



April 2026 Newsletter

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Getting ready to grow

First-time Gardeners Meeting 4/27

New to the garden this year? Have questions? Come to the **Garden classroom on Monday, April 27th at 6:30** for our First-Timers class, designed to help you start the season with confidence. This orientation will walk you through how the garden operates, the amenities available to you, and your responsibilities as a BFCG plot holder—along with a few helpful tips for a successful growing season.

It's also a great opportunity to meet fellow first-timers and get to know Greg, our Garden Coordinator, and members of the Garden Committee. Building connections early helps make the garden a more welcoming and supportive place for everyone.

Whether you're brand new to gardening or just new to BFCG, we're glad you've joined us and we're excited to help you get growing!

Find some preliminary info online: benfranklincommunitygarden.org/newgardener

Kick-off Meeting 5/4

Join us for our Season Kick-Off Meeting on **Monday, May 4, 6:30 p.m. at Mary Queen of Peace** Parish Center Cafeteria, 4427 Pearl Road. Enter from the rear parking lot.

50/50 raffle and free seeds will be available as well as (drum roll) the 2026 season's plots chart.



Join us for our annual fundraising event to support Greater Cleveland's oldest and largest community garden! A Cle Landmark, we've been growing both food and community since 1981, donating thousands of pounds of produce to local food pantries and logging thousands of volunteer hours. However, seasonal plot fees alone aren't enough to sustain operations. To cover vital expenses like equipment, soil, and grounds maintenance, we rely on grants and donations. Your support ensures the garden remains a thriving resource. Enjoy dinner, drinks, door prizes, 50/50, basket raffle (best in town!), in a historic venue, while helping us continue this vital work.

A vertical poster for the "Spring Fling 2026" event. At the top left is the Ben Franklin Community Garden logo with illustrations of vegetables and a butterfly. To the right is an orange watering can. Further right, text lists "RAFFLE BASKETS", "SIDEBOARDS", "DOOR PRIZES", and "50/50". The main title "Spring Fling 2026" is in large green letters. Below it, "16TH ANNUAL BEN FRANKLIN COMMUNITY GARDEN FUNDRAISER" is written in smaller black text. The date and time "SATURDAY APRIL 18TH 6:00PM-10:00PM" are prominently displayed. The location "Sachsenheim Hall, 7001 Denison Ave, Cleveland, OH 44102" is listed. Ticket information "TICKET PRICE: \$40 INCLUDES: DINNER-BEER-WINE" is shown. At the bottom, it says "TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM RICK GALL: (216) 375-5104". The KSKJ LIFE logo is at the bottom center, with the tagline "A matching funds event with KSKJ LIFE". The poster is decorated with various garden-related illustrations: a pair of orange gloves, a basket of fruit, a potted plant, a shovel, and a garden bed with seedlings.

Tickets are available now!
Tables may be reserved for parties of eight (8) or more.
Vegan options available upon advanced request.

Donate to the fundraiser

There's still time to donate your prizes and pledge your baked goods.



Raffle Baskets & door prizes

We welcome your basket of goods for our basket raffle – and if you know a generous business that might like to contribute, we'd love that too! Or, if you would like to donate a gift card, bottle of wine, or an item \$10-20 value, we would love to give it away as a door prize! NEW items, only, please.

Contact Connor at [\(440\) 865-2624](tel:440-865-2624) or Janet at [\(216\) 695-0157](tel:216-695-0157). **Please contribute by Tues., April 14th** so your contribution can be recognized.



Bakery

We are in need of baked goods for our fabulous dessert buffet. This is your chance to show off your baking skills! We are expecting around 200 attendees, and we'd like to have 2-3 pieces of dessert available for each person. Please email

benfranklincommunitygarden@gmail.com if you are interested.

THANK YOU for your support of our main fundraising activity of the year.



Text message notifications

GroupMe

We use GroupMe, free mobile messaging, to communicate announcements and reminders quickly and efficiently. Never miss out!

[Find details here.](#)

Thank you for staying connected to keep the garden running smoothly!

Patience. Except for spotted lanternflies.

The summer-like days we've had make it tempting to get out and start turning the soil at the first sign of spring—but a little patience now can make a difference later. Working the ground while it's still too wet can compact the soil and damage its structure, making it harder for roots to grow.



Early spring is also when many beneficial insects are still sheltering in the soil or plant debris. Giving them a little more time to emerge helps support a healthier garden ecosystem. When the soil crumbles easily in your hand instead of forming a sticky clump, it's a good sign it's ready to be worked.

Spotted lanternfly note:

As you know, SLFs are NOT beneficial. Nymphs begin emerging in late April–May. Due to their spread, the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture recently issued a statewide quarantine. Residents are urged to destroy egg masses and kill nymphs and adults on sight to help reduce infestations. Egg masses resemble dried mud patches that should be scraped and destroyed. Remember, SLF's preferred host is the invasive Tree of Heaven.

Calendar



Our calendar is still in process. Stay tuned for more garden event dates and details.

Use [GroupMe](#), check the [website](#), watch the bulletin boards. Here's a preview:

- Spring Fling Fundraiser – Saturday, April 18, 6–10:00 p.m., Sachsenheim Hall
- First-Timers Meeting – Monday, April 27, 6:30 p.m., Garden classroom
- Season Kick-Off Meeting – Monday, May 4, 6:30 p.m., Mary Queen of Peace Parish Center Cafeteria, 4427 Pearl Road. Enter from the rear parking lot.
- Garden opening – Saturday, May 16 (the "creek don't rise" date)
- Pedal for Prizes – Saturday, May 16 (our Garden is a "stop" on this [community event](#))
- Cuyahoga County Fair – August 11–16
- Garden closing – Saturday, October 10, 4:00 p.m.

More dates to be posted soon!

Garden Operating Committee Monthly Meetings

Your Garden Operating Committee meets year round! Unless otherwise indicated, committee meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at

Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation
4274 Pearl Road, rear entrance.

All gardeners and members of the public are welcome to attend!



Ben Franklin Community Garden

1905 Spring Road

Mailing Address: 4274 Pearl Road

Cleveland Ohio 44109

A program of

Old Brooklyn Community Development Corp.

benfranklincommunitygarden@gmail.com

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