



February 2022 Newsletter

Winter Greetings & Pavilion Update

Greetings, BFCG gardeners! We hope this first newsletter of 2022 finds you in good health and enjoying this cold and snowy winter season. We're certain you are looking forward to Spring and the 2022 garden season as much as we are!

Last year, the BFCG Operating Committee initiated an ambitious plan to build a pavilion to benefit both the garden and the Old Brooklyn community as a whole. Through the acquisition of grant money and donations we received through our IOBY (In Our Backyards) crowdfunding campaign, we were able to raise the funds needed to break ground on the pavilion and purchase the materials needed to build it. We have made tremendous progress in the building of this wonderful space for cultural events and community gatherings. Perhaps you attended one of the fabulous musical performances there last summer!

Through the **Business Volunteers Unlimited (BVU)** program, volunteers from **Eaton Corporation** assisted us in the building of the pavilion's foundational structure. Garden committee vice-chair, Mark Tapajna, and Garden Coordinator, Greg Noeth, along with garden volunteers completed the roof structure.

We are grateful to the Eaton Corporation for allowing their employees to volunteer their time and efforts in this grand undertaking. We are also thankful to Mark and Greg for their time and dedication to this project!

Currently, the pavilion structure is complete, aside from the roof. We are awaiting the arrival of Spring, when the metal for the roof will be fabricated and then installed by Don Baily Builders. The roof structure was sealed with "iceguard" this past fall to limit its exposure to the elements prior to the metal installation.

In September of 2021, former Councilman Tony Brancatelli made a generous donation of \$10,000 toward completing the pavilion site. When received, this money will be put towards installing electrical power to the pavilion, including a fan and lighting. It will also be used to construct a seating area and landscape the site. The garden received a \$2,000 **Neighbor Up Action Grant**, as well. This

grant will be used to purchase plants and soil to begin landscaping the pavilion area. We will be using community volunteers to complete this project!

We are excited about collaborating with OBCDC again this year to create a schedule for the 2022 garden season, including musical performances, art classes and children's programs. We are looking forward to a wonderful summer at the garden and we hope you are, too!

Photo 1: Eaton Corporation volunteers building foundational structure

Photo 2: Garden volunteers staining boards for roof

Photo 3: Greg and Mark working on roof

Photo 4: Pavilion structure to date



SAVE THE DATE

Spring Fling 2022

Please join us for an evening of fun and support our community garden on Saturday, April 30th

from 6-10 p.m.

- **50/50 Raffle**
- **Basket Raffle**
- **Side Boards**
- **Grumpy's Famous Buffet**
- **Beer and Wine**



SEEDS

By Jim Kasper

If you are like me or like most gardeners you have boxes or bags with packs of seeds. Some of these packs are new for this year. Others have been left over from past years. So, what is the best way to handle this stash of future plants? Hopefully, I can give you a few tips and save you a few bucks in the process with what I have learned over the years of gardening.

How long do seeds last? It depends on what kind of seeds you have and how they have been stored. Almost all seed packs have a date printed on them (e.g. packed for 2019). Some seeds, like onions or parsnips are notorious for a short shelf life (one year, MAYBE two, if you are lucky). Others, like tomatoes or radishes can last six years or more and still be viable. The germination rate may drop, but you will probably still get good results. This, of course, depends on proper storage. Seeds should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place, preferably sealed in a container that keeps out moisture, such as plastic freezer bags, a plastic box or glass jars with tight lids. If you kept yours in a paper bag on a damp garage floor, there is a good chance that they are no longer viable.

Viability check: A relatively quick way to check if the seeds are still good, is to put a some on a damp paper towel, fold it over, place in a plastic bag and put it in a warm spot. Most seeds only need moisture and warmth to sprout. A few will need light, too. This will be noted on the seed pack. Leave these seeds on the surface of the towel and place under a grow light or on a sunny windowsill. The seed packs normally give you a germination time, such as 7 to 10 days. Check your seeds after 10 days to see how many germinated. If you put 10 seeds in and 9 sprouted, you can expect a 90% germination rate. If you get none or 1 or 2 out of 10, it might not be worth your time to plant the rest of that pack.

If you do not want to do this, you can Google the estimated seed life published by universities or seed producers. The lists you will find are usually guestimates and the years may vary. One source may say tomato seeds only last 4 years, and another may say 6 years. If your tomato seeds of a favorite variety are 10

years old, you have three options, do a viability test, plant them and hope for the best, or toss them out and buy new.

I strongly recommend going through your collection and tossing the older packs beyond the years they are viable. If you do not want to cross reference each seed type and the years of viability, just toss anything older than 3 years. Organize your seeds as you see fit before buying new ones. If you already have 3 packs of something there is no need to buy more.

Now you are ready to come to our **Seed Give Away** and gather up what you need and add to your seed collection or start a new one!

Seed Give Away info below.



Seed Give Away - Saturday, February 19th - 10 am-1 pm

Our annual seed give away will take place in the Ben Franklin Community Garden classroom on Saturday, February 19th.

A variety a seeds will be available to returning gardeners in good standing.

Please join us!

Returning Gardener Applications

If you requested an online application during the 2021 garden season check-out, you will receive an email notification the week of February 27, 2022. Be sure to check your junk or spam folders.

Paper applications will be mailed to gardeners who chose this option during the week of February 27, 2022, as well.

Thank you!!

Benjamin Franklin Community Garden

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