

CHINQUAPIN GARDENS NEWS

Official newsletter of the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board • Chinquapin Park, Alexandria, Va. • Summer '06

Save the Date: 8th Annual Picnic Planned for Saturday, Aug. 12

Make plans to attend this year's Chinquapin Gardens Potluck Picnic, which is sponsored by the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board.

Join your fellow Chinquapin gardeners at the eighth annual event, which will be held **Saturday, Aug. 12, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.** at the Chinquapin Park Pavilion.



Gardeners are invited to bring a potluck dish and share their harvest with their fellow Chinquapin gardeners. (Because of City of Alexandria health regulations, please do not bring meat-based dishes and use care when preparing foods with eggs or mayonnaise.) If you have a recipe you would like to

share, bring a copy with you to the picnic. We will try and run recipes for some of the favorite dishes in the fall issue of *Chinquapin Gardens News*. Barbequed hot dogs and fixings will be available free for picnic attendees. Friends and families of gardeners are welcome!

Awards, Tomato Taste-Off also on the agenda

The eighth annual picnic will also feature presentations of this year's **Outstanding Garden Awards**. Certificates will be awarded at the picnic to some of the gardeners who have some of the best plots at Chinquapin. A special awards selection team will be going out into the gardens sometime in July to select the outstanding gardens, so be sure your garden looks its best!

Gardeners are invited to bring their best Chinquapin-grown tomato for the annual **Tomato Taste-Off**. Awards will

be given for the biggest, best-tasting and most appealing tomatoes. We will also be giving an award for weirdest tomato, so if your tomatoes are more ugly than appealing, you can still enter the competition!



The picnic pavilion is covered, so the event will be held rain or shine. Join us for good food and good company on Saturday, Aug. 12. Hope to see you there!

If you have questions about the picnic, call gardener Michele Late at (703) 575-9412 or e-mail michelelate@yahoo.com.

Gardens are Looking Good this Summer at Chinquapin

Well, we are off and running heavy into the 2006 garden season. Except for garden plots that were rented and not started, the gardens by most reports are looking exceptional. I trust that you all are vying for the Outstanding Garden Awards that will be presented at the 8th Annual Chinquapin Gardens Picnic on Aug. 12. I am looking forward to those lip-smacking creations from food produced from your gardens.



First off, I want to thank those gardeners who have already served on the garden monitoring teams as well as those who are scheduled to serve later this year. Since we have had a great response from those of you who have volunteered, we cannot schedule everyone. We will try to schedule you in next year.

The City of Alexandria has been trying to arrange for the monitoring teams to do their reporting using a PDA that could electronically e-mail the results. While staff are trying to make it function, we are still using the manual forms that will be mailed or e-mailed out to those whose gardens need a little more attention. The results of the garden

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monitorings are entered into a chart that serves as a tracking tool for the monitoring teams. This chart shows the pattern of compliance or problems in each garden, compared to the regulations. This way every gardener is treated equally and fairly through peer review. Again, as a result of the monitoring teams, the city — to the best of my knowledge — has received no complaints from the neighbors — which were once frequent!

The city and Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board are trying to reassign the garden plots that have not been started yet this year. In the meantime, we have asked the city to weed whack those plots for the benefit of all, and you have probably all ready seen the results. We have agreed that for this year, current gardeners may sign up for those plots at no additional cost. If you are interested in taking over a neglected plot for the remainder of this gardening season, please e-mail John Walsh of the Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department at john.walsh@alexandriava.gov, call him at (703) 838-4343, ext. 436, or e-mail Steve Tompkins at stevetompkins@alexandriava.gov.

At the Sept. 18 meeting of the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board, John will be presenting his observations and listening to our ideas for improvements to the gardens. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the office of the Chinquapin Park Recreation Center. We look forward to meeting with John and welcome your participation.

— Marlin G. Lord, Chairman,
Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board
E-mail: mglia@aol.com

Start Planning Now for Fall Gardening Season!

Come June or July, many people think the planting season here in Alexandria is over. They've got their tomato plants, herbs and peppers and they're set — in their minds, planting time is over.



But the truth is that there is still plenty of time to plant here at Chinquapin. Fall is just around the corner, and that means it's time for cooler weather crops.

If you sow seeds and plants now, you could have another round of fresh veggies coming your way in a few weeks and months. There's still time left in July for gardeners to put in another crop of snap beans, beets, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, endive or kale.

If you have some free time in August, you can set out head or leaf lettuce in your plot, as well



as mustard greens or turnips. In late August, it's possible to have a second crop of peas or spinach. And fast-growing radishes can be planted as late as September.

Some gardeners at Chinquapin like to plant their garlic in the fall and let it overwinter. That way, when the ground warms up in the spring it will be there waiting for them. You can order garlic through gardening catalogs, or buy a healthy-looking bulb from the grocery store. Look for garlic bulbs that have some green at the tips. Just split up the cloves and plant them individually four or five inches apart.



Instead of mourning the end of the gardening season, you'll soon be well on your way to a new one!



For more information on gardening at Chinquapin Park, e-mail John Walsh at john.walsh@alexandriava.gov or call him at (703) 838-4343, ext. 436. To suggest items for this newsletter, e-mail michelelate@yahoo.com