



Dear Friends,

Aaahhh! That awful heat wave is gone for now, and also the high humidity. With lower temperatures, the garden is a much more pleasant place to work. Instead of working quickly and leaving quickly to escape the heat and humidity, we can now focus on tasks that we let slide. One of these tasks is removing the weeds.

If you are comfortable with the idea, on Sunday please bring your weed whacker/string trimmer to the garden along with charged batteries and extra string. Bring eye protection (goggles) and ear protection too. I envision a number of weed whackers going all at the same time and, when we are done, leaving a garden looking presentable for the first time in a long, long time.

If you don't have a weed whacker, come anyway. You can remove the weeds that are too close to our plants. Or rake the weeds from the berms where we plan to plant our fall crops next week on August 10th. Or re-dig for buried potatoes. Or put up the mylar tapes around the fence.

Yep, this Sunday is going to be

GETRIDOFTHEWEEDSDAY.

I've been steadily working like an Energizer Bunny (I saw plenty of bunnies in the garden this week, by the way) removing weeds and harvesting. I haven't time to lift up my head, whip out my camera, and take pictures. If you have been in the garden but don't see yourself in my pictures, it's not because I don't love you! I hope you know that.

I emailed Seed St. Louis and asked for volunteers. If you remember, a group had been scheduled earlier in July but had to cancel due to the dangers of heat. I'm sure we are among many gardens seeking assistance. Vivian Partridge responded that as soon as she has a group to schedule, she will send an email. She also mentioned that August is a slow time for volunteers.

Our combined garden party (that is, combined with the garden at Mt. Zion Church on Craig Road) will be Saturday night October 11th at the JCC. If the weather is fine, we will eat outside in the J's sukkah. If not, then we have a room reserved inside. Gio Sparks and his wife, Vicky, are going to plan the party and will consider my request for entertainment. If you want to join them in planning the party, I think they'd be delighted.

Gio is planning a tour of Confluence Farms on a date yet to be specified. Be warned we have to be there awfully early and we are expected to work too. The terrain is uneven. If you are interested, let me know. We will carpool.

In this newsletter are more summaries of articles about growing tomatoes, more information about New Earth Composting, and lots of pictures of (ahem) the weeds and our work to contain them.

See you in the garden,

Myra



The Garden in the Weeds

*Sunday
27 July 2025*



The lead caption was going to be either Gardening in the Heat or Gardening in the Weeds. In the previous page Alan hung up the bucket opener after he finished emptying the TTG buckets. The first bin is nearly full though the browns (shredded leaves) hadn't been added yet. The heat makes the compost decompose faster but we have had lots of buckets to empty recently.

Let's take a look at **SOME** of the weeds:



Above: in front of the shed
Left: by the entrance looking to the west.





Left: Looking towards the east near the front gate
Below: Underneath the blackberry bushes. In front is the berm where we just harvested and re-dug for potatoes. The weeds returned quickly. (Sigh)





It took me hours to weed the berm in the far east of the garden. I just threw the weeds onto the walking paths. They die quickly and thus are easier and lighter to pick up. The bag of the pulled weeds Zhiwei is holding is very heavy. Xingfa waved me away and is finishing the job of picking up the weeds and removing even more as Zhesheng watches.





What do we do with all these weeds? My thought is the bags of weeds we put into the dumpster weighs more than the food we give to the pantry! The tall weeds are danged heavy. We appreciate Zhiwei and Xingfa for doing all the heavy lifting. Just before I took the picture below, the wheelbarrow tipped over due to the unequally distributed weight. It just was righted again. See the clouds? It rained some just before we entered the garden in the morning. It was clearing as we worked.





Not everything is horrid and embarrassing. Tianying Mi had just finished weeding around the chard. It took him two days to do this. Just beyond the chard in the same berm the buckwheat are growing. To the left of the berms are the tomatoes with tall weeds in front of it. I saw the rabbit playing in there earlier.

I should mention that I forgot my iPhone at home so Mary Ann Ford lent me hers. All the pictures on Sunday were taken in a space of a few moments using her phone. There was more action in the garden than pictured.



For example, Bob Dorson and Mary Lucado re-dug for potatoes while Mary Ann started weeding the boxes of native plants at the edge of several berms. The bed behind Mary Lucado needs to be re-dug for potatoes. You can see Zhesheng's roses. The eggplants are doing well. The tall greenery behind Mary L. are cucumbers.

Here's an "active" picture of Bob looking for potatoes that had been buried deeper and weren't found in the original dig.





Not bad for a second dig!
Actually, that's wonderful
because it was a half berm.
We have a few more berms
to re-dig for potatoes.

This is one of them. I think
it was two weeks or so
when we dug the potatoes
from this berm. The weeds
are starting to fill in again.
We will soon plant fall
crops here and will re-
weed while we re-dig for
potatoes and preparing the
berm for planting next
weekend.





In my sojourn around the garden with Mary Ann's camera phone, I snapped a few pictures of the tomatoes the Zhaos are growing. When asked how it is their tomatoes are doing so well, they explain they cut off the top of the tomato plants, stick them in the soil, and then transplant them.



The above picture is a bit out of sequence but shows how hard Bob and Mary L. are working. At right, our first sighting of an eggplant. The blooms show more will come.





The cucumbers grow long. Some are left to grow for seeds. When I asked why so many were grown for seeds, Zhesheng explained that not all cucumbers produce many seeds. Some do, some don't.

You can see Bob Dorson at top left re-digging for potatoes.



Above are the butternut squash growing near the washing station. It was mesmerizing to see the bees go in and out of the flowers. If all these flowers turn into squash, we will have done very well. At right this bed was planted with zucchini. Only one or two plants didn't do well though the one in the foreground produced quite a number of zucchini before it collapsed. The others seem to be doing fine.



This is the last picture I took before I retuned Mary Ann's camera phone to her. Just four boxes of native plants were tended and weeded. There is one box of glorious Black-Eyed Susans. You can see the weeds around it.

More action occurred that weren't pictured. After re-digging for potatoes Bob, Mary Lucado and I searched among the squash plant leaves removing the ones with squash bug eggs and, well, squashing them before disposing of them. Any squash bugs found were, well, squashed too. To tell the truth, there weren't THAT many squash bugs found, but there will be fewer squash bugs as a result. We did well to plant the squash late in the season.



There's one walking path that hadn't been recovered yet this season. It was covered with weeds. Bob Dorson took the weed whacker and tried to remove them. Mary Ann, Mary Lucado and I hand pulled or cut the weeds in the area. Mary Ann suggested we use the black plastic to cover the weeds because they were so entrenched and disgusting. The day was very hot even though it rained slightly earlier in the morning. We decided to do that another day.



This was one of the hottest days in an extraordinarily hot month. Some of us came early to the garden to accomplish some work before the heat rose. I had my iPhone with me but was so busy harvesting that I didn't take many pictures. There are none of Carol Luebbert or Linda Dimitrijevic though they both did a tremendous amount of work harvesting and preparing the food for weighing and transport to the pantry. There are also no pictures of the Zhaos or of Tianying Mi. Sorry.

Monday
28 July 2025

Above the okra plants are growing tall. To the right of it are sweet potatoes filling out nicely. On the other side of the okra are the Chinese beans also doing nicely.

Alan opted to remove the finished compost from the third bin and spread it here and there in the garden.



Xingfa picked banana peppers. In the foreground is a leek that was deliberately left to grow seeds.



Last week I mentioned two cantaloupes that were opportunistic plants. Alan harvested them. It wasn't easy because they grew between the cattle panel fence and the deer netting. Below, one acorn squash was ready for picking. It was impervious to my nail to see if the skin was hard enough. So it was ready.



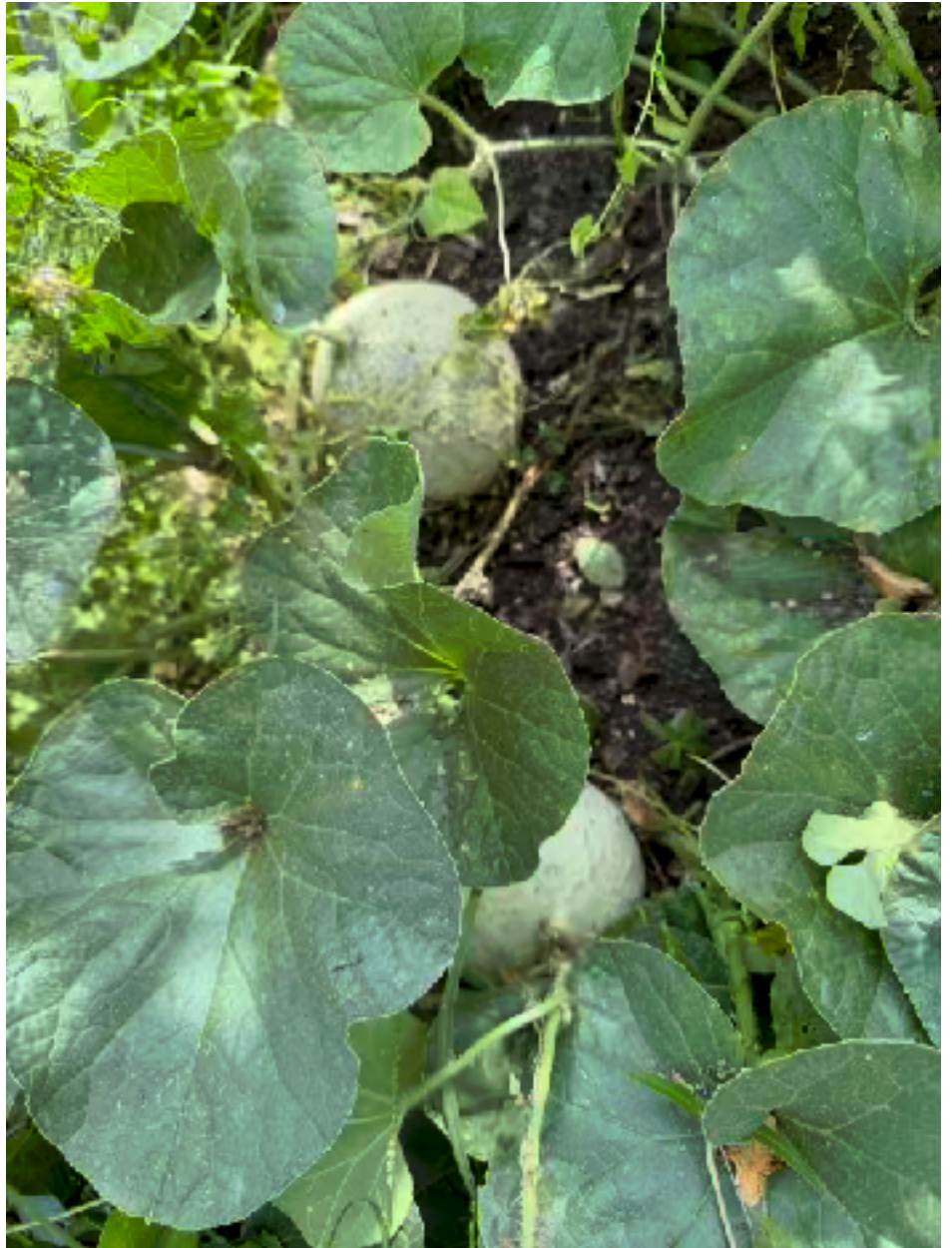


Deer were in the garden again. One melon was eaten among the strawberry patch. Now ants are all over it. The sweet potato leaves were munched on. But on the bright side, a butternut squash is forming from the flower. It's a delightful sight to see.

Another bright note: we took more than 100 pounds to the pantry - but the entrance to the pantry was closed! No one told us and it wasn't a Jewish holiday. Alan and I took the food home and returned with it the next day. It turned out they had a staff meeting.



While weeding underneath one of the arbors I saw two opportunistic canteloupes growing. I left them. When they turn more of a tan color, we will harvest them.



Thursday
31 July 2025

The extreme heat wave with high humidity and resultant high heat index finally broke! Just as we were leaving the garden, it started to sprinkle. But there were consequences from the heat.

Some of our plants need copious amounts of water due to transpiration and thus folded like these squash plants. Parts of the plant could possibly be revived. We will have to see.



A fair amount of harvesting was done and Alan worked on emptying the Table to Garden buckets. We spent a good amount of time weeding and removing excess, unwanted plants.



Linda Dimitrijevic brought her weed whacker from home and attacked (yes, that's the right word) the weeds near the entrance to the garden. Before she started we weren't able to walk down the path without the weeds hitting our legs.

Sunday it might be a good idea if we all could bring our weed whacker to the garden and whack the weeds inside and outside the garden. It would be SO NICE to have the garden look presentable again.



Alan was at his usual place emptying the TTG buckets and Carol Luebbert tended to the zucchini in the double high bed. Below after Stan Vriezelaar harvested okra, he cut down the grape vines and weeded underneath. He found honeysuckle vines which he removed as well.



You can see Linda at far right working on the weeds. She brought with her three batteries.



I weeded up and down the berm where the tomatoes and watermelons grow. We have plenty of flowers but no tomatoes to harvest yet. We are growing cantaloupes along with watermelons. The cantaloupes are opportunistic plants.





After using the weed whacker Linda took a garden sheers and cut down the weeds on the path where I just weeded and put them into the black trash bags. You can see the watermelon and the cantaloupe. The bag was heavy and Alan helped her with it. It will be taken to the dumpster next time.



Two weed whacker batteries sit on the edge of the double high bed.



It looks SO MUCH BETTER!
WOW!! Both walking paths
near the front entrance are now
navigable. See pages 4 and 5
to see the before pictures!



The sky was overcast in the
morning. Towards the end of the
gardening session it began to
sprinkle but it didn't last long.
The breeze and lower
temperatures were pleasant.



Although I don't have any pictures (due to my intense weeding efforts), Carol Luebbert and Judy Harris were also in the garden doing various tasks such as harvesting, weeding, and preparing the crops for the pantry.

For the first time this season we harvested butternut squash. I wished I had taken a picture of it too. The pictures below is from the internet.

Gio Sparks had an interesting conversation with AI. It speculated that our tomatoes aren't producing, not just because of the hot weather, but also because the soil is high in nitrogen. The nitrogen is concentrated because of the composting we do. Gio bought 0-10-10 fertilizer (0 means no nitrogen) and is going to use it on his tomatoes. He will lend us some if he has any left. Earlier this season we put bokashi tea in-between the tomatoes and the watermelons. Maybe that's one reason why the the tomatoes aren't doing well.



August

2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
27	28	29	30	31	
				8:00 Garden	
3	4	5	6	7	
8:00 Garden. Tisha B'Av	8:00 Garden. National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day			8:00 Garden	
10	11	12	13	14	15
8:00 Garden	8:00 Garden			8:00 Garden. Love Your Bookshop Day	Tu B'Av
17	18	19	20	21	22
8:00 Garden. Baby Boomers Recognition Day	8:00 Garden. Bad Poetry Day	National Potato Day		8:00 Garden	
24	25	26	27	28	29
8:00 Garden. National Peach Pie Day	8:00 Garden	National Dog Day		8:00 Garden	
31	1	2	3	4	
8:00 Garden					



JUDY HARRIS
CAROL LUEBBERT
TIANYING MI
LINDA DIMITRIJEVICH
ALAN RAYMOND
XINGFA GUI STAN
VRIEZELAAR MARY
LUCADO BOB
DORSON ZHIWEI
ZHAO MARY ANN
FORD ZHESHENG
ZHAO

Are you
ready?

On Sunday bring your weed whacker, string trimmer or whatever you want to call it and let's decimate the tall weeds in the garden and outside the fence for once and all. Well, for a while anyway. Bring ear and eye protections if you have them, plenty of strings and charged batteries. (We have no electricity in the garden).

We have one week to get the berms ready for fall planting. Some berms will be covered with cardboard, some left fallow for planting the crops after whacking.

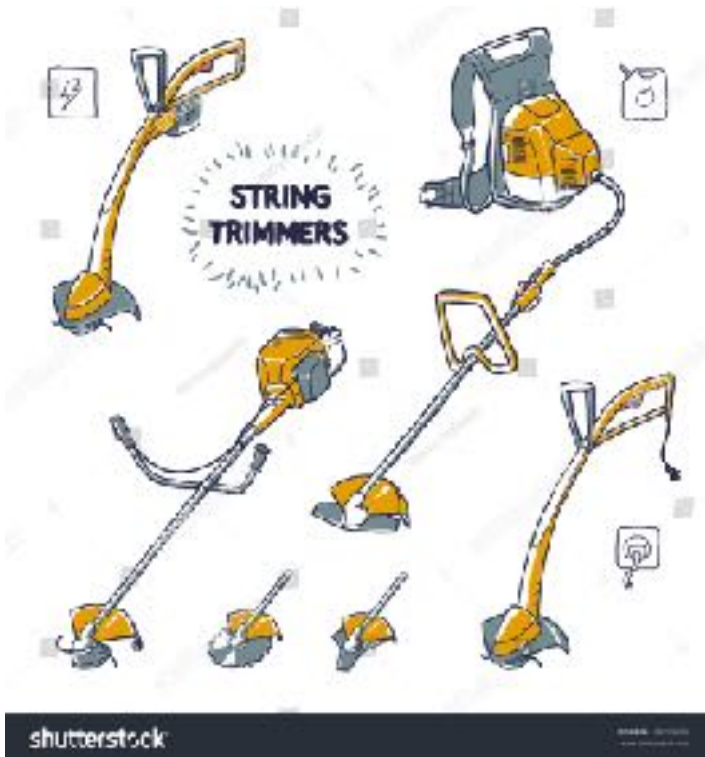
Hand weed where the weed whacker can't go. Also help Mary Ann weed the pollinator boxes within the garden.

Help Stan remove the honeysuckle vines. It is invasive and can decimate our garden.

Sucker the tomatoes and spread 0-10-10 fertilizer on the base of the tomatoes. Inspect the squash leaves and remove the ones with eggs and squish them to oblivion.

Two more potato berms need to be re-dug.

Put mylar tape on the fence to scare the deer. Also let's start putting the metal landscape wires down by the fence to keep animals from burrowing into the garden.



Bring the string trimmers or weed whackers to the garden this Sunday.



Melody Newton

She/Her

Community Outreach Coordinator

✉ melody@newearth.farm

☎ (314) 390-6950

📍 800 Warren Street
Saint Louis, MO 63102

🌐 www.compoststl.com



Did you know that New Earth's drop off composting service accepts more than just fruits and vegetables? Nearly all foods, including meats, dairy, and processed foods are accepted in the bin! Due to the use of large scale composting, the internal temperature of the piles is sufficient to kill human pathogens, insect larvae, and weed seeds. So you can compost anything from apple cores to leftover pasta salad to raw chicken that sat in the fridge too long! Check out the full list on Betterbin and the compost guide here:

newearth.farm/compost-guide

More summaries of articles gleaned from AppleNews:

Should You Give Tomato Plants Aspirin? 5 Weird Tomato Hacks Gardeners Swear By by Miranda Crowell

You aren't hurting your tomato plants by adding fish heads, dry milk, pasta water or banana peels to your tomato soil, but they would be better in the compost pile. Aspirin may or may not work, but it has to be added every two weeks. Any organic fertilizer and some lime might work.

We Asked Gardeners for the Worst Thing You Can Do to Your Tomato Plants - And We're Guilty by Tessa Cooper

Not giving tomato plants room to grow, incorrect pruning and adding too much nitrogen to the soil. Space tomato plants 2 to 3 feet apart, strip off the bottom leaves, and sucker. Too much nitrogen leads to a poor harvest.

How to Spot Stink Bug Damage on Your Tomatoes Before It Ruins Your Harvest by Michelle Mastro

Stink bug damage includes cloudy spots, damage clusters, blackish brown droppings, and stink bugs themselves.

Cut off affected fruit, remove the insects by hand, spray homemade repellent (lemongrass oil, spearmint oil or rosemary mixed with water in a spray bottle), remove any lingering plant debris, and plant marigolds.

The Epsom Salt Hack That Will Make Your Tomato Plants Thrive by Rob Johnstone

Epsom salt is magnesium sulfate. A magnesium deficiency is indicated by green veins in the leaves, but the rest of the leaf has discolored splashes of red, yellow, or brown. It will lower fruit production, and the plant will be impaired. A magnesium deficiency is indicated by green veins in the leaves, but the rest of the leaf has discolored splashes of red, yellow, or brown. It will lower fruit production, and the plant will be impaired. Too much magnesium can interfere with the plant absorbing other nutrients and can also stunt the overall growth of the plant. (Which will harm fruit production.)

Gardeners swear by this simple trick — here's how to save split tomatoes fast by Kaycee Hill

We know that inconsistent watering causes split tomatoes. Look for small cracks forming around the stem area and check the weather forecast regularly during tomato season. Cut away the split sections and use the tomatoes immediately rather than storing them. Water consistently, every 3 to 4 days, and keep the top 2-3 inches of soil moist but never soggy. Apply mulch around the plants. Look for tomato varieties specifically bred with flexible skin that resist cracking (Big Beef, Big Boy, and Box Car Willie).

How To Prevent Split Tomatoes In Your Garden by Emmy Schneider-Green

There are no magic fixes. Consistent watering is the key. Give your plants an extra boost by watering with leftover cooking water. Halt cracks before they can start by harvesting your crops early while still green and let tomatoes reach peak juicy ripeness from the safety of the kitchen counter.