

Rogers Farm Demonstration Garden 2016 Field Day

By Jonathan Foster, UMaine Cooperative Extension, Penobscot County



We talk a lot in this newsletter about the Master Garden Demonstration Garden at Rogers Farm. This is *possibly* due to a conflict of interest, since this author's two primary professional responsibilities at the Cooperative Extension are the penning of the Central Maine Garden News and managing said Demonstration Garden, but it's also because the garden is Penobscot County's largest Master Gardener project and one of the longest-running. Since breaking ground in 1994, the garden has evolved with the abilities of its workers, the direction of horticultural research at the University of Maine, and the needs of our gardening community. It has flourished under the leadership of Dr. Lois Stack, Gleason Gray, and Kate Garland, all well-known, vital members of our local horticultural community.



The early days.

Situated on 1 acre at Rogers Farm in Old Town and sub-divided into more than 30 individual plots, the garden space is lush and diverse, offering demonstrations of beautiful annual and perennial cultivation for a dazzling array of plant species, as well as a workhorse of fresh fruit and vegetable production for the Maine Harvest for Hunger. Our abiding goal is to provide a living laboratory and educational outreach site, where we can show members of the green-thumbed public what can be done in the garden with the sustainable, evidence-based horticultural practices we at the Cooperative Extension advocate in our efforts to bridge the gap between research scientists and gardeners, farmers, and homeowners. The garden hosts expert speakers every summer, as well as holding Tuesday night “Ask a Master Gardener “ sessions for anyone who has a pressing question about their tomatoes, their peonies, or anything else that’s on your mind in the garden.

None of this success comes easily; the garden requires a lot of labor. Think for a moment how much planning, planting, cultivation, weeding, feeding, watering, mulching, and pruning goes into such an undertaking. I oversee 20-30 Master Gardeners doing this work every week during the season and still marvel over their dedication, enthusiasm, and productivity—something I probably don't tell them often enough. These people make the garden the special place it is, and their efforts allow the Cooperative Extension to utilize Rogers Farm as a teaching resource, free of charge to the citizens of Maine. And the benefit is evident every time I see a Master Gardener Volunteer engage with a visitor about a favorite plant, a new gardening technique, or just a mutual frustrating pest in the plots. Please, readers, learn about what the Demonstration Garden can offer you and make use of this public resource!



A few of our stalwart volunteers at last year's Field Day pose with Trisha Smith (center, the carrot!), of the Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension.

And so, it is our very great pleasure to host 2016's Field Day as a means of inviting the public out to learn more about the Demonstration Garden, as well as a way to show off the hard work our volunteers have put into the place. We would love to have you and your family join us for the celebration of this year's season!

Field Day Schedule (10AM-2PM, 9/10/16)

All activities and refreshments will be free of charge!

- 10AM Festivities kick off as the Master Gardeners welcome visitors
- 10:30AM “Growing Great Garlic,” Heron Breen, Plant Research/Area Coordinator, Fedco Seeds
- 11AM Animal yoga for the kids with Kristina Jacobs, MGV
- 11:30AM “Toxic Plants in the Garden,” Dr. Lebelles Hicks, Maine State Toxicologist
- 10AM-2PM, ongoing
- Division of Peonies demonstration with the Peony Society of Maine
 - Garden tours
 - Alphabet plant scavenger hunt and face-painting for the kids
 - Observation beehive
 - Creative uses for herbs from the garden with the Herb Society of Maine
 - Seed bank information from the Orono Public Library
 - Pest management resources from the Cooperative Extension
 - And more!
- 1PM Live Bluegrass Music with the *Rogers Farm Field Pickers*
- 2PM End of the day

Home-cooked snacks, treats, and light lunch items will be provided throughout the day by the Penobscot County Master Gardeners, as well as plenty of water.