

THIS SUMMER'S ECOLOGY EFFORTS

[SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD]

AUTUMN 2012

ISSUE 1

GARDEN ENDEAVORS

mostly small...and not too successful this summer

Now that we're moving into the latter months of the calendar year, autumn is around the corner here in North America. It's that time of year to note what worked well in our gardening efforts and what not to repeat next spring when it's again time to plant that flower bed or window box.

I drool over the pretty flowerboxes in the neighborhood but, the flower selections we made were a flop. Even though the tag indicated they would thrive in the partial sun they would get in our flower box, it was, in fact, too shady there. Next summer I'll use Begonias instead of Zinnia's at the front of the house.

Our small garden on the west side of the house I think needs several loads of new soil and perhaps some good dry cow manure to enrich the clay-like stuff that is currently here. Having only recently moved, I'm finding there is much to learn about soil conditions, sun patterns and weather in this area. The rhubarb is finally growing well and the lilies were great; the green beans and peas were a

disappointment to say the least. Even the tomatoes struggled and weren't very productive. I've already asked some friends to save seed from their colorful huge Zinnia's, Black-eyed Susans and Cone flowers so that I can begin developing more perennials —



that translates into less expense as well as less spring work.

Even at this time of fall you

can still plant a fall-winter vegetable container for your back porch or sun room. Local fresh spinach or lettuce this time of year is a treat...and you can say "I grew it myself".

Click on this link for a video giving you the steps:

http://www.ehow.com/video_7548209_make-winter-vegetable-containers.html

Mary Lou Schmersal



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Would you take time to note and share what you are doing to be a little more "green" or to protect the environment at home, at work, with others or alone?

Perhaps you have found a great resource you can share with us or you visited a wonderful site that was helpful in some way. We'd like to hear about it. We would like to begin featuring your efforts in our next bulletin (winter edition).

Please send your contributions (along with a photo if possible) to me at cppsnews@bright.net Deadline for the Winter issue is 12/01/2012.





COLDWATER BEAUTIES...Marty Bertke

I try to take care of my flower beds, both in front and in back of my apartment realizing that, in caring for God's creation, I share my respect for the earth and, at the same time, add some beauty to our world. I find it's so enjoyable to work with my hands and touch the good soil. Planting, watering and watching growth take place adds joys to my life and to others.



I have lived here 7 years and each year I take special care and strive to enhance this place. In the Springtime I have daffodils and tulips. Later my lilies of the valley pop up and finally, all summer and fall I have the geraniums in the front of my apartment. In the back of my apartment there are beautiful irises, white daisies, and mums. This year I enlarged the flower beds in the back by adding two miniature rose bushes, some pepper plants and mulch. My landlord was very pleased with these additions and he gave me a fine comment for my on-going care of the place.

Another take on environment efforts... Amy Junk



Sister Amy Junk reports from Toledo: Life has been a little challenging for me lately. I haven't done anything unusual this summer in the way of environmental efforts except to be more conscious and deliberate about the whole issue. I guess the thing that keeps coming to the surface of my awareness is being consciously aware of how certain foods are packaged and then trying to purchase healthful foods that are not in plastic



containers. Sometimes it seems like there is more container than food.

Tips from Tipton.... Maureen Mangen

Here in Tipton, IN... for ecology's sake I focus on the following:

- Every possible thing is recycled: tubs are in a small room, marked for each kind of recyclable plastic / glass / tin item.
- Paper, magazine, cardboard is given is proper place. Also aluminum containers (tabs from pop cans are saved – for the Children's hospital).
- I have a small, efficient "raised" garden that is easy to care for.
- At least an acre of "grassy area" (lawn) has not been mowed for several years– behind Visitation House, where I live.
- Two of us share laundry "days" saving on water, etc.

That is all I can think of for now... Maureen Mangen, cpps



Mushrooms are good if you know what you're looking for....Marie Kopin



Kids on a Mushroom hunt in the Rain--August 2012 at Hall's Lake township park in Isabella County, Michigan—led by Sr. Marie Kopin



Benny, our 11 year old member, is seated at the right



Phil Tedeschi, our MMHC President, ladled out the homemade mushroom soup at the end of the day



Marie tells a group of children that Mushrooms are good if you know what you're looking for. Each participant had to find specific colors and shapes to earn a prize for the biggest and for the smallest mushroom.

This specialized event for home-schooled children and their parents was sponsored by the Michigan Mushroom Hunters Club. Marie prepared an illustrated handout and even some homework for the next session in mid-September featuring an exercise in making 'spore prints' and 'online' vocabulary work.

Luckily a 'plan B' to gather under the picnic pavilion was anticipated since it started to rain and thunder shortly after beginning. In spite of the weather, all had an informative and fun time.

*Note: Sr. Marie is secretary of this MMHC state-wide club.

Efforts in Minster, at the Shrine & Cabin ... Judy Niday

We have been trying our best to recycle as much as possible. We planted tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, and eggplant in our home very small garden. We also planted corn, squash and tomatoes at the Shrine in a larger garden. The men at the Shrine cultivated the ground for us. We are now recipients of apples and pears which will be made into pear butter, applesauce or anything else we can create to freeze or use in the present.



Instead of throwing away a broken food slicer I took it to TruValue here in the Village and they soldered it back together.



After a major wind storm hit in late June I hired teenage boys to cut trees that had fallen at the cabin. They in turn had a cord of wood for their home in the country near Dayton. Personally I belong to the Arbor Day Foundation and support tree planting. Additionally I also belong to a committee here in the Northern region that has to do with rural issues on the environment.

Other Michigan EndeavorsBY Marie

Kopin

Personally, I garden with a friend on her farm and we share produce with others. I also have a flower garden by my home.

As to gardening, we have had a very different season up here in Central Michigan area. Many plants are producing smaller veggies such as squash, pumpkin, cabbage, carrots, onions, and beets. Some things we planted did not come up at all. An extra warm early spring in February and March started trees budding only to be followed by a heavy killer frost eliminating most Michigan fruits. This was followed by about 6 weeks of draught in mid-season, As a result, apples

are very scarce this year and much more expensive than usual. Hopefully the fruit trees will bear more next year after their 'rest' this year.



This year I am experimenting with preservation using a dehydrator. I've found cucumber, tomatillo, and summer squash 'chips' to be very tasty as snacks; I store them in tightly sealed glass jars. The produce needs to be sliced thin and dried to a crisp texture. Later, they can be 'recrisped' in a dehydrator if they soften in storage.

check out this website to for practical ideas, applications and projects –from making applesauce to constructing a rain barrel, to planting a garden

<http://www.motherearthnews.com>

Another source for inspiration, reflection and resource:

<http://www.gratefulness.org/t/motherearthlinks.htm>

Cincinnati projects.....Mary E & Tish

Even with interruptions and a late start, Mary E & Tish had success in getting a garden and compost going in their new home. Zucchini, lettuce, radishes, peppers, tomatoes and flowers took off and, depending on location, some did very well. One lonely melon provided lunch for a nosy deer who topped that off with some tomatoes and the tops of the roses as well. Deer netting now manages that interference. Mary E & Tish attended a composting workshop which gave them some practical helps to make that endeavor productive for next



year. Also check this site: <http://howtocompost.org/>

Tish reports on her volunteer experiences at Parkys Farm – a 100 acre demonstration farm which is part of Hamilton County Parks District. It includes orchards, gardens, animal, pony rides and a play barn. While there Tish does direct animal care (grooming sheep, goats, rabbits, and horses as well as feeding pigs, cattle, goats, rabbits, llama, alpacas and chickens) and also cleans out the stalls. She also spends time with visitors as they come up close to learn about the animals. In addition, she helps assists with the various seasonal programs: harvest fun, winter activities, and pioneer school. To learn more about the parks almost daily events, log onto: <http://www.greatparks.org/parks/parkys-farm.html>



This Ecology Bulletin is an endeavor by the Sisters who expressed interest in trying to keep the Environment an important issue for themselves and who desire to share ideas and experiences with other members of the Congregation.

We invite your comments, questions and contributions.

--Amy Junk, Marie Kopin, Tish Rawles, Mary Lou Schmersal