

NEWS / NEIGHBOURHOODS



EARLY SPRING HARVEST: Community gardening enthusiast Kyla Dixon Muir poses with one of several coldframes she has set up at the Riverdale Meadow Community Garden behind the City Adult Learning Centre. Leafy greens have been growing in these coldframe throughout the winter. Dixon Muir will lead a workshop on the construction and use of coldframes on April 19 at Grass Roots on The Danforth

Photo by Colin Grant

Worthy garden project needs a little help from friends

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The garden is a worthy project, connecting people from the neighborhood to each other and to the land, sharing with those in need, spreading cultivation techniques which nurture nature and reduce waste. This garden, too, is just one small example of a city-wide strategy fashioned by Toronto City Council to create a community garden in every ward, most of which are on Parks Department property and have established staff and funding connections.

"There's still so much more we can do," George muses. "We're slowly removing the grass in the pathways and replacing it with thyme, to nourish the soil. The grape vines haven't been brought back to fruitfulness yet - we hope to put in an arbor for them, and one for the roses, this year, to help create a bit of shade. It's a challenge, though, for our garden, a non-school garden on school board property, which has no paid staff or formal funding."

A wish list has just been produced, and we're inviting everyone to catch our vision, and share what you can. To arrange to make donations, email: mudpies@sympatico.ca, or call 416/469-9507 x 2.

WISH LIST

Living Things: Rose bushes (Rugosa, or Ontario native species), fruit trees/

bushes, perennial herbs (lots of thyme), Ontario native species wildflowers & shrubs.

Structural: Fencing, welded wire, rectangular aperture, and/or t-bars; (to extend the height of our current 4' tall farm fencing; and discourage trespassing, theft, & vandalism) garden is 50' x 50', chicken wire (to keep dogs & rabbits out), trellising (or lumber) for our grape vines, lattice for shade arbor,

Irrigation: Water barrels (& mosquito-proof covers), PVC pipe & connectors to hoses, (- 300' to separate garden from school parking lot), soaker hoses (for community raspberry patch), "posts" for perimeters of 25 plots (to keep the watering hoses in the pathways).

For

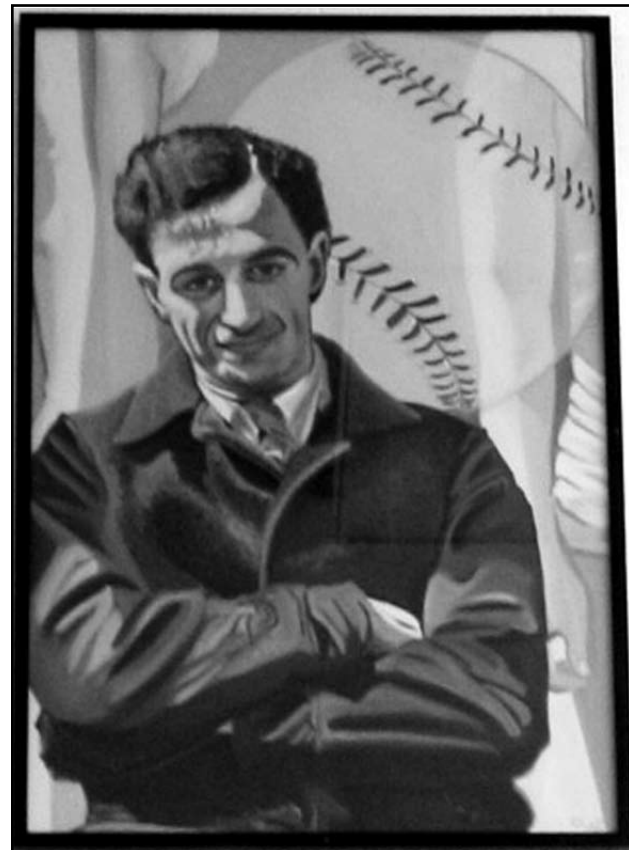
Growing: Free-standing shelving (for temporary greenhouse), hardening-off seedlings grown in members' window-sills -- or small greenhouse system/solar pod. (Note: nothing big enough to become "habitat for humanity": a sturdy outdoor work table - which we could stake to the ground (for carpentry, potting, members' meetings, fundraising sales), plexiglass, any size (for building cold frames, temporary green housing, or to make perimeter fence climb-proof)

For Comfort: Seating on which to rest (chairs or benches, but nothing on which someone could stretch out to sleep).

For Work in the Garden: Leather work gloves: 6-8 pairs, size large & XL (ours now have patches on the patches), Garden/construction tools (edging spades, hand cultivators, garden forks; sledgehammer, post pounder, drill bits & driver bits; galvanized Robertson screws, spiral nails, construction-gauge wire, vise

grips, untreated lumber, patio stones, bricks.

For Administrative Work: 8 1/2 x 11 paper, 6 x 9 & 9 x 12 Kraft envelopes, cartridges for HP5L Laser-Jet printer



MATTY ECKLER REBORN: More than 34 talented artists responded to a public call to portrait artists last fall by the Matty Eckler Advisory Council. Matty Eckler, who died in 1996, was one of the former Pape Recreation Centre's first staff when it opened during the 1930s. 'Matty' was an inspiring 'centre head' for the centre up to 1975, a positive influence on east community children, youth and families. Due to his pioneering influence, the centre was given his name in 1997. Artist Olaf Schneider was chosen to complete the portrait, shown above, which now hangs in the prime spot at the centre. The advisory council raised the funds for the portrait and plaque.

Photo courtesy Suzanne McCormick

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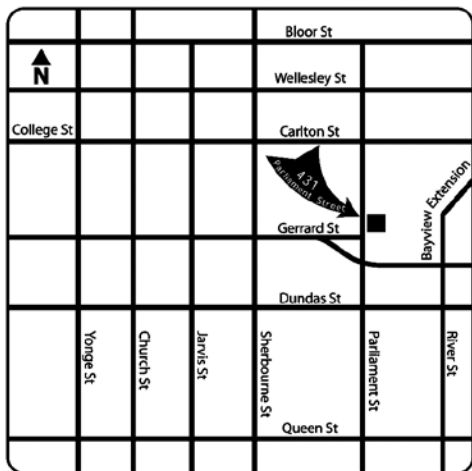
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ColdFrames Workshop

Led by Kyla Dixon-Muir at Grassroots, 372 Danforth Avenue, 19 April, 2006 (tentatively 7:30 p.m.)

Register via: 416/466-2841 or grassrootsstore.com

ColdFrames are a very basic, environmentally sound practice through which plants may be sheltered to provide optimal conditions for extending our growing season. Basically a framework which protects plants from the rigors of outdoor elements, ColdFrames can be constructed simply from a variety of inexpensive materials. They are used for three different practices: In spring, to harden off (acclimatize) plants started indoors, helping them adjust to: a broader range of temperatures, stronger sun, and wind and rain. This allows them to be put in the ground earlier in the season than Toronto's traditional planting-out date of May 24th weekend; In fall, to extend the growing season, which is especially helpful for sub-tropical food plants such as okra, sweet potatoes, and peppers; or to get a head-start on crops for the following spring; Over the winter, to grow cold-hardy crops for eating through the snowy months, including leafy greens like spinaches, lettuces, mache (corn salad) and kale. This workshop will demonstrate a variety of simple methods you can easily use right now for creating shelters to expand your growing season for all these circumstances. Handouts will also be provided. A "torchlight tour" of the garden, to see Kyla's 15 varied coldframes and the raised bed in action will follow.

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