

Dear Gardeners:

The Planting Team is grateful for your responses to the 2022 Garden Survey. We use this survey as a great source of information for planning the 2023 garden.

With respect to the survey, we wanted to respond to several comments:

- 1) New crops: Among the survey results for new crops we found a few that may be a good fit for the garden. For next year, we are adding Brussels Sprouts, Eggplant (a small sweet variety such as asian, that grows quickly instead of the globe variety that takes too long to mature), Shishito and Padron peppers and Romano beans.. The planting team will incorporate these new crops into the master garden plan. When we get a suggestion for a crop, such as eggplant, we have to choose a variety that will fit with our growing conditions and season. Other suggested crops (such as burdock, lotus root, corn and okra) need growing conditions that we just don't have and can't provide. A few of you mentioned turnips, which we are planning to plant again this year.*

Amy Van Syoc and Barb Gomes wanted to try planting beets and carrots. It was a wonderful success from which we learned a lot. We encourage people who want to try a new crop to contact the Planting Team directly. We will be happy to help you choose a variety that will suit our growing conditions (soil temperature, water needs, air temp, days to maturation, etc.) and allot part of a bed for you to plant in.

- 2) Some gardeners wondered why we were pulling harvestable crop. Crops are pulled for three main reasons:*

A) During the hottest parts of the year crops like lettuces, endive, and radicchio can bolt. The crop becomes bitter and we pull it so people don't eat it. We want people to harvest great tasting produce!

B) Bed planning may need to be changed for that bed due to issues in another bed.

C) The bed may be scheduled for planting another crop even if the current crop is growing slower than estimated.

For example, in the hot month of August we were late in tagging the Radicchio and Endive for picking and it rapidly began to bolt. The greenhouse had Radicchio and Endive seedlings that were ready to plant so we had to make the difficult decision to pull the same crop in the bed that was only halfway

harvested. Our planting team members learn when we make mistakes and we adjust when possible.

When we do have to pull a harvestable crop, it does not go unused. It is donated to several different groups so it doesn't go to waste.

- 3) At the beginning of the season we had a lot of lettuce that was not being harvested so we cut back on a sowing of lettuce. We sowed the same amount as we did in 2021 so we weren't sure why it wasn't being harvested.*

Once we cut back, we then had several "rounds" of lettuce varieties that failed to germinate. This led to a few weeks without harvestable lettuce. We adjusted for that issue as well.

An overly successful germination of crops presents an interesting problem. Do we plant just what we need and give the rest away, or plant more of it and complete the bed using other plant orphans that utilize the same watering system? We make this choice every week. Reduction of crops is essential because it's never an option to water a partially full bed. Ever reluctant to dispose of healthy, vibrant starts to the compost heap we tend to fit them in a partially filled bed which leads to excess of that crop.

These are a few examples of decisions we make every week and how we adjust with the flow and rhythm of the garden. It's a weekly balancing act to fit the incoming starts with ready beds.

- 4) Beans, brassicas, cucumbers, and other crops were hit hard with bird, gopher and insect damage this year. The beans and cucumbers were replanted repeatedly but they just weren't as successful as in years past. Some years are like that. We tried to be as aggressive as possible using organic methods but our crops did suffer.*
- 5) There were many comments about asparagus. The asparagus is still recovering from overharvesting a few years back. This year saw a big increase in the number of stalks that were harvested and, with all the work we have done to reinvigorate the soil, we expect a more productive crop next year. Removing this legacy crop would be extremely difficult as the roots are six feet deep.*

Throughout the year, the Planting Team does a weekly survey to analyze harvesting rates, pest damage, changes in weather (such as sunlight, temperature, and water),

fluctuations in germination, planning bed availability to adjust crops as needed. There are multiple variables that must be taken into account and our weekly survey is our measure of what is happening in real time. We can't plan ahead without this critical analysis of the garden. Each week we are joined by members of the Greenhouse team to discuss how seeds are germinating (or not), so we can make adjustments for plants that are ready for planting or need to wait another week or two. As you can imagine, the timing from germination to planting is a living Jenga puzzle, full of unpredictabilities that need to be assessed on an ongoing basis.

During these walkthroughs, we also see what crops are being harvested and we hear from gardeners about what crops they are enjoying, would like to see more or less of and gather suggestions about future crops. All of this, along with the year end survey, informs us as we plan for the next garden season.

Thank you again for your valuable input to how we can improve our growing season. We encourage you to get in touch with us if there is a crop that you want to try or if you have questions about the survey. We can be reached at: MONIQUE - 415-465-0655 or email @ olivesdojudo@gmail.com.

Happy New Year and we'll see you in the garden.

Sincerely,

The Planting Team - Monique, Ursula, Jeanne, Kelly, Susan, Zoe, and Roberta