

The Turnip

Fairfield Glade Community Gardens Newsletter

Important Garden Dates

The gardens have been tilled and plot boundaries are marked. On April 1 the water will be turned on. It's time to plant. Take advantage of the good weather and watch out for late frosts.

The last official frost date for the Tennessee Plateau is May 10. It's best to hold off planting any warm season crops until Mothers Day.



The Red Tractor, Oil on board, Dale Soblo

Reminders

Although “weeds” can be beautiful. They have no place in our gardens. As the season begins make sure to keep your garden plot weeded and in tidy order. Keep the grassy areas around your plot cut to 6 inches.

Water is our biggest expense. Please make sure water is shut off at the valves and do not leave any hoses or attachments on the faucet.

Always read the label and err on the side of caution when using anything in our gardens. If the labels do not specifically read that the product is safe to use in vegetable gardens, don't use it.

Review the Fairfield Glade Community Gardens Handbook located on our website and accessible by clicking [here](#). It contains the rules and policies that all gardeners are expected to adhere to. It will also answer most questions you have concerning the gardens as well as valuable tips for a successful harvest.

If you have any questions, reach out to one of the committee members.

Safety

The Community Gardens are a safe amenity here at Fairfield Glade. In general there is little or no crime. Occasionally there has been a vegetable or two that has gone missing. Encounters with bears, skunks and other wildlife are uncommon but possible. If you do see wildlife, exercise common sense and keep your distance. Given our population a medical emergency or accident are probably more likely.

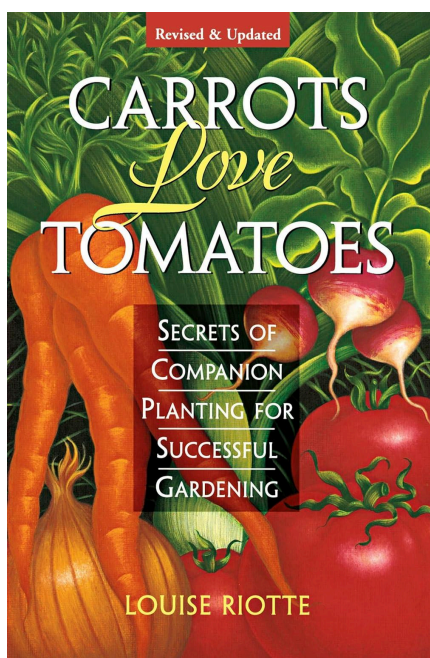
Anything suspicious or out of the ordinary should be reported to one of the garden committee members. If you notice any criminal activity contact the Fairfield Glade Police at 931-484-3785. Of course if it's an emergency call 911.

Help us be prepared by filling out the linked [Emergency Contacts Google Form](#). thank you

Planting Your Garden

A well laid out vegetable garden is aesthetically pleasing with its neat rows and blocks of vegetables, herbs and flowers. This arrangement greatly enhances harvests and reduces maintenance. When laying out the garden consider the following basic principles.

Rotate crops from year to year. Do not plant tomatoes in the same soil they were planted in last year. This goes for all crops. Plants have different nutrition needs, some are heavy feeders and others actually build soil fertility. For example tomatoes and corn are heavy feeders. Beans and other legumes will add nitrogen in the soil. Crop rotation also reduces problems with pests and disease that can build up in the soil.



For more information on companion planting check out this classic book, *Carrots Love Tomatoes*.

Companion plantings are pairings of different crops that enhance yields, reduce pests and help control weeds. Common pairings include tomatoes with marigolds or basil. An ancient triad is corn, pole beans and winter squash. See the [Old Farmers Almanac](#) for many examples. If you want to learn more, *Carrots love Tomatoes* by Louise Riotte is a classic worth reading. Plan for a succession of



A well tended garden that utilizes all available space.

plantings to extend the seasons. A garden can be in production from early spring until well into the fall.

Diversity in the garden is a great way to insure a harvest and reduce pests. Having several types of a single crop, for example three types of kale, means that if one variety fails there are two others to potentially harvest. It's the same ancient wisdom as not putting all your eggs in one basket. This also pertains to the number of different crops grown. If 30 different types of plants are growing in the garden it's very unlikely that any single disease or pest is going to ruin the overall harvest. Having a mixture of flowers, herbs and vegetables will encourage beneficial insects and increase pollination.

Basic soil maintenance has been covered in previous issues of *The Turnip* (February 2024) but it is still worth mentioning. Build the soil with composted organic matter, use organic fertilizer, apply lime and mulch. Weed control and water conservation are greatly enhanced with mulch.

Whether to use conventional rows with wide spacing, raised beds, or square foot gardening techniques to lay out your garden is a personal choice. By following the above basic principles for planting a garden success is all but guaranteed.

Gardening Education

Want to up your tomato game this year. Check out this class offered by the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture.

[Now THAT'S a TOMATO](#) on Saturday, April 19 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM at UT Gardens, Crossville 320 Experiment Station Rd, Crossville, TN 38571

A wealth of information can be found in the [2025 Tennessee Home Fruit and Vegetable Calendar](#)

Thank you volunteers



Derek Leistra and Dale Soblo represented the Community Gardens at the Community Information Fair held on March 12, 2025.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you're interested in volunteering contact any of the garden committee members via email at communitygardensoffg@gmail.com. Or just come say hello if you see any of us at the gardens. Below are a few of the ways you can help.

Garden keepers maintain plots for gardeners that are facing a hardship or medical emergency. They also step in to help maintain abandoned plots.



Chris Schwaberow has been hard at work clearing privet from the garden roadsides.

Chris Schewaberow has been finding ways to make the gardens a better place for a long time. With extensive agriculture and market gardening experience he is a valued advisor to all that have ever managed the community gardens. He is also a very accomplished gardener and a genuinely nice guy. We all owe him a big THANK YOU!

Behind the scenes your Garden Committee has been busy coordinating the tilling, road maintenance, staking plots, turning the water on, clearing wasps nests (yes plural) from the kiosk, cleaning the bluebird boxes, recruiting new gardeners, maintaining databases, paying the bills, and of course producing this newsletter.

Food bank organizer to coordinate the distribution of surplus produce to those in need.

Graphic designer to produce educational materials for the garden kiosk, events and public relations.

Public relation / Marketing representatives to attend events and promote the gardens.

Writers produce timely articles for the newsletter and publicity.



Photo credit Jessica Schatz.

Archives of *The Turnip* can be found on our website next to the turnip truck.

Recruiting New Gardeners

If you know someone who may be interested in gardening at the Fairfield Glade Community Gardens please have them fill out the **Prospective Gardener form** by clicking [here](#). Or direct them to our website and the Prospective Gardeners Page. Getting on the waitlist is the best way to insure that they will get a garden plot. You never know when there will be a new opening.



The Community Gardens website is now linked to the main Fairfield Glade website on the *Lifestyles* page under useful links.

The Turnip is a newsletter for, about and by the gardeners of the Fairfield Glade Community Gardens. Please send us your stories and pictures to be included in future issues. *The Turnip* is published in the Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall.

Contact Us

The Gardens Committee can be contacted at:
communitygardensoffg@gmail.com

Brian Dilts - Garden Coordinator & Bee Keeper

Cary Woolard - Assistant Garden Coordinator,
 Treasurer & Irrigation Management

Derek Leistra - Wait List & Plot Assignments

Jeff Nagy - Land Management and bluebird boxes

Dale Soblo - Marketing, Web Meister & Newsletter

Rod Thomas - Site-B liaison

Visit our website to see the Gardeners Handbook and more.

<https://sites.google.com/view/ffg-community-garden>