

## GrowBoston Newsletter

Please note: If you would like to receive a translated version of this newsletter, please contact [emily.reckardmota@boston.gov](mailto:emily.reckardmota@boston.gov)



Photo: Savannah at the Mattapan coffee hours

Happy summer, everyone! At this point in the growing season, summer crops are well established, the days are long and hot, farmers markets are underway, and the weeds are coming in quickly. We hope you are settling into the rhythms of summer and are able to enjoy beauty amidst a busy season.

Spring was a busy time for GrowBoston. We went to five of the Mayor's Coffee hours, along with a Food Access event at Brookside Community Health Center, and shared about our programs with community members. We saw the launch of the Urban Agriculture Ambassador program to support low-income gardeners in our four priority neighborhoods. The Grassroots Program celebrated the re-opening of the Julian, Judson & Dean Community Garden and the sale of four parcels of land in Dorchester that will become a new food forest. And we saw the completion of 154 raised beds.

If you would like to learn more about GrowBoston, check out our website [here](#). If you would like to find a community garden or urban farm near you, see our directory [here](#).



*Photo: Boston Food Forest Coalition's Maple St. Food Forest Grand Opening Celebration on June 28th, photo credit: John Wilcox*

### **Urban Agriculture Highlight: Maple St. Food Forest**

On June 28th, GrowBoston staff joined Mayor Michelle Wu, community members, and the Boston Food Forest Coalition (BFFC) to celebrate the opening of this new green space. Maple Street Food Forest is a community-designed food forest that mixes edible plantings, raised garden beds, and gathering space. This project is the result of many years of organizing and planning, dating back to 2019, when the City of Boston began meeting with the Sonoma Maple Schuyler Tenants Association and other community members to envision the future of the vacant lot at 44 Maple Street in Roxbury. BFFC recently purchased the parcel from the Boston Planning and Development Agency, now the Planning Department, and received a grant from GrowBoston's Grassroots Program to build a new community food forest.

Check out this recent episode of **Down to Earth Podcast**, a collaboration between Radio Cafe and Quivira Coalition, featuring the Boston Food Forest Coalition and their work.

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Photo: Brassica rows with Marigolds at The Food Project

**Educational Tidbit: Establishing Fall Crops - by Danielle Andrews (The Food Project)**

Did the wet spring or personal responsibilities stop you from getting your garden established this spring? Here are some crops and tips that we have found to work well for summer planting for fall harvests.

**DIRECT SEEDED CROPS**

Direct seeded crops mean crops where you plant the seed right in the soil, rather than a seedling. There are many seeds you can plant directly into your garden. The vegetables below are all crops we seed right up until the first week of September and they germinate and grow well:

- **Arugula**
- **Baby lettuce**
- **Mustard green**
- **Bok choy**
- **Tatsoi**
- **Radishes**
- **Turnips**

All of the above seeds take less than a week to germinate. If you water them well a couple times throughout the week, they should germinate just fine. Lettuce is more sensitive to the heat than the others and you might want to water them every day for better germination. The trick with germination is keeping that seed fairly wet until it germinates. Remember, you don't have to water deeply, just to the depth of seed. While I normally advocate less frequent and deeper watering, when it comes to germinating seed, watering more often but just enough to get the seed wet is your best approach.

Other seeds that you can start fairly easily in July include **cucumbers, summer squash, beans, beets, and scallions**. These should all produce fine for you in September and October if you seed them by mid July.

Two of our favorite summer crops that we seed that require a little more help are **cilantro and carrots**. These seeds take longer to germinate. Something we've turned to is "seed priming". We will soak the seed overnight and then either sow them by hand, or let it dry out and use that seed over the next few weeks. The soaking process starts the germination process. **Spinach** is another crop that can benefit from priming. We generally sow our fall spinach starting the second week of August and sow it through the first week of September.

## **TRANSPLANTED CROPS**

Transplants can be harder to find in the summer months, but you can call around to nurseries to see if they have any of the following plants that are great for establishing in mid through late July for fall harvest. Be careful to water well until the plants are established:

- **Broccoli**
- **Cabbage,**
- **Cauliflower**
- **Collards**
- **Kale**
- **Swiss chard**
- **Head lettuce**
- **Scallions**
- **Beets.**

Whether you try transplants or seeds, I encourage you to keep going with your garden through the summer! It can be so fun to figure out how to maximize your growing space and learn about what crops do best in your particular yard.

Good luck!



*Photo: Radishes harvested at Green City Growers' Joseph Lee school garden*

### Community Resources & Announcements

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- Join UMass Amherst for a [Pest Control Workshop](#) on **Saturday, July 19th from 10am-12pm at GreenRoots La Finca, 78 Miller St, Chelsea**. Refreshments and Spanish interpretation will be provided.
- The [Boston Summer Eats](#) program offers free, nutritious meals to kids and teens (ages 18 and under) throughout the summer. Come celebrate summer with us at the Boston Summer Eats Kick-Off Event! This fun, family-friendly event will take place on **Friday, July 11, 2025 from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at Paris Street Park in East Boston**. (In case of rain, we'll move across the street to the BCYF Paris Street Community Center.) The event will feature tasty Summer Eats meals, fun games,

giveaways from local groups, and a special show from Puppet Showplace Theater. It's also a great way to learn more about the [33 Summer Eats sites open across Boston](#). Boston Summer Eats is a partnership between OFJ, YMCA, BPS Food & Nutrition Services, BCYF, and Project Bread. For a full list and details, visit [boston.gov/summereats](https://boston.gov/summereats).

- [\*\*Mini-grants are available for composting in historically underserved neighborhoods\*\*](#). The Institute for Local Self Resilience is offering grants up to \$10k for community composting work. They are specifically looking to support organizations rooted in historically underserved communities and neighborhoods affected by discrimination and exclusion. The application deadline is July 25.
- [\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Week: August 10-16<sup>th</sup> - SAVE THE DATE!\*\*](#) Join MDAR in the celebration of Urban Agriculture Week and the urban ag organizations providing “ag-tivities” in cities across the Commonwealth! During the week of August 10-16, 2025, urban farmers are encouraged to host activities and events that educate, celebrate, as well as advocate food production in our state’s urban centers. MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle will highlight youth in urban agriculture and the programs that support farming, marketing and other job skills to teens interested in food production. **To participate and get more information**, please contact Rose Arruda at [Rose.Arruda@mass.gov](mailto:Rose.Arruda@mass.gov).





## Urban Agriculture Fair Harvest Competition

Bring produce from community gardens, urban home gardens, and urban farms to the fair this fall! Win prizes in each category listed below.

**Categories**

- Preserved Foods (canned, fermented and pickled foods)
- Fruits & Berries
- Flowers & Herbs (bouquet)
- Honey
- Oddly Shaped Vegetable
- General Produce
- Junior Category

Grand  
Prize:  
\$100!



**Sat., September 20, 2025**  
**Roxbury Heritage Park**  
**483 Roxbury Ave, Boston**  
 Questions? 617-388-7378



\***Save the date** for the 2025 Urban Agriculture Fair – **September 20th from 11-3pm** at Roxbury Heritage State Park!

\*Find a [farmers market near you](#) and support your local urban farms this summer!

\*[GrowBoston's Fruit Tree Interest Form Out Now!](#) Please complete the form if you are interested in being notified about future opportunities to learn about how to care for your trees, what to do with excess fruit, how to deal with pests, etc.

\*[GrowBoston's Urban Agriculture Ambassador Program is underway!](#) If you live in Dorchester, Roxbury, East Boston, or Mattapan, you can set up a consultation with your neighborhood ambassador to receive free gardening support.

## Receive Free Gardening Help!

### **What: Request a gardening consultation**

The City of Boston is funding 4 part-time garden educators to provide gardeners with the support they need to grow their own food! Accessibility questions are welcome.

**Who:** Residents in East Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan are eligible for this program.

**When:** 2025 & 2026 - set up a garden consultation at your convenience

**How:** Reach out to the urban farm in your neighborhood to meet with your Urban Ag Ambassador:

**Mattapan** - Urban Farming Institute,  
Melanie.Floyd@urbanfarminginstitute.org

**East Boston** - Eastie Farm, info@eastiefarm.com

**Roxbury** - Haley House, nsheck@haleyhouse.org

**Dorchester** - The Food Project, uaa@thefoodproject.org



City of Boston  
GrowBoston



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*Parting Photo: Garden beds at MLK Towers public housing community.*

Happy Growing!

Emily & the GrowBoston team