



## June 2026 Newsletter

### Garden smart during the heat wave

With a heat wave forecast for next week, please remember to take care of yourself while caring for your garden. Bring water, take breaks, and avoid the hottest part of the day. Watch for GroupMe messages and posted signs regarding opening times and closures. Most crops can recover from a hot afternoon; heat exhaustion is another matter. The Garden will still be here tomorrow, so don't overdo it today.

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



### Volunteer days — next up

Looking ahead, here are our next scheduled days for general upkeep and routine tasks—no doubt including more alley work! No advance sign-up needed; please come for whatever time you can spare.

- **Sunday, June 28, from 10 a.m.–2:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday, July 11, from 10 a.m.–2:00 p.m.**

A big **thank you** to those who've taken on season-long tasks and are working on their own schedules. **Reminder:** Please record all volunteer hours in the **volunteer logbook at the garden**, under the main gardener's name. Every hour helps us track and celebrate your contributions!

### Special talents – skills inventory

The Operating Committee would like to learn more about the special talents and skills within our garden community. Many gardeners have abilities that can help support the Garden while also fulfilling volunteer-hour requirements.

If you are an artist, musician, audio technician, graphic designer, photographer, or have other creative talents, please contact Mark Tapajna at [mtapajna@yahoo.com](mailto:mtapajna@yahoo.com). Knowing your interests and abilities will help us better organize, promote, and expand our music and arts programming.

Likewise, if you have skills in carpentry, mechanics, painting, plumbing, electrical work, or general repairs, we'd love to know. These talents are invaluable in maintaining and improving the Garden, and they may provide opportunities to earn volunteer hours doing work that matches your experience and interests.

If you'd like to be included in our skills inventory, please contact Mark at the email address above.

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### *Your hours or your dollars*

#### **Update on volunteer time worth**

According to [Independent Sector](#), the estimated value of a volunteer hour rose to **\$36.14 nationally** in 2024, an increase of \$2.65 or 3.9% over the previous year. In **Ohio**, the value was estimated at **\$33.54** per hour.



Back in 2018, the national value of a volunteer hour was **\$25**. That's the benchmark we continue to use at Ben Franklin Community Garden when calculating donation equivalents for volunteer service.

But numbers only tell part of the story. Volunteer hours are what keep the grass mowed, the common areas maintained, hunger center plots growing, events running, and the garden welcoming to all. We can put a dollar value on the work, but the true value is what we accomplish together.

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## Summer 2026 Lineup

**June 6th – Hey Mavis** This Northcoast Americana band has been weaving a musical tapestry and igniting a following of dedicated fans. With heartfelt vocals, honest songwriting, blazing instrumental solos, and an undeniable onstage musical chemistry, this quartet is the definition of great Americana music.

**June 20th – Zerbo Brothers** Bringing together music, new and old, sourced across thousands of miles traveled, the Zerbo Brothers connect West African, North American and other traditions in a new blend of song.

**FRIDAY, July 3rd – Opus 216** Equally versed in classical and non-classical styles, Opus 216 brings a high-level performance ranging from classical to French café jazz, Top 40, hip hop, South American jazz, Irish fiddle and original music. **No rain date for this show only.**

**July 18th – Da Land Brass Band** Cleveland's own original brass band with a heavy dose of funk. Boasting original tunes, funky adaptations of classic songs, and true roots New Orleans music, Da Land Brass Band has the versatility to satisfy any audience.

**August 1st – John Orsini Jazz Quintet** Comprised of some of the finest jazz musicians in the Cleveland area, featuring trumpet player, Jack Schantz; drummer, Jim Rupp; guitarist, Brent Hamker; bassist, Tim Lekan; and saxophonist, John Orsini, this quintet brings years of experience performing all forms of jazz music. This evening they will be performing jazz music from the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

**August 15th – The Rhondas** Led by three female vocalists and instrumentalists, the Rhondas perform a mix of covers and originals ranging from soft and sweet, lulling you into a state of bliss to kicking up the dust with some sassy tunes to get you dancing.

**September 5th – Women singer-songwriter showcase featuring Liz Bullock & Jessica Sikon** Vocalist and songwriter, Liz Bullock's music is inspired by folk, blues, soul and jazz. Her debut EP 'Where to Begin' highlights these influences and her powerful vocals. Jessica Sikon's dreamy songs are blooming with layers of ethereal vocal harmonies and moving melodies. With subtle influences y artists such as Loretta Lynn and Fiona Apple, but with an indie pop/rock and cosmic country flavor.

**September 19th – Classical fusion showcase featuring Arleigh Savage & Eri Snowden** Cellist and singer-songwriter Eri Snowden-Rodriguez explores a variety of soundscapes by the mixing the natural cello sound with effects pedals creating a unique sound and style. A one-woman band, Arleigh Savage crafts original music with looping pedals, amplifying the bassoon's, haunting and soulful qualities to illuminate the tension and paradox within womanhood.

**FREE Performances are at 6 p.m. on the first and third Saturdays\* June – September. Bring a lawn chair & join us!**

**\*July 4th weekend concert will be on Friday, July 3rd.**

*In the event of rain, shows will be performed on Sunday at 2 p.m.*



## SAVE THE DATE – ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL





*Pictured: 2025 BFCG blue ribbon entry*

## Cuyahoga County Fair – Community Garden Competition

BFCG will once again compete in the Community Garden Competition at the Cuyahoga County Fair. Over the years, our garden has earned an impressive collection of ribbons, and we're looking forward to another strong showing in 2026.

This year's Fair runs August 11–16, and the Garden & Produce theme is "America Celebrates 250."

Committee members Rick Gall and Janet Smith will coordinate the design and assembly of our exhibit, but they'll

need help from a team of gardeners to bring the display to life (think volunteer hours). As Fair time approaches, we'll also be looking for fresh produce from garden plots to showcase in our entry.

If you'd like to join the "America Celebrates" effort, please email [grow@benfranklincommunitygarden.org](mailto:grow@benfranklincommunitygarden.org).

*Note:* Many gardeners also enter produce and preserved items individually. To learn more about the rules and categories, check out the Fair's [Premium Book](#).

### Give Your Hose a Safe Place to Rest

After watering, please disconnect hoses from faucets and move them out of pathways and grassy areas. Hoses left helter-skelter can trip fellow gardeners and will always lose an argument with lawn mowers. Plus, ya know, it's just common courtesy.

– The annual Hose Manifesto

### Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County

#### Tuesday Talks at Ben Franklin

We're invited to join the Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County for **Tuesday Talks at Ben Franklin**. All talks run from 7–8 p.m.

- **July 14: ID and Control of Common Weeds**
- **August 11: Garden Myths – What do you believe?**
- **September 8: Starting a Vegetable Garden**

For full descriptions and **free registration** visit <https://cuyahogamg.org/TT/>

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### Old Brooklyn CDC & Rust Belt Riders

#### Composting workshop



- **Tuesday, July 7, 7–9 p.m.**

From Rust Belt Riders and Tilth Soil: learn the importance of composting and how to compost at home:

- What is compost; How do you make it?
- What the heck is going on in my compost pile?
- Common mistakes; How do I fix my compost?
- What is good compost; Building the perfect detritivore ecosystem

\$10 cost (scholarships available). Free tool with attendance.

<https://www.oldbrooklyn.com/ev...>

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### **Recycling | Composting**



#### **Glass recycling is back**

You'll find the containers on the right, just inside the big fence/gate from the parking lot. Check [this FAQ](#) to learn about glass reuse & recycling, and types of glass you can deposit.

#### **Our community compost bins**

Don't forget our bin right outside the north gate. It's there for your green and brown compostables, but not dairy, bread, oils, animal products. It's also not for your garden weeds or other yard waste.

See our [composting guide flyer](#) and information on [composting your weeds and debris in your own plot](#).

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**Sat., July 11 & Sun., July 12 | 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

#### **GardenWalk Cleveland 2026**

Garden Walk Cleveland is a free, self-guided tour of private home gardens and urban farms across several neighborhoods in the city.

BFCG is once again a stop on the Old Brooklyn tour on **Sunday, July 12**. If you're in the Garden that day, please plan to greet guests and help make them feel welcome as they explore the space.

If you're able, [get the guide](#) and take some time that weekend to explore other participating gardens. It's a great way to see what's growing in other parts of the city.

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#### **Calling All Garden Artists and Makers**

#### **Art Hop returns to the Garden**

BFCG will once again participate in Old Brooklyn's Art Hop on Friday, August 7, from 5–9 p.m. Art Hop brings together galleries, businesses, community spaces, and other neighborhood destinations that help create

culture and community in Old Brooklyn.

As one of the featured stops, BFCG will host local artists in the pavilion area. If you're a gardener who creates art or crafts, we'd love to have you join us. You don't need to be a gallery artist, just someone who enjoys making and sharing creative work with others.

We're also looking for gardeners who would like to earn volunteer hours by helping plan, prepare for, or staff the event. If you'd like to lead a simple art or craft activity for visitors, we'd especially welcome your participation!

To exhibit your work or volunteer for the event, please contact Mark Tapajna at [mtapajna@yahoo.com](mailto:mtapajna@yahoo.com).

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### **When Life Gets in the Way**

Life happens. Illnesses, family responsibilities, unexpected emergencies, work demands, and even well-deserved vacations can make it difficult to keep up with your garden for a while. If you know you'll be away or unable to tend your plot, please let the Garden Coordinator or a Committee member know.

Plants and weeds don't take time off, and a quick heads-up may allow us to connect you with someone who can help keep things under control until you're back. We're a community garden, and supporting one another is part of what makes this place special. Besides, we'd much rather hear from you than see your tomatoes and weeds competing for world domination.

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***Four seats on the Operating Committee will be open this September***

### **Your Garden Needs Your Voice**

Each year at our Harvest Picnic in September, gardeners elect members to the Operating Committee, the group that helps keep the Garden running smoothly and moving forward.

Over the years, the Committee has played a key role in projects large and small, including acquiring our tractor, building and maintaining the pavilion area, purchasing tools and equipment, improving our soil, providing access to plants, and managing the fair and orderly assignment of garden plots. While we all wish the Garden could run itself, the truth is that it depends on gardeners who are willing to step up and help sustain and improve this special place.

This year, at least 4 Committee seats will be open. We encourage you to **consider becoming a candidate**. No special skills or experience are required, just an appreciation for the Garden and a willingness to support your fellow gardeners and our community.

We are the largest community garden in NE Ohio and, in our opinion, the best. The gift of the Garden we embrace and enjoy today exists because gardeners before us were willing to give some of their time and energy to its success. Please consider taking that same step and helping preserve and strengthen this gift for future gardeners.

For a complete description of Committee responsibilities, see the [Garden By-Laws](#).  
You're encouraged and always welcome to come to a meeting.

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## 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](mailto:communications@benfranklincommunitygarden.org)

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