

## Interfaith Garden Report

Saturday 6/17/23

Gratefully, the game was NOT called for rain. OK, no game, just referencing the 8 – 9:30 window when volunteers help on Saturday mornings. But rain was on everyone's minds given the forecast. We all got safely home before the skies opened and delivered ~1.5" of rain. But we had lots of fun working together before then.

Here's a picture of one of the carts that went over to the Lexington Food Pantry. So colorful! Sliver carrots, strawberries, beets, radishes, and beautiful lettuce (our 3<sup>rd</sup> cutting of the plants and the leaves are still sweet.)



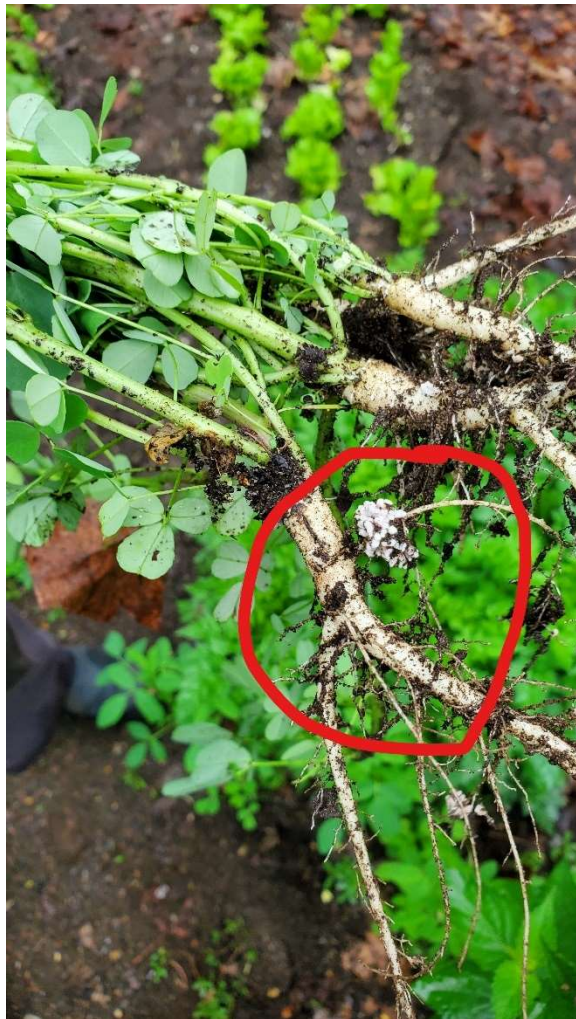
This was also a morning with where Carla shared more of her knowledge. She is a great teacher.

That plant with the purple spire flowers? That is anise thistle that has pest deterrent qualities. This hardy perennial has home in several places in the garden.





Carla explained to Joylyn the best way to harvest chard. Using a sharp knife, Carla instructed her volunteer to cut the largest leaves on each plant but be mindful to always leave 3 leaves—enough to encourage more growth.



There is a fair amount of crop rotation that happens at the Interfaith Garden. Some vegetables take out certain nutrients and others add back to the soil. Carla “fixes” the soil’s nitrogen by moving around the nitrogen-heavy peas, beans, clover into beds previously planted with nitrogen-hungry potatoes. She pulled up some clover and pointed to the roots. Those nodules circled in red contain the favorable bacteria that are part of the mechanics of these nitrogen “fixers.” We would have seen similar nodules had we pulled up one of the bean or pea plants. They all share this characteristic.

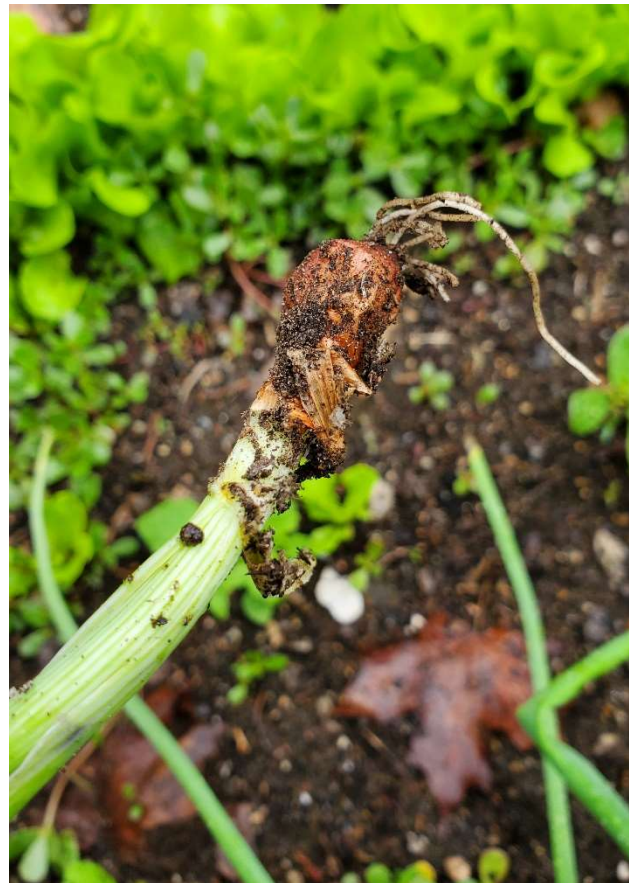




I was reminded on how to harvest green onions. No tools necessary. (We delivered about 1 ½ pounds to the food pantry this morning.)

Step 1. Just pull them out of the ground.

Step 2. See that brown papery skin covering the bulb? Use your fingers to slip off the end. Kind of like taking your socks off.



Step 3. No further cleaning necessary. They look great. Now they just needed to be bundled together in groups of 5 or 6. We help the pantry by doing as much pre-packaging as possible into individual servings. This saves them time as they start allocating the fresh produce among their clients' orders.



Our volunteer group often shares their skillsets at the Interfaith Garden. A First Parish volunteer, who has helped a number of times over the years, had noticed how dull many of the tools were. Today he brought his grinder to sharpen tools, knives, and scissors. The next time you come, see if you notice a difference in how easily the various implements work, many of them benefitting from a new edge.

