



Fall 2026 Newsletter

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Message in your email may be clipped for length. Please expand to view all.



By gardener Kim Repinski

It's a wrap!

During the summer we have seen the "refresh" of the steel container that sits behind the shed. Volunteers worked hard to power wash it, prime it, and paint it in anticipation of the final step—wrap it.

Concurrently, two mural artists were creating custom artwork depicting the garden attributes.

Amber Esner (www.amberesner.com) depicted a harvest table. The mural includes vegetables that appear in the garden throughout the season.

Matt Labyk (www.mattlabyk.com) chose to feature various attributes of the

garden. The garden's name, location and history appear with various items common to gardens.

The back of the container depicts an image of a zinnia and a common visitor to the garden—the beautiful Monarch butterfly. The Monarchs visit Ben Franklin to find nectar for their long journey to central Mexico and California. They are a constant reminder that the garden feeds and sustains others.

Container prepped, artwork completed, the remaining task was to wrap the container. On September 23rd, George from SpeedPro began installing the vinyl wrapper. He was able to complete Amber's mural on the east side of the container before darkness and a gusty wind forced him to cease the effort. He will return on September 29th to finish the job. I know it will be worth the wait.

The final product will be beautiful and befitting Ben Franklin Community Garden.

The project could not have been completed without the assistance of many. In no particular order I would like to thank the following:

- All of the volunteers who lent their time.
- Amber and Matt who lent their artistic talent.
- The Operating Committee, and especially Connor Wollenzier and Mark Tapajna, who oversaw the volunteers and led the project.

A special thank you goes out to my sister and brother-in-law, Katie and Jim Lasch who funded the project. Residents of Oakdale, MN and avid gardeners themselves, they have long been friends of Ben Franklin Community Garden. Five months ago they offered to fund any garden project I chose.

I chose to bring a bit more beauty to the garden.



Closing date: Oct. 10



[per End-of-Season Rule 22 – Checkout Process]

Check-out procedure and volunteer hours

To wrap up the 2026 gardening season, please plan to check out of your plot with Greg, our Garden

Coordinator, or a Committee Member by **4 p.m. on Saturday, October 10th**. Together, you'll go over a simple check-out sheet that confirms your plot is ready for winter plowing and cover crop sowing.

- **Manmade Materials / Trash** – Remove all manmade materials, including weed-blocking material and staples/pins. Gardeners must haul away their own trash: broken hoses, tomato cages, stakes or unwanted weed blocker materials.
- **Flowers** – **Leave flowers in place** to provide habitat for pollinators.
- **Vegetation** – **Cut vining vegetation** to 2 feet or less and spread vegetation evenly across the plot. It is not necessary and **not recommended that vegetation/organic material be removed**. Vegetation MAY NOT be placed in compost bins.

- **Straw** – Spread any straw bales evenly across your plot. Cardboard may remain in place.
- **Stakes** – Leave your name board and brown plot stakes in place.
- **Level Ground** – Rake smooth all mounds and fill in any holes so the ground is level.
- **Volunteer Hours** – All volunteer hours or monetary donations* are due at season's end and will be verified during check-out.

*[Donate via PayPal](#)



End of season volunteer opportunities

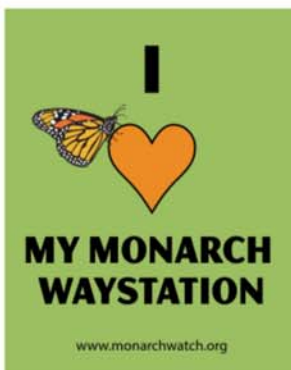
Still need volunteer hours? Sign up on the shed door for upcoming opportunities to pitch in on closing day, **Saturday, Oct. 10 and Sunday, Oct. 11**. There will be plenty to do to help Greg shut down the garden. **Don't**

forget: Log all volunteer hours in the book at the shed under the main gardener's name. Every hour counts and helps us celebrate your contribution!

These are the last hours that count for this season. If you've come up short, you can make the corresponding monetary donation when you check out from your plot.

BFCG will be at OB StreetFest

On **Saturday, Oct. 10 from 2–8:00 p.m.**, Broadview Rd. between Spring Rd. and Tampa Ave. will become pedestrian only, filled with food, live music, retail vendors/artisans, a beer garden, and family friendly activities. Free! Garden volunteers will work our booth and everyone is encouraged to stop by!



As the garden takes on its more ragged end-of-season look, one of the joys of harvesting and clearing our plots is seeing the monarch butterflies passing through.

According to the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, many of the monarchs we see were born in Canada and crossed Lake Erie on their way to central Mexico. A stop in our garden may be their first real rest after a 50- to 60-mile flight over the lake.

Our late-blooming zinnias and other flowers provide much-needed nectar for the next leg of their journey.

Milkweed also grows in several of the Garden's common areas. Depending on the weather, migrating monarchs may stay for a few hours or a few days.

It's also one reason we ask gardeners to leave their flowers standing at the end of the season. The monarchs may have moved on, but honeybees and other pollinators are still active on warm fall days. Those slightly bedraggled flowers still have work to do.

And, as you may know, BFCG is a registered Monarch Waystation with [Monarch Watch](#).

Old Brooklyn Trick or Treat Trail

Old Brooklyn's annual Trick or Treat Trail, organized by Gateway Church, will be held at BFCG on **Saturday, October 24th from 1-3:00 p.m.** The free event includes popcorn, apple cider, games, crafts, and music, plus the Trick or Treat Trail with treat stations hosted by local organizations. BFCG will have a station with activities and treats. No little one or costume required; just come by and enjoy all the scary cuteness. (Volunteer time for this event counts for the 2027 season.)



Looking ahead

For 45 years, Ben Franklin Community Garden has depended on gardeners willing to take responsibility not only for their own plots, but for keeping the Garden itself going.

As we head toward 2027, we have reason for concern.

This year, we came up short on candidates for the Operating Committee. At the same time, Greg, our Garden Coordinator, will retire at the end of the year after 12 years of service. We know just how much he has done, including a great deal that never appeared in a job description.

The apparently effortless experience of showing up and gardening is possible because other people have already done a remarkable amount of work behind the scenes: planning, organizing, communicating, solving problems, managing applications and plot assignments, directing volunteers, maintaining equipment, and simply making sure things get done. It's that work that allows the rest of us to come to the Garden and, well, garden.

For a long time, a relatively small number of people have carried much of that responsibility. Some have served gladly, but for too long. Now that number is getting smaller.

A community garden can have plenty of gardeners and still reach a point where there aren't enough people to keep the community garden going.

That's where we find ourselves as we look toward another season.

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation
What's Up Underground? Unlocking the Secrets of Soil

October 8, 2026: 6:00 – 7:00 pm

Newburgh Heights Village Hall

Full description and free registration
(free soil test kit):

<https://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/e...>



Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation

Winter Sowing

Saturday, November 21: 10:30 – 11:30 am

Cuyahoga County Maple Heights Branch Library

Full description and free registration: <https://attend.cuyahogalibrary...>

Community and Economic Development, Central State Univ.

Savvy Gardener

Monday, January 11: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Cuyahoga County Parma-Powers Branch Library

Full description and free registration: <https://attend.cuyahogalibrary...>

Other dates and time also available.

Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County

Seed Starting Demonstration

Tuesday, February 16, 2027: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Cuyahoga County Brooklyn Branch Library

Full description and free registration: <https://attend.cuyahogalibrary...>

Other resources to check:

[Wild Ones Gardening Programs](#)

[Summit County Master Gardeners Webinar Library](#)

<https://summitmastergardeners...>

[OSU Master Gardeners Video Library](#)

Become a member of OBCDC

Membership is free. Please consider joining Old Brooklyn Community Development Corp. A gardener's membership does not bring any obligation but it does add to the Garden's voice within our parent organization. And, it does add to OB's voice within the wider community. **Sign up here.**



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.

communications@benfranklincommunitygarden.org

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