



Well-Preserved

Newsletter of the
Neighborhood Gardens Association/
A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed green spaces since 1986

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Our Mission

The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) is a private nonprofit corporation founded in 1986. Its mission is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia neighborhoods.

NGA is 20 years old

Happy Birthday to the Neighborhood Gardens Association. Twenty years ago, the NGA land trust was created to preserve and protect community-managed green spaces in Philadelphia that might otherwise be lost to development. NGA and the community gardeners have had great successes over the years, as well as a few disappointments. Community gardeners in Philadelphia are an incredibly diverse group of energetic and committed people, working in neighborhoods throughout the city, all with a similar goal -- to make their community better. We look ahead to the next twenty years with great anticipation and excitement, and hope to add many more gardens to the list of preserved. Read inside for information on the history of NGA, as well as a list of the land trust gardens and the year they were preserved.

The Board and staff are extremely grateful to all of the contributors to NGA who, over the years, have supported our mission. We thank you. Now in its 20th year of preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in neighborhoods, NGA is looking forward to the future and is considering the possible expansion of its mission in response to changes that have occurred in Philadelphia over the last several years. NGA will celebrate this major anniversary in the summer with a special event to be announced. Check the website in the spring for information.



Warrington Community Garden

SPOTLIGHT ON: *NGA's History*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on the history of the Neighborhood Gardens Association.

In the 1970s, the community gardening movement had spread to Philadelphia. Through the work of individuals, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) and the Penn State Urban Gardening Program (PSUGP), vegetable and flower gardens were sprouting up on vacant, blighted lots throughout the city's neighborhoods. They quickly became positive forces for change in these communities. By the 1980s, it had become clear that developers looking for vacant lots to build on would choose community garden lots over unimproved vacant lots. PHS and PSUGP, with other community partners, formed the Neighborhood Gardens Association as a land trust to preserve community-managed gardens and green spaces that were important to the neighborhoods and needed to be made permanent.



Gardeners at Bel Arbor

NGA took its name from the original *Neighborhood Garden Association*, founded in 1953 by Louise Bush-Brown, an author of gardening books and the Director of the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture in Ambler. After a trip to Europe, she got the idea that, in her words, "if window boxes were introduced into the depressed areas of Philadelphia it would lift the spirits of the people living there and improve the neighborhoods in looks as well". The presidents of local garden clubs volunteered to plant flowers in window boxes and on vacant lots. The program was a great success: inspiring neighbors to work together to improve the neighborhood. Over 450 Garden Blocks were planted, affecting over 150,000 residents. One of the original volunteers, Charlotte Stokes, was the President of the Germantown Garden Club and is now 90 years old and living in Roxborough. Mrs. Stokes recalls those days with a great sense of pride. She was particularly fond of her work with the residents of 15th and Rodman Street where a policeman said to the volunteers: "Ladies, you're wasting your time".

But these ladies knew the power of greening. Rodman Street was transformed into a place of beautiful flowers where neighbors were no longer strangers, and where they helped each other, kept their block clean, and were inspired to improve their community. The Garden Block Program received national and international attention for its successful approach to fighting blight in Philadelphia. As a tribute to this groundbreaking work, the land trust adopted the name "**Neighborhood Gardens Association/A Philadelphia Land Trust**".



Garden Coordinator James Taylor
at Glenwood Green Acres

Read more about the Garden Block Program in Philadelphia in *Garden Blocks for Urban America*, by Louise Bush-Brown, 1969.



Garden Coordinator Hayward Ford
at Aspen Farms, preserved in 2004

GARDEN UPDATES

The following are the NGA Land Trust Gardens and the Year Preserved

- Seedy Acres - 1990, 1992 & 2004
- Church Lane - 1991
- Southwark/Queen Village - 1991 (lease)
- Grays Ferry - 1992
- Warrington Garden - 1992
- Kauffman Green - 1992
- Point Breeze Seven - 1992 & 1995
- Chester Avenue - 1993
- Stillman Street - 1994
- North Street - 1996
- Glenwood Green Acres - 1997
- Rainbow Park - 1997
- Tulip Street - 1998 & 2000
- Summer/Winter - 2000 (lease)
- Bel Arbor - 1999
- Aspen Farms - 2004
- 2100 Fitzwater - 2004
- Pentridge - 2005 (lease)

In addition to the above twenty-four permanently preserved gardens, another thirteen are pending. We hope to be able to add them to the "preserved" list soon.

Lemon Ridge Garden - A Miraculous Story

Last spring, NGA was approached by a brother and sister who wanted to donate their land at the corner of Ridge Avenue, 13th, and Mount Vernon Streets for a gardening project. The land was being used for scrap storage, and they wanted to donate it for a community garden or park. Several weeks later, over fifty people attended a community meeting in the neighborhood, and the Lemon Ridge Garden was born. NGA worked with the gardeners for over nine months to get the land appraised, research the environmental history, and plan for a new community garden/park. Lemon Ridge Garden, Inc. took title to the land by the December 31st deadline and is now working to clear the land for their first gardening season this year. NGA applauds their efforts and will continue to provide technical assistance as needed. For information about Lemon Ridge, call 215-765-4140, or log onto www.lemonridge.org



Future site of Lemon Ridge Garden

Learn about NGA gardens on our website: www.ngalandtrust.org

Clip and send with your donation!

Help Save Community Gardens - NGA's 20th Anniversary Year

NGA is a nonprofit urban land trust preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia's neighborhoods since 1986. We need your support!

\$50
 \$100
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 NGA's United Way Code is 8206

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(as you wish to be acknowledged in our publications)

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I prefer to remain anonymous. I am interested in making a planned gift. Please contact me.

Please make checks payable to the Neighborhood Gardens Association and mail to:

NGA, 100 North 20th Street, Suite 309, Philadelphia, PA 19103

If you would like to use a credit card, go to www.ngalandtrust.org and click on the Donate Now button.



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Email Margot if you would like to receive the newsletter via email. Please let us know if you would like your name removed from our mailing list. Thank you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Aspen Farms included in the Archives of American Gardens

The Aspen Farms Community Garden at 49th and Aspen Streets is now part of the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Gardens (AAG). Ann Reed, a volunteer for the Garden Club of America submitted photos of this award-winning garden. Aspen is one of over 5,700 gardens included in the AAG, a source used by researchers and the general public for scholarly, educational, and inspirational purposes. You can search their website at www.siris.si.edu for garden images and other information.