

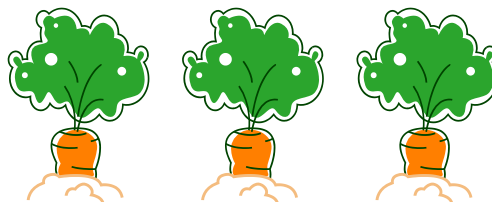
EAST HADDAM GREEN COMMITTEE

March/April 2011 Newsletter

East Haddam Community Food Bank Garden

The Food Bank Garden will begin its third season this spring! Started in front of the old Middle School in 2009, it has provided 218 lbs of organically grown produce, all donated to the Food Bank. Last year the garden was expanded with the help of a grant from the Rockfall Foundation and grew peas, beans, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, spinach, squash, watermelons, sugar pumpkins, and tomatillos. We would like to expand the garden again this year, doubling the size to 34' x 28'.

The Food Bank now serves about 190 families, up from 103 families when the garden was started. Wood ashes and chicken manure are on our garden wish list. Seedling starts are also appreciated. Please contact Town Hall or email the Green Committee at easthaddamgreencommittee@gmail.com if you can help.



Connecticut Clean Energy

East Haddam is a Clean Energy Community and already has 114 households (3.5%) signed up to use clean electricity. This helps the town qualify for a free clean energy system (solar photovoltaic, wind or solar thermal) from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund. Customers of CL&P or United Illuminating can support clean energy made from renewable sources like wind or small hydro. There is a small additional cost but it can be offset by choosing an alternative electric supplier. Your electricity would still be delivered and billed by CL&P or UL, but would be purchased from a less expensive energy supplier. Go to www.ctenergyinfo.com to compare rates and then to www.ctcleanenergyoptions.com to check out the options for clean energy and to sign up.

Check out information regarding rebates and tax incentives on clean energy systems – solar pv leases, solar pv systems, thermal energy and more- on the CT Clean Energy website at www.ctcleanenergy.com. Both residential and business properties are eligible for the programs.

Connecticut's Solar Lease Program is still accepting applications. Qualifying homeowners can add a solar system to their home with no up-front cost. More information is available at www.ctsolarlease.com.

Boy Scouts Attend Green Committee Meeting

Last fall several Boy Scouts and their troop leader, John McCormack, attended a Green Committee meeting. Here are the impressions of Cole McCormack, Randy Holmgren, and Connor McCormack:

“We attended a Town of East Haddam Green Committee meeting at the River House. There were ideas discussed about a windmill but it was denied because of the noise and difficulty of getting it in. We could put in a windmill by the cell tower at the Transfer Station so it wouldn't be a big annoyance. That would reduce the amount of people that can hear it. We think that it would be a good idea to have power that can help with the electricity in our town or even the cell tower next to it. It is already in our neighboring states, like Massachusetts. People once said cell towers were ugly. Now almost everyone depends on them so you would think that they would be accepting of something that would run their house's electricity and TV. We need to think about different ideas to try to make the town of East Haddam green.

We talked about the recycling in the schools and how it could be improved. It could be improved by dumping the cans and bottles into the town Boy Scout's troop trailer instead of the trash. This also will help fund the troop.

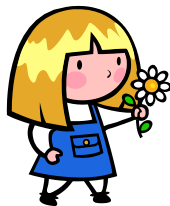
Our town has a Food Bank garden which supplies the Food Bank with fresh vegetables. Everyone should have a garden because it makes the world greener, for several reasons. The first reason is you get to eat fresh vegetables. The second is you can reduce the cans and plastic bags that the produce comes in. The third reason is you can put the extra produce into a compost pile. The compost pile can be used to help the soil in your garden the next year.

What we don't understand is how before when you went to the transfer station you had to separate the paper, plastic, and cans but now you can put it into one bin. A machine that takes away jobs is separating everything once it's all together. It seems like we took a step backwards.

Recently reusable bags have become very popular. A high school student in our town created a reusable bag design that was put onto a bag that is sold in stores in the town. East Haddam took a step forward when these bags were sold. If more students could be involved in helping the town become greener we could have a better environment. These are just some things that you can do to help the environment, so do your part. Some of these ideas will assist in the main objective to: **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.**”



Remember to Recycle! Every ton our town recycles is a ton we don't have to pay to dispose of as trash.



3 Gardening Book Recommendations

by Martha Hansen

I am always on the lookout for new gardening books, it seems that there is always another tempting one just published, but there are some that I find myself coming back to over and over again. Here are two old favorites and one new one.

The first is Barbara Damrosch's *The Garden Primer: Second Edition*. Updated in 2008 to be 100% organic, this book is thorough and has advice on soil, landscape design, tools and equipment, annuals, perennials, bulbs, vegetables, herbs, fruit, lawns, roses, trees, wildflowers and more. There are plant lists, and a great appendix full of sources – organizations, books, plants, equipment, sources for native plants, etc. A great resource made even better, and for less than \$20. It's fun to read, too.

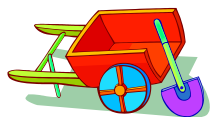
For wonderful companion planting suggestions I refer to *Great Garden Companions: a Companion Planting System for a Beautiful, Chemical-Free Vegetable Garden* by Sally Jean Cunningham. This book has terrific suggestions and advice for interplanting vegetables with various herbs and flowers designed to attract beneficial insects to pollinate things and prey on the bad guys. All organic, with advice on raised beds, and excellent illustrations of "good" and "bad" bugs, this book inspires me and has broadened the variety of herbs and flowers I plant. All good!

The Resilient Gardener: Food Production and Self-Reliance in Uncertain Times by Carol Deppe was published last fall. It deals with gardening under difficult circumstances, and how to integrate a flock of chickens or ducks with your gardening, growing most of their feed. The book focuses on producing food that stores well and can be grown inexpensively. Carol offers helpful advice for gardening efficiently in spite of time, financial, or physical limitations. She is a long-time expert gardener, and has also written a book on breeding your own vegetable varieties.

May all your weeds be wildflowers

Wondering how high oil prices could affect the economy and your life? Check out www.postpeakliving.com and www.ecoshock.org for advice on how to cope.





Grow Something Different!

Try growing something different in your garden this year, suggests Chad Peterson; you never know what you might discover. Greens, and winter storage vegetables like onions, carrots, potatoes and winter squash are easy to grow, and can help offset rising food costs. Most berry bushes are simple to grow, too. We are all familiar with the traditional blueberry, but have you tried Aronia, or cranberry? Aronia, also known as chokeberry, is native to Connecticut, and you don't need a bog to grow cranberries. These shrubs are available for pre-ordering at the CT Coastal Conservation District's annual plant sale in April – see the Events calendar below.

Miner's Lettuce: *Claytonia perfoliata* – a cold-hardy salad green also known as Winter Purslane, this is rich in calcium and vitamin C and has a mild flavor. It tolerates moderate frost and can be grown all winter in mild regions or in cold greenhouses. The same plant can be cut over and over again during the season and it will regrow.

Purslane: *Portulaca oleracea sativa* – This crisp, mild green is easy to grow and will self seed. It can be picked to within 2" of the base and will regrow. It is sensitive to frost.

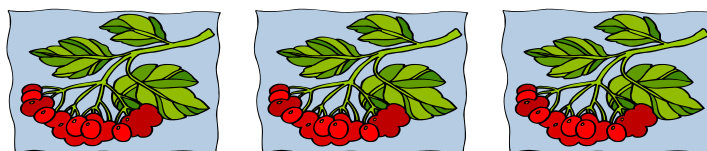
Sorrel: *Rumex acetosa* - Produces some of the earliest greens of spring and the latest of fall. The tender, fresh green leaves grow to about 8" long and have an intense lemony flavor. Rich in vitamin C, perennial. Make sorrel soup!

Seeds are available from Johnny's Selected Seeds (www.johnnyseeds.com), Fedco (www.fedcoseeds.com), John Sheepers (www.kitchengardenseeds.com), Botanical Interests (www.botanicalinterests.com), and Abundant Life Seeds (www.abundantlifeseeds.com)

These seed companies, among others, have taken the Safe Seed Pledge - they will not sell genetically modified (GMO or GE) seeds. They have large selections of heirloom and open-pollinated seeds, as well as hybrids. Hybrid seeds have not been genetically modified, but have been bred to have certain traits like disease or drought resistance, high yield, etc. Their seeds, if saved, will not breed true in the next generation. Heirloom and open-pollinated seeds can be saved and will produce the same plant as the parent.

Aronia: [Aronia Melanocarpa](#) (black chokeberry) [Aronia Arbutifolia](#) (red chokeberry), and [Aronia Prunifolia](#) (purple chokeberry), make excellent landscaping plants with colorful berries and flowers. The berries are high in antioxidants, you can make wine and jam from the berries, though most varieties are sour. These native shrubs grow 6-10' high and have showy white flowers in the spring. The foliage turns red in the fall. Easy to grow in sun or partial shade.

Available from Fedco (Fedco Trees) www.fedco.com/trees, Raintree Nursery www.raintreenursery.com, Miller Nurseries www.millernurseries.com. Check local garden centers also.





Area Green Events



We want to spread the news about local environmental activities. If you or your organization are sponsoring an event that promotes healthy and sustainable living; protects, restores, or maintains ecological integrity; encourages and supports the use of clean energy, conservation of energy and natural resources, please let us know. We'd love to share the news!

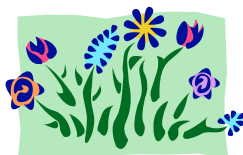
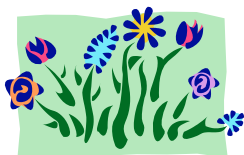
Send your submissions to easthaddamgreencommittee@gmail.com. Include your organization's name, the location, date, time of the event and contact information. Keep submissions under 100 words and submit them early. Our newsletter is published every other month.

March 17, Thursday, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Outhouses, Cragin Memorial Library, Colchester. A presentation by Virginia Williams, "The Outhouse Lady", topics include: Architecture, History of Outhouses, Trivia. Come, reminisce and be entertained by this fun program.

March 31, Thursday, 7:00 -8:00 pm. Composting 101, Essex Public Library, Essex. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, you won't want to miss this great program on how to make free "garden gold" – nutrient-rich compost that will make your garden grow. Presented by Master Gardener Claire Matthews.

April 15,16,17, 2011 CT River Coastal Conservation District 20th Annual Shrub & Seedling Sale. A large variety of plants native to Connecticut. Pre orders due by March 25, go to www.conservect.org/ctrivercoastal for a complete list of plants and ordering information, or telephone 860-346-3282. This is our main fundraiser: all proceeds are used for conservation, environmental education and technical assistance programs.

April 23, Saturday, 1:00 – 2:00 pm. Native Connecticut Animals: A Live Encounter, Brainerd Public Library, Haddam. Learn about some of our wildlife neighbors up close and personal at this family friendly event presented by the **New Canaan Nature Center**. This fun event is open to all ages. Seating is very limited. Call the library to register at 860-345-2204.





CAN YOU LEND A HAND?

The East Haddam Green Committee is charged with surveying the town's eco-footprint, reporting on the results, and helping to promote a more eco-friendly town.

We're looking for a few new volunteers to join our committee. Meet residents with similar values and interests. Make a difference to your community and the environment. Join the East Haddam Green Committee!

To become a member, attend one of our monthly meetings or go to the First Selectmen's Office and complete a Committee Volunteer application.

Committee members or alternates must be town residents and at least 18 years old.

East Haddam Green Committee

Meets the First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm
at the River House behind the Town Hall

Current Committee Members:

Ken Simon, Chairman
Chad Peterson, Vice-Chairman
Martha Hansen, Secretary
Jean Breuler
Nancy Pincus
Yvonne Rubin
Terri Smith
Sue Staehly

Any comments or suggestions, please email the Green Committee at easthaddamgreencommittee@gmail.com

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