BREA NEWS

www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/

Volume 13 Issue 5

September/October 2013

BREA Meetings

BREA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month (except for August), at 1 p.m. in one of the conference rooms in Bldg. 400 (except where noted).

All BREA members are invited to attend and participate.

Meeting Schedule

September 10, 2013
October 8, 2013
November 12, 2013

BREA Officers

President
Dave Cox
expatdave@aol.com

Vice President
Ken Mohring
kenwadingriver@gmail.com

Secretary
Louise Hanson
hanson.louise@gmail.com

Treasurer
Steve Shapiro
shapiro@bnl.gov

* * *

Newsletter Editors
Mona S. Rowe
mrowe@bnl.gov
Anita Cohen
afcohen@optonline.net

From the President
by Dave Cox, expatdave@aol.com

Alas, summer is almost over – which means that after an August break we shall be resuming our monthly BREA meetings on September 10. Everyone is welcome at these meetings, so if you are not a regular attendee, feel free to drop by and join in the fun!

Please note also that as the end of the year approaches we will be having elections for the BREA Board of Officers for the next two-year term. If you would like to nominate somebody for one of these positions – or better still, volunteer on your own behalf – please let our secretary, Louise Hanson, know. We are lucky to have a number of dedicated volunteers, but we are always looking for new faces!

I would also like to once again remind everybody about the Worker Health Protection Program for retirees and other former BNL employees. This program provides free medical (continued on page 4)
Hidden Potentials Growing on Long Island

Tips from a Master Gardener

Can you eat your landscape?
Is straw in your future?
Why do farmers plant poles?

As usual, there are things “we just have to learn,” and as a gardener there are many interesting things to learn and try. My latest interests include growing processes that are not new or cutting edge, but which make my gardening endeavors more interesting and challenging.

I also have an interest in anything that will keep farming viable on Long Island. Let us get to the answers.

You Can Eat Your Landscape

For the past two years I have had an edible landscape display garden (5’ by 9’) at the Cornell research farm in Riverhead, NY, where I volunteer.

By definition, an edible landscape is a space where food plants are integrated in an ornamental setting. The design principles for all gardens (including color, texture, form, scale and variety) apply to edible landscapes. Why merge fruit and vegetables into your flower gardens? The primary reason is to grow fresh and flavorful produce. In addition, the mixture provides many interesting planting options, including those not available in a single-purpose planting area. You can see in the diagram above and picture below that the garden is packed with plants, which eliminates almost all of the weeding. I especially like the herbs, beet tops and larger vegetables for their colors and textures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornell Late Blight Resistant Tomatoes (Varieties 1, 2, 3, 4)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Green Pepper</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sweet William</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Oregano</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Purple Passion</strong></td>
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A 5 x 9-foot plot makes a compact and edible landscape.

Straw-Bale Gardening

Halloween and Thanksgiving will soon be here and friends and neighbors will have excess bales of straw (not hay, it has seeds) from decorations. Take them. A new gardening world can begin for free. You will experience less bending, almost no weeding, being able to plant in any spot, and minimal gardening costs. If you have limited space, only a concrete slab for a garden, poor or no soil, or dislike yard work, a small or large straw-bale garden may be for you. Preparation is minimal under any of several options, but the easiest is to fertilize the bale and water it for two weeks in the spring.
This speeds the heating of the straw and starts the decay process inside the bales. Or, live on the edge and just plant and fertilize if the bale is old. Straw bale is great for tomatoes, squash, eggplant and almost everything.

The only downside is watering, where requirements are similar to those for container gardening. You must keep your bales damp. One daily watering – or two in dry conditions – is necessary. For larger gardens, a soaker hose or drip irrigation system (which are now fairly inexpensive) works well. Bale gardening (pictures on right) is especially good for adding height to an area, and for the option to plant in any location.

**Poles for Hops**

There have been beverage law changes in New York State that now encourage small breweries. The next step was to encourage farmers to grow hops for micro and home breweries. During the 19th century, New York was the largest grower of hops. Mold and prohibition, however, eliminated the state’s hops-growing industry. Within the last five years, the industry was revived in the state’s central region. Long Island farmers are currently using the natural mineral-filled soil and mild climate here to produce high quality hops for local brewers.

Hops (left) are grown on vines reaching 25 feet high to avoid mold issues. The change in the farming landscape is welcome as the grown hops are sold, and local breweries and restaurants attract more customers – a double economic impact.

If any of the above sparks your interest, please see the websites below.

**Edible Landscape:** [http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1255.html](http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1255.html)


- Ken Mohring, kenwadingriver@gmail.com
About That Date
On Your Mailing Label

When I took over the BREA membership database, there was quite a lot of work to be done in bringing the data up to date. The invaluable help of Sheryl Gertsman made it possible to have a working database defined and implemented.

Recently, I made an error in the “membership expires” field of some records in the database. As a result, the wrong year was displayed on some of the mailing labels of the previous BREA newsletter. I hope I have fixed all the errors in this field for this current newsletter.

Note to all: Your membership fee will expire on December 31 of the year printed in this label.

Please excuse the confusion generated. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to send me an email (sjbenk@optonline.net), call me (631.265.3982), or send me a note at 12 Sandy Drive, Smithtown, NY 11787.

Thank you for your understanding.
- Carmen Benkovitz, BREA Membership Secretary

President’s Message (cont’d from p. 1)

screening for possible work-related illnesses that might be eligible for compensation under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program. Many BREA members have taken advantage of these programs, so if you would like to participate, please check the link at www.worker-health.org or contact me.

- Dave Cox, expatdave@aol.com

Renew BREA Membership

If you see 2012 or any previous year on the mailing label of your newsletter, you need to renew your BREA membership. Complete the form below to continue receiving BREA newsletters.

Membership type:
[ ] annual ($10) [ ] 5 years ($40) [ ] life (95)

Last name: _____________________
First name: ___________________ MI: ___
Street: __________________________
City: __________ State: ___ Zip ____
Phone: __________ Email: __________
Check made out to BREA for $ ______

Mail to: Carmen Benkovitz
BREA Membership Secretary
12 Sandy Drive
Smithtown, NY 11787

Brookhaven Retired Employees Association
BREA c/o BERA
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Bldg. 400
Upton, NY 11973

Phone: (631) 344-2873
E-mail: breabnl@aol.com
Web: www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/