

GrowBoston Newsletter

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



Photo: GrowBoston Team (Emily, Theresa, Savannah, and Shani from left to right) celebrating the opening of the Jackson Square Greenway. (Photo Credit: MOH Team)

Happy Autumn! Summer was full of growth and community action at GrowBoston. Highlights include the grand opening of a new food forest in Roxbury at 44 Maple St., managed by the Boston Food Forest Coalition, and the long-awaited launch of the Jackson Square Greenway, a Grassroots project years in the making. During Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Week, [GrowBoston's 2025 grant recipients](#) were recognized for their incredible work across the city. New opportunities became available with the release of two land disposition and funding RFPs, alongside the Education Grant. Summer events brought the community together, from co-sponsoring Boston's Urban Agriculture Fair to supporting dozens of gardeners in East Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan through the Urban

Agriculture Ambassador Program. It was a season of collaboration, growth, and exciting new possibilities for Boston's urban agriculture community!

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: Culturally-relevant vegetables grown on tall trellises in the garden. Photo Credit: GrowBoston Team

Urban Agriculture Highlight: Charlestown Sprouts Community Garden by Gerald Robbins (Garden Coordinator)

Charlestown Sprouts Community Garden is a welcoming, natural space in the city that brings together diverse people of all ages to grow, harvest, share, and eat healthy food, while fostering a sense of belonging. Sprouts has individual gardening plots for families to grow culturally appropriate foods that may not be available locally. It provides a space to build community while learning from others and caring for the land. The garden also contains several varieties of fruit trees whose produce members are free to harvest. Charlestown Sprouts, established in the 1980s and relocated to its current site in 1997, completed a multi-year transformation in 2023 with support from GrowBoston, as well as other government agencies, private organizations, and community members.

According to a 2024 census of Sprouts gardeners:

- 200 family members in 68 families have been served by Sprouts.
- 67% of respondents speak languages other than English at home and of those respondents 63% spoke Chinese.
- A majority of families earned less than \$40,000 per year, and live in subsidized housing.
- A majority of families stated that the vegetables they grew supplied their family with “most”, “almost all”, or “all” of the vegetables they ate at home.

Contact charlestownsprouts@gmail.com or go to facebook.com/charlestownsprouts to see what they've been up to.



*Photo: A female long-horn bee in the Melissodes genus forages from native aster in Boston.
Photo credit: Nicole Bell, UMass Amherst Extension*

Educational Tidbit: Where Do Bees Go In the Colder Months? by Nicole Bell (UMass Amherst Extension Educator)

Knowing that fall and winter both represent important times for native bees, what are pollinator-friendly management practices that encourage overwintering success?

While you may not think about it, on sunny autumnal days, you may see bee activity on late-blooming plants like goldenrod, asters, and others. These plants are essential for newly emerged queen bumblebees, who must feed on pollen and nectar before they settle down for the winter. By the first hard frost of the year, all queen bumblebees have settled in their overwintering location, which is sometimes in leaf litter or just under the soil surface.

While queen bumblebees spend the winter hunkered down, some other native solitary bees wait out the cold temperatures in pithy stems like old raspberry canes, which house small carpenter bees .

You can help these important pollinators in a couple of ways. You may want to designate an area on your property where leaves can remain undisturbed from the first frost until temperatures consistently warm above 60F. You may also choose to delay spring pruning until temperatures have risen, the sun is out, and spring plants are blooming. Because most bees in Massachusetts and around the world are ground-nesting, you should minimize large disturbances such as tilling, mowing, and digging as much as possible. If you find a nest in the late spring, you may flag it to mark its location and work around it. This ensures that native bees have the best opportunity to emerge.

To learn about how to register to keep bees in Boston and why bees are important for our ecosystem, check out GrowBoston's [Bees in Boston webpage!](#)



Photo: GrowBoston's Urban Agriculture Ambassadors – Joel, Memia, Melanie, and Nouradine (from left to right). (Photo Credit: GrowBoston Team)

Putting Your Garden to Bed

At this time of the year, the growing season is drawing to an end. As the days shorten and the nights cool, summer crops are winding down and fall crops are already established in the ground.

If you are a gardener, it is about time to think about putting your garden to bed. Some things to keep in mind:

- Instead of pulling the entire plant out of the ground, consider cutting it at the base in order to leave the root system intact. This will provide structure and continue to foster a healthy microbiome in the soil.
- Plant garlic between mid-October and mid-November before the ground freezes.
- Add mulch (leaf mulch, woodchips, straw, etc.) to your garden bed to protect the soil over the winter.
- Shut off the water source
- Start planning your garden for next season! Consider taking the [Master Urban Gardener Class](#) (more details below), or attend other workshops to learn more for next season.

If you live in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, or East Boston, reach out to one of our [Urban Agriculture Ambassadors](#) with support to plant garlic and shut down your garden this fall!



Photo: GrowBoston's MA Urban Ag Week Event where we announced our 2024-25 grant recipients and celebrated urban agriculture in Boston! Photo Credit: MOH Team

Community Resources & Announcements

NEW
GRANTS CALENDAR

Explore upcoming grant opportunities with the City of Boston.

BOSTON.GOV / GRANTS

***[Explore the City's New Grants Calendar!](#)** See what programs City departments plan on launching in the upcoming year! See the full calendar and apply for funding at boston.gov/grants.

Master Urban Gardener (MUG) Certification Course

Saturdays 10am-3pm | October 25 - December 20
Sliding Scale Course Fee

An intensive, skill-building training for community and home gardeners from Greater Boston and beyond. Whether you're just getting started or have been gardening for decades, MUG covers everything you need know to thrive in a community garden.



***[Become a Master Urban Gardener \(MUG\)!](#)** MUG is an intensive skill-building course for gardeners of all levels, covering everything you need to know to thrive in a community garden: soil science, botany for gardeners, organic pest and disease management, and more. Saturdays from 10 AM - 3 PM (with lunch break) between October 25 - December 20. **Apply today through [this link](#).** This course is offered on a sliding scale from \$0 - \$350 based on income. Please send questions to mfrancke@thetrustees.org. The application deadline is October 5, 2025 and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

***[The Growing Justice Fund](#)** offers grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$250,000 to support community-led initiatives that advance equitable food purchasing. These grants empower Tribal, Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian, and immigrant communities engaged in food markets to secure institutional contracts and gain economic viability. Through large-scale purchasing opportunities with community-serving institutions—such as schools, hospitals, and elder care centers—these grants foster equitable access to food buying revenue and help build wealth in historically marginalized communities. **The application deadline is October 14, 2025 at 5 P.M.**

***[GrowBoston's FY26 Education Grant Program Now Live!](#)** GrowBoston is offering up to \$30,000 to fund educational programming about urban agriculture including farming, gardening, permaculture, fruit trees, beekeeping, etc. Apply for the grant online here. **The application deadline is October 15, 2025 at 4 P.M.**

[*Norfolk & Mascot Open Space Land and Funding RFP Now Available!](#) GrowBoston is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of five parcels of open space on Norfolk and Mascot Streets in Dorchester. These lots are abutting the MBTA Fairmount Line tracks and are being offered in "as is" condition. Qualified organizations who apply must agree to invest in transforming the properties into open spaces that can be used by the community. **The application deadline is November 17, 2025 at 4 P.M.**

*Check out these free [Haley House Thornton St. Farm](#) events below!



HEALTH IS YOUR GREATEST WEALTH

HALEY HOUSE

Nsheck@haleyhouse.org

FITNESS GROUP FOR ELDERS

Meeting 1:00-4:00
Tues and Thurs:
Sept 30th - Oct 30th
95R Thornton st 02119

NUTRITION AND CONDITIONING:
This session is perfect for beginners. for five weeks participants will work with a chef and trainer to establish patterns of healthy living.

SCAN ME



HALEY HOUSE

Nsheck@haleyhouse.org

Join the Junior Farmer Program—

a fun, hands-on adventure where kids, ages 8-12 learn to plant, harvest, and care for the earth. Through games, garden time, and tasty lessons in nutrition, young growers build skills in teamwork, sustainability, and healthy living. Perfect for curious minds and muddy hands!

Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00
Sept 29th-Oct 27th

SCAN ME

Spots are limited. Register now!

95R Thornton st
Roxbury MA, 02119



Virtual Workshop 10/23 @6-8PM

Fruit Tree Care & Orchard Planning

Black Coral's Annual 2-Part Workshop

1: Planting With purpose
2: Growing food & Building Legacy

BLACK CORAL

Register @
www.Blackcoralinc.org
Follow us @
FB | IG: Blackcoralinc
GrowBoston

SCAN ME

*[Black Coral Inc.](#) invites you to a free, two-part virtual workshop focused on fruit tree care and community orchard planning! Learn from experienced growers and organizers how to cultivate resilience through food and nature. This event will take place Thursday, October 23rd from 6 - 8pm. Register [here](#).

*The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) is inviting local urban farms to be part of their November Eat Local Always campaign! In Week 3, they'll spotlight The Local Thanksgiving Table, highlighting how fresh, local ingredients can bring new life to your holiday meal. In Week 4, their theme is Honoring Heritage through Harvest, celebrating cultural traditions and stories rooted in local food. If you are interested in being highlighted on SBN's social media for either of these themes, email emory@sbnmass.org—they would love to feature you!



Parting Photo: Flower and honey entrees for the Harvest Competition at the Urban Agriculture Fair in September. Photo Credit: GrowBoston Team

Happy Fall!
Emily & the GrowBoston team