their time as volunteers.

Community gardens offer a place for people to come together to create spaces that are both beautiful and productive. Those involved often find themselves spending more time outdoors, building relationships with neighbors, making new friends, and experiencing improvements in both mental and physical well-being.

They are also wonderful places to visit—peaceful, inspiring, and full of life. Visitors are encouraged to enjoy community gardens respectfully: take in the sights, sounds, and scents, but

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

season.

The Verona Community Garden has also made a positive impact beyond its borders by donating produce to Verona Senior Housing on Hillwood Terrace, further strengthening the spirit of community care and support.



What to Plant in Your Garden

You're already starting to dream about your next garden. You browse seed catalogs, scroll through gardening posts on Pinterest, and eye the transplant options at your local nursery. But what should you plant? You want them all! So how do you choose?

The one mistake you don't want to make is planting more than you can

keep up with. It's hard, but necessary, to pare down your list to a manageable number of key crops. That number will, of course, depend on your garden space and whether you're growing just for fresh eating or planning to preserve for the off-season as well.

5 Tips to Help You Decide What to Plant in Your Garden

Choose crops you eat often

The best use of your garden space is to grow crops you already eat regularly. It's fun to experiment with something new but most of your space should go to familiar favorites. After all, homegrown produce tastes far better than anything you can buy at the store.

A simple way to prioritize: ask yourself, Which vegetables, fruits, and herbs do I buy most often at the grocery store? Those are the ones worth planting first.

Grow crops that are expensive to buy

If you want to get the most bang for your gardening buck—because gardening is cheap, but it's not free—focus on crops that cost more in the grocery store, even during peak season.

Herbs top the list. Basil, for example, is surprisingly pricey, yet incredibly easy to grow at home.

Peppers are another great example. Even in season, a red bell pepper rarely costs less than \$1.00 at the store. My four plants give me dozens of peppers—do the math, and it adds up quickly.

And let's not forget blueberries. On sale, non-organic blueberries cost around \$4.99 per pint, and when they're not on sale, the price often doubles. Blueberries take a few years to produce heavily, so the savings aren't immediate—but by the third year, my four blueberry bushes were

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

Choose crops that are listed on the “Dirty Dozen”

Each year, the Environmental Working Group tests produce and identifies the twelve foods with the highest amounts of pesticide residues. The "Dirty Dozen" is an annual list published by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) highlighting 12 fruits and vegetables with the highest pesticide residues, based on USDA data. What this means for you is this: if you are trying to reduce the amount of toxic substances you eat from produce, you'd have to purchase their organic counterpart, which costs more.

By choosing to grow your own produce pesticide- and chemical fertilizer-free (or in limited amounts), you save yourself this expense. Plus, you know exactly what is – and what is not – on your food. Among the mainstays on the Dirty Dozen list you'll find strawberries, grapes, celery, spinach, sweet bell peppers, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, imported snap peas and potatoes.

Choose crops that are relatively easy to grow in your climate

Some crops simply won't thrive in your area. As a beginning gardener, it's best to start with plants that are well-suited to your climate and save the more challenging ones for later.

How can you tell which crops struggle locally? Check what other gardeners in your area are growing, see what's available at your local farmers' market, and take note of the transplants at nearby nurseries. Ask your local gardening friends on Facebook—gardeners LOVE to talk about what they grow!

Start with crops that are known to do well in your region. Once you gain confidence, you can experiment with the more “iffy” crops—you might be pleasantly surprised.

Consider Your Garden Space

Are you gardening in raised beds, a small plot of land, or containers? How much space do you have?

Most crops don't require much room and can thrive in raised beds or small garden plots.

However, some crops—like watermelon, corn, and black-eyed peas—need a lot of space. These are best suited to larger areas. That said, it is possible to grow them in raised beds, but think carefully about how much of your limited space you want to devote to these high-demand crops.

Jill McSheehy © 2026 Journey with Jill LLC



Monthly Chores and Planting Guide

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▾

April

April is the month that Zone 7 has its average last frost. After the last frost date, it is generally considered safe to plant tender seedlings outdoors. Last frost dates are estimates, so while you can anticipate the last frost, your best bet is to rely on the weather forecast or local recommendations! Around here in New Jersey, it's widely known that, though the average [last frost date](#) is towards the end of April, you should wait until after Mother's Day to plant!



- Scatter [annual flower seeds](#) in flower borders. The fine seeds need no covering. The plants grow rapidly and provide colorful blooms in early summer.
- You can sow seeds outdoors directly into the garden for [beets](#), [carrots](#), [Swiss chard](#), [kohlrabi](#), [late cabbage](#), [leaf lettuce](#), [mustard greens](#), [collards](#), [turnips](#), [radish](#), [spinach](#), [bunching onions](#), and [peas](#).
- Plant new trees and shrubs by the end of the month.
- Continue to stay on top of and pot up your tomato seedlings.
- Resist planting out warm season summer veggies! The chance of a late frost is still high, and warm days can be deceiving.
- You can still start seeds indoors of [okra](#), [squash](#), [cucumber](#), [melons](#), and [watermelons](#). Sow vining crops in individual peat pots since these do not transplant well if the roots are disturbed.
- Plan new landscaping projects on paper first. Do not overplant. Be sure you know the mature size of each plant and allow for growth.
- Cover Brassica crops with floating row cover to protect from cabbage moth and flea beetle damage if these little critters have been a problem in the past. They tend to come out a touch early.
- Keep "hilling up" potatoes.

May

May is all about getting everything in the ground! Those long season crops like peppers, corn, and tomatoes can all go in safely now.

- You can keep starting [okra](#), [squash](#), [cucumber](#), [melons](#), and [watermelons](#) indoors. Sow vining crops in individual peat pots since these do not transplant well if roots are disturbed.
- Begin hardening off frost-tender plants in late April and early May, including [vegetables](#), [herbs](#), and [flowers](#) that have been started indoors.
- By the second week of May, it should be safe to plant almost everything outdoors. Houseplants, too, can be moved to a shady spot in the yard for their summer vacations.
- Keep all direct-sown veggies well watered out in the garden. This will help with germination and establishment.



Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▾

and sweet corn so that successive plantings can be done every week or two. Sweet corn should be planted in paired rows or blocks for good pollination.

- Plant [sweet potato slips](#) after the soil has warmed, though this may not be until the beginning of June.
- Direct sow [sunflowers](#), [nasturtiums](#), [marigolds](#), [borage](#), [basil](#), and other warm season flowers and herbs.
- Have a trellis system in place for your tomato patch before the plants begin to sprawl.
- Newly transplanted vegetable plants should be protected from cutworms with collars. Cut strips of cardboard two inches wide by eight inches long, staple them into circles and place them around the plants. Press the collar about one inch into the soil. These collars will fence out the cutworms and protect the stems of the vegetable plants.
- Be sure to harvest leafy greens often because they will soon bolt.

June

Keep up with that seeding! As the weather warms up, direct sow outside in successions to make sure you extend that harvest all season long! It's also time to keep an eye out for pests! Learning to identify and control pest infestations early on can make things way easier on you as the season progresses and for the years to come. Our [Pest Watch Guide](#) can help you know where to look and how to identify these bugs! Learning [pest control basics](#) can also help ensure things don't get too out of hand with those pests that love to munch.

- Continue to cover Brassica crops with floating row cover to protect from cabbage moth and flea beetle damage if these little critters have been a problem in the past.
- Colorado potato beetle adults, eggs, and larvae can be handpicked to remove or sprayed with an organic insecticide. The adults are yellow-and-black-striped beetles. The eggs are yellow and laid in groups on the undersides of leaves. The larvae are humpbacked and red. Look for them on the stem tips. They are present almost all season.
- Also keep an eye out for striped and spotted cucumber beetles. They transmit bacterial wilt to squashes and melons. Adults and eggs can be handpicked throughout the season.
- Watch out for Mexican bean beetles. To be on the safe side, you can cover the entire crop with floating row cover as soon as seedlings emerge.
- Aphids of all types show up on a range of host plants as soon as the warm weather arrives. Look for them in newly unfurling foliage. Sticky leaves are also a sign of their presence since they secrete a 'honeydew.' While it can be alarming, the honeydew itself doesn't damage the leaves. Aphids, however, do damage the plant. Spray leaves with a strong jet of water to dislodge most of them. Insecticidal soap is an organic approved product that provides pretty good control as long as the insects are wet enough. A second and third treatment to kill newly hatched eggs may be needed in five to seven days.
- Squash vine borer adults are one inch long, orange and green day-flying moths that are emerging from the soil about now. They lay brown, button-shaped, 1/16 inch eggs at the base of the vines of summer and winter squashes. Examine stems daily and remove eggs by hand to prevent burrowing of larvae as they hatch. Wrap lower 6 to 12 inches of stem with aluminum foil or floating row cover to prevent egg laying.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

KEY COMPONENTS OF AN IPM STRATEGY



PREVENT
the build-up
of pests



MONITOR
crops for pests
and natural control
mechanisms



INTERVENE
when control
measures are
needed

- Determine the most appropriate intervention to control pests; one that is cost-effective and environmentally sound
- Interventions can be physical, cultural, biological or chemical
- If crop protection products are required, use them responsibly

Subscribe

Past Issues

Keep direct sowing [sunflowers](#), [nasturtiums](#), [marigolds](#), [borage](#), [basil](#), and other warm season flowers and herbs.

Translate ▾

- The beginning of June is an excellent time to take softwood cuttings of shrubs to start new plants. Some shrubs that can be propagated in this way are spirea, lilac, and viburnum.
- Stay out of the garden when the vegetable plant leaves are wet. Walking through a wet garden spreads disease from one plant to another.
- After your vegetable garden is well established, it is best to water it thoroughly once a week rather than giving it a light watering every day. That way, a deeper root system is encouraged to develop, which will later help the plants tolerate dry weather.



- Keep a close eye on the quality of your spring crops. Hot weather causes lettuce to bolt and become bitter. Plant a warm season crop as soon as the spring vegetables are harvested.
- In most cases, blossom end rot on tomatoes, peppers, squash, and watermelons can be prevented. Do this by maintaining uniform soil moisture by mulching and watering correctly, planting in well-drained soil, and not cultivating deeper than one inch within one foot of the plant. Blossom end rot can also be corrected with an application of calcium-heavy fertilizer such as [bone meal](#). Avoiding high nitrogen fertilizers can also help.
- Continue planting direct-seeded, warm season vegetable crops such as [beans](#), [summer squash](#), and [cucumbers](#).
- Garden flowers, whether annuals or perennials, benefit from "deadheading" after flowering. By removing the spent flower heads, energy is used to produce more flowers, foliage, and roots. Many will produce another flush of blooms.

- Flowering requires lots of energy so it can be helpful to fertilize annual plants with a [balanced fertilizer](#) once flowering begins. Fertilize one more time before the end of the season.
- Weed the garden regularly to keep the task easy and manageable.
- There is still time to plant heat-loving [Southern peas](#) and [asparagus beans](#).
- Pinch the flowers off of herbs like [basil](#), mint, and [oregano](#) to promote bushy growth.
- Harvest onions and garlic as the tops dry and fall over. Braid garlic tops and hang in a cool, dry place. Cut onion tops back to one inch and dry thoroughly before storing. Use any damaged produce immediately.



Source: [Sow True Seed](#)

 Recipes

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[One-Pan Orzo with Spinach and Feta](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Melissa Clark
[NYT Cooking](#)

Similar to spanakorizo, a Greek spinach and rice dish, this easy, meatless meal features orzo, spinach, peas and scallions. It is deeply satisfying but still on the lighter side of pasta recipes, thanks to all those vegetables. A little feta gives it creaminess and tang, while some lemon zest brightens everything up. It makes a complete meal on its own, or, if you're looking for something more substantial, serve this as a hearty side dish to roasted meats or fish.



Total Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 4 large scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced
 2 large garlic cloves, minced
 8 ounces baby spinach leaves (8 cups), coarsely chopped
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 1¾ cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
 1 cup orzo
 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest (from 1 lemon)
 ¾ cup crumbled feta (3 ounces), plus more for garnish
 ½ cup frozen peas, thawed (optional)
 1 cup chopped fresh dill, or use parsley or cilantro

PREPARATION:

Step 1

Heat a 10-inch skillet over medium, then melt butter, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Stir in about three-quarters of the scallions (saving some of the green parts for garnish) and garlic, and cook until softened, stirring frequently, about 3 minutes.

Step 2

Stir in spinach, adding in batches if it doesn't all fit in the pan at once, and ½ teaspoon salt. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until spinach is wilted, about 5 minutes.

Step 3

Stir in stock and bring to a simmer. Stir in orzo, lemon zest and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat until orzo is nearly cooked through and most of the liquid is absorbed, 10 to 14 minutes, stirring once or twice.

Step 4

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

Peeps Raspberry Lemonade Cocktail

Sugar Spice and Glitter

A simple 3-ingredient Easter cocktail recipe using raspberry vodka and PEEPS! What more could you ask for?

Prep Time

5 minutes

Total Time

5 minutes

Ingredients

2 oz. Smirnoff Raspberry Vodka
 4 oz. raspberry lemonade
 2 oz. lemon-lime sparkling water
 Fresh raspberries
 Fresh sliced lemons
 Pink bunny-shaped marshmallows



Instructions

Add a couple fresh raspberries and a slice of lemon to the bottom of a tall glass and fill with ice. Add the Smirnoff Raspberry Vodka, followed by the raspberry lemonade and the lemon-lime sparkling water. Stir gently and garnish with a pink bunny-shaped marshmallow! Enjoy responsibly.



Garden Poems & Humor

The Garden

Shel Silverstein

Ol' man Simon, planted a diamond,
 Grew hisself a garden the likes of none.
 Sprouts all growin', comin' up glowin',
 Fruit of jewels all shinin' in the sun.
 Colors of the rainbow,
 See the sun and rain grow
 Sapphires and rubies on ivory vines,
 Grapes of jade, just
 Ripenin' in the shade, just
 Ready for the squeezin' into green jade
 wine.
 Pure gold corn there,
 Blowin' in the warm air,

Garden Jokes

Why did the tomato blush?

Because he saw the salad dressing!

Why can't you get angry with a yam?

Because they're such sweet potatoes!

When do you know a banana wants to dance?

When you see a banana shake!

Why do fungi have to pay double bus fares?

Because they take up too mushroom!

Which is the fastest vegetable?

A runner bean!

What is a zucchini's favorite sport?



Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▾

Ol' crow nibblin' on the annythyst seeds.
 In between the diamonds ol' man Simon
 Crawis about pullin' out platinum weeds.
 Pink pearl berries,
 All you can carry,
 Put 'em in a bushel and
 Haul 'em into town.
 Up in the tree there's
 Opal nuts and gold pears--
 Hurry quick, grab a stick
 And shake some down.
 Take a silver tater,
 Emerald tomater,
 Fresh plump coral melons
 Hangin' in reach.
 Ol' man Simon,
 Diggin' in his diamonds,
 Stops and rests and dreams about
 One...real...peach.



Squash!
 What do you do if you lose your root

vegetable ?
Hope it will turnip!
Why did the potatoes argue?
They couldn't see eye to eye.
What is broccoli's favorite music genre?
Brock 'n' roll.
What is green and goes to summer camp?
A brussel scout!
What is the strongest vegetable?
A muscle sprout!
Why did the grape go out with a prune?
 He couldn't find a date!
What did the sweet potato say to the pumpkin?
I yam what I yam!
Which vegetable did Noah leave off the ark?
Leeks!
Which vegetable loves animals the most?
A zoo-cchini!
Got more garden jokes for us? Lettuce know!



VCG Bed Agreement



Verona Community Garden Bed Agreement - 2026

veronanaj.org/communitygarden

Mission: The Verona Community Garden (VCG) provides sustainable gardening for Verona residents' physical and social benefit in a common greenspace, promoting gathering, education, and healthy, sustainable practices.

Vision: VCG aims to provide opportunities for residents to grow food, increase activity, connect with neighbors, and maintain a beautiful communal space, creating a treasured community legacy.

The garden is administered by the VCG Committee and overseen by the Township of Verona, the garden is located on the property of H.B. Whitehorne Middle School, next to municipal lot #1. The Verona Board of Education reserves the right to terminate its involvement if deemed in the School District's best interest.

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

Only Verona residents 18 or older may apply. Beds are non-transferable and remain the property of the Verona School District (excluding crops). If unable to maintain a bed, notify the VCG Manager immediately at veronanjcommunitygarden@gmail.com. The bed will be offered to the next person on the waiting list, and the fee is non-refundable. Access begins around March 15, 2025, after full payment and contract submission.

Obligations of Gardeners:

Gardeners must regularly maintain their bed and perimeter, including controlling weeds, pests and disease with organic products (per OMRI list), staking plants within the bed, harvesting mature plants, and properly disposing of waste.

If a bed is unmaintained or abandoned: 1) A verbal warning is given. 2) If no response or correction after 7 days, a written/electronic notice is sent. 3) If the violation persists after another 7 days, the bed is forfeited, and the gardener loses privileges for the season and the following season's plot.

Vegetables must be harvested promptly. If a gardener cannot harvest on time, the VCG committee may notify them and then pick the produce for donation. Remove all trimmings and prunings at the end of each garden visit; no on-site composting. Perennials must be kept in pots which may be buried in the plots. Pets are prohibited. Report suspicious behavior to the VCG Manager or Verona Police.

It is suggested that each gardener maintain their own bucket of gardening tools, bags for harvesting and waste disposal bags.

Mandatory Dates and Volunteer Hours (Dates TBD)

Garden Orientation, Opening Day Site Clean up and Build: Mandatory policy review, introductions, and garden prep. Gardeners may start after paying the fee. Site maintenance includes mulching, bed upkeep, furniture setup, and weeding.

Closing Day: Mandatory attendance for final plot and overall garden cleanup.

Volunteering: Each family must participate in one week of summer maintenance, including watering multiple beds.

Other Volunteer Activities: Includes weeding/watering the fenced perimeter, placing donation bed crops in bins, tool cleaning, and general garden tidiness.

Access to Beds: Access is from sunrise to sunset, following a School District schedule. Participants must limit their presence to the garden beds and are prohibited from interacting with students unless coordinated by the School District and Community Garden Liaison. Observe all parking regulations.

Access to Beds by School: School children may access the garden as part of their curriculum.

Rules and Regulations: Signing the agreement means compliance with all garden rules and regulations, as amended.



Building Legacy One Brick at a Time

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

[Brick!@](#) have joined forces to raise money for our project! The Verona Community Garden is located near HBW Middle School.

The goal of this space has been to create a multi-use community centerpiece. The garden has given community members an opportunity to learn, connect and grow together.



This cherished spot has grown over the last 4 years and is fully funded by grants and donations. As the demand for the garden has grown we need a walkway in our public section of the garden. We are asking for your support through an engraved brick fundraiser.

Help us create a legacy for the community by showing your support with this fundraiser.

[Order here](#)

Stay Connected with VCG!

Join our vibrant community online! Follow us on **Facebook** (*Verona NJ Community Garden*) and **Instagram** (*veronanjcommunitygarden*) for updates, photos, and event highlights. You can also stay in the loop by joining the [VCG WhatsApp Group!](#)

VCG Manager:

Carol Thomas - veronanjcommunitygarden@gmail.com

Newsletter Committee:

Brianna Aguirre - briannaaguirre1@gmail.com

Tara Bratek - tara.bratek@gmail.com

Nina James - ninajames24@gmail.com

If you'd prefer to stop receiving these newsletters or other garden emails, send a message to veronanjcommunitygarden@gmail.com —we'll take care of it.

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

Copyright (C) 2025 Verona Community Garden All rights reserved

Our email address is:

veronanjcommunitygarden@gmail.com

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

