



# WEEKLY WEEDER

March 30, 2023

1. Sunshine's TSBVI Donations Planted!
2. A Lighter Touch
3. March and Year-to-Date Sunshine Donations to Micah 6 Food Pantry
4. April 6: Join Sunshiners on an Outing
5. Garden Education by Ila Falvey
6. Garden Tasks by Steve Camp

[View this email in your browser](#)



Planted: TSBVI student places a tomato in the ground, one of the plants donated by Sunshine to schools in Austin—Submitted by Rea Ferich



## A Lighter Touch

In the flower garden the baby blue eyes and the spiderwort are the stars of early spring. The spiderwort shoots up its flowers like a firework, in shades of pinks, purples and even a rare white. While the baby blue stay low, with their scalloped leaves and creamy bell shaped flowers that look as though the petals were lightly dipped in ink the color of the sky. But the days are growing longer and the blue eyes are starting to show signs of exhaustion.



This being the third year that I have worked in Sunshine's flower garden, I have learned it is better to use a lighter touch when removing the spring annuals. Not every baby blue is ready to go, but the ones that are start to yellow and flop exposing their sometimes purple stems. The thing to do is select the most tired of the bunch and chop them to the ground. Then lay the stems and spent flowers where you would like to see them next year and mulch with at least two inches of whatever compost you prefer. The blue eyes spread by themselves, of course, but are happy to be told where to go.



The sunflowers, however, are just beginning their journey. And before they get too big, I like to thin them to bunches of three, five and seven. They can become bullish and try to take over the garden; thinning puts them in their place. In a few weeks time we shall pinch them. Which basically means "off with their heads!" This ensures more blooms and extends the life of the sunflowers.



One Spring chore that no longer is done under my watch, and I suggest that you brace yourself dear reader for what I'm about to tell you. We no longer pull weeds! But fear not, for I have come to this decision through common sense. It seems to me that a tidy gardener can become an enemy to nature! In my opinion, a healthy garden must include a bit of wildness and most importantly diversity. A well tempered garden includes nature; flora and fauna. The so called "weeds" can be a fantastic place holder for when the weather is crazy, or until you've sown your summer annuals. But also they are beautiful! Some of my favorites are the wild geranium, hedge parsley, henbit, and wild clover. Even the cleaver brings



texture and blooms to the garden when it's rare to find a bloom at all.



That being said, not pulling weeds does not mean the flower garden is low maintenance. In fact, it seems there is more to do every year. But it does allow our volunteers more time for growing and creating. And we have some wonderful volunteers who are dedicated to the flower garden. A marvelous mix of gardeners from Sunshine and people from the community looking to reconnect with the natural world. And we are always looking for more volunteers! Spend your service hours in the flower garden rather than mowing the lawn 115 time a week! Especially now that you know we don't pull weeds! We have several projects that we need help with this year, including adding pocket prairies and wildflower meadows to unused corners of Sunshine. Learning more about regenerative agriculture, re-wilding and propagation by cutting and seed collection. And, of course, creating a beautiful sanctuary for both gardener AND nature.



We gather every Sunday from 9am to 12pm, so join us when you can. Getting your service hours can now include building a legacy of beauty with mother nature! —Submitted by *Matthew Johnston*

---

March and Year-to-Date Sunshine Donations to  
Micah 6 Food Pantry

March / Year to Date

- Sunshine Produce -- 124 lbs / 254 lbs
- Dry Goods & Non-Sunshine Produce -- 18 lbs / 193 lbs

The amount of donations to the food pantry continues to be excellent. In addition to produce grown at Sunshine, some of you donated fresh produce purchased from local stores. Thank you very much for the bags of citrus, apples, potatoes, onions, ect... The Micah 6 Food Pantry clients appreciate any and all fresh produce.

Fresh Produce Donations:

Please consider donating your excess harvest to the Micah 6 Food Pantry. Donations of fresh produce (**from your garden or purchased**) may be left in the cool room (south end of the trailer) or in the trailer refrigerator. At this time of year, one delivery a week (Saturday ~ 9am) is made to the food pantry.

Dry Goods Donations:

Micah 6 Food Pantry is struggling to keep up with demand. Please consider donating non-perishable items in addition to produce. Leave your donations in the cool room at the south end of the trailer.

Non-perishable donation suggestions:

- Canned meats such as tuna and stew (pop-up tops preferred)
- Canned vegetables and soup
- Dry beans and rice
- Healthy cereals
- Peanut butter

Thank you! Your generosity is appreciated. — *Submitted by Walter Kuhl*

---

## Join Sunshiners on an Outing 🍷

Come have something refreshing and hangout with other Sunshine gardeners next Thursday, April 6th, at the Brewtorium from 4:30 on. Hope to see you there.-- *Submitted by Randy Thompson*

---

## Garden Education by Ila Falvey

- [Trowel and Error Gardening Symposium at Mayfield Park](#) on April 1 starting at 9:30 am. This is a lovely and informative gardening event. If you never attended this symposium, now is the time!

### TOMATO PROBLEMS

*The information below is from Backbone Nursery in Marble Falls. I have added additional info in red*

#### Insects and Disease:

Once your tomatoes are growing well, and reach about 2 ½' tall, begin removing the bottom leaves up about one foot from the ground. This goes a long way in preventing fungal spores from splashing up on the bottom leaves and infecting the plant. **But it does not prevent it. It is impossible to control**

**the transmission of soil borne fungal disease entirely.**



Spider mites can be prevented by spraying weekly with a liquid Seaweed solution. Be sure to get the undersides of the leaves.

Rotate all members of the tomato family to a different area each year to avoid repeat of insects and diseases from last year. This family includes potatoes, peppers and eggplants.

**This is nearly impossible to do at Sunshine.**



If leaf-footed bugs invade your garden, learn what the eggs and nymphs (babies) look like. They can be picked off and put in a can of soapy water. **You can also knock the adults off with your hands into soapy water. I just squash them.**

**Some varieties of leaf footed bugs are called stink bugs. If you squash them, you will learn why. Also, the insects move slower in the am and easier to "catch". You can also vacuum them up.**



Leaf footed bug damage to tomatoes

These insects "sting" the tomatoes leaving a tough whitish spot under the skin **ruining the taste and texture of the tomato.** You WILL want to control them! **Please don't let your tomatoes rot on the vine as this attracts leaf footed**

**bugs**

**Also, the insects move slower in the am and easier to "catch". You can knock them off with your hands into soapy water. You can also vacuum them up.**

**Blossom end rot**



Blossom end rot is a physiological disease of tomatoes. It is often said to be caused by a calcium deficiency, and it is, but not always because calcium is lacking in the soil. When soil moisture fluctuates from wet to dry, tiny hair roots die. Since the hair roots absorb much of the water and nutrients for the plant, uptake is compromised. The part of the plant furthest from the root system is the fruit, so when calcium is not transported to the end of the fruit, it shows calcium deficiency symptoms, which is blossom end rot

**Tomato Hornworm**



Tomato hornworms look like a giant green or brown worm from outer space. They have the characteristic "horn" at the tail end of their body. These behemoths can consume an enormous amount of foliage overnight.



Weekly sprays of Bt will help prevent damage.

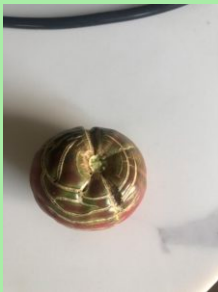
**If you see the damage, look for the "worms" and pick them off and put them into soapy water.**

#### Root Knot nematodes



If your plants are stunted and have pale yellow foliage, you might have root knot nematodes. These microscopic organisms cause swelling on the roots of the plants. Take a good look when you pull up the plants and if the roots look like this, you have root knot nematodes. Planting a "catch crop" of Elbon Rye in the winter, or French Marigolds in the summer, then tilling it in will lessen the numbers of this pest. There is no appropriate chemical control for vegetable gardens. **We do have these organisms**

**at Sunshine.**



Cracks in tomatoes occur with fluctuations in soil moisture, rapid growth after fertilization or are just common in some varieties such as Celebrity.

#### Crop Rotation

Since disease can overwinter in the soil, it is important to NOT plant any member of the tomato family in the same area two years in a row. **It is difficult to follow this practice at Sunshine. Healthy**

**soil somewhat ameliorates this problem.**

**Good luck growing tomatoes!**

## Garden Tasks by Steve Camp

Howdy SCG Gardeners!

Again, we can't thank you enough for volunteering and helping with our successful plant sale!

---

NEXT SCHEDULED WORKDAY - April 22 - contact Frank Genco [fcgenco@gmail.com](mailto:fcgenco@gmail.com) on day of. This will be first workday since plant sale, I'm sure there will be plenty to do!

Workdays often evolve into social events! SCG is a fantastic place to meet new friends and learn both new and old gardening techniques. There's a wealth of knowledge here and experienced people that love to share it.

---

#### NOTE

The North & East fenceline now have a number assigned to each panel. It is on a brass ring hanging on the panel. Please, either you or a small group please sign up for 1 or more that you will work to keep clean and neat looking. It may have certain vines on it if you wish. Check with staff

about which vines will perform the best. Contact Jim Willmann [jhwillmann@gmail.com](mailto:jhwillmann@gmail.com) for assignment options.

Thanks!

---

## NEW GARDENERS

There are several new gardeners at SCG! Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself and y'all get to know each other a little and share garden knowledge and tips. Let's emphasize the COMMUNITY in Community Garden.

---

## ROADS AND PARKING

- Speed limit is 3 MPH. (Primarily for safety, but also to keep the dust down.)
- Sunshine's roads provide access to plots and common areas. Gardeners should not 1) park on roads except to unload a heavy load from vehicle, 2) drive on roads when wet, 3) drive around barriers, 4) drive into another gardener's plot, or 5) put plants or other items in the road.
- Cars may not be left idling while at the garden.
- Park only in the front parking area or your common area. On weekends there are parking spaces on Sunshine and 49th Street.

Handbook and Site rules specifically state that PARKING ON GARDEN ROADS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. Park in the parking lot or common areas only. When the emergency vehicle enters SCG, they may (I hope not) be coming to assist YOU. How inconvenient it would be for them to have to wait for folks to move cars.

---

## PRIORITY TASKS

- Mowing and Trimming everywhere but especially Fenceline and lawn on either side of fence. With the recent rains and more to come, mowing has become a primary task.
  - Khaki Weed Season is Upon Us! For the uninitiated, Khaki weed is an invasive plant that infects the garden in late spring, summer, and fall. We are determined every year to eradicate it as much as possible. To this end, we are allowing digging up khaki weed to be counted as TSVBI hours until further notice.
  - Maintaining common paths and common areas. If you have plants extending into common paths, trim them. The common paths are designed to allow the biggest wheelbarrows that we own to traverse them unimpeded.
- 

## TSVBI

- Weeding paths in TSBVI garden and wood chip areas on west side. (This is normally needed. Try to get out roots. Be sure to smooth out paths after weeding to facilitate TSBVI students moving around garden). Mowing between fence and street along 49th St. and Sunshine Dr. along and 10' inside fence.
- Picking up trash wherever you see it.
- Cleaning the street curb gutters of dirt and debris buildup. (At places



in the curb gutter along Sunshine Dr. And 49th St. soil has built up and grass is beginning to grow. Scrape off with shovel and put in wheelbarrow. If debris is gravel it can be put in low places in the parking lot, otherwise, destination is dumpster.

- Note: TSVBI hours can also count as regular hours.

---

## REGULAR

- Maintaining common paths. (Gardeners are required to maintain a 2' strip of common paths adjacent to their plot.
- Mowing and cleaning up overgrown/messy places in common areas.

Your Zone Coordinator may have more tasks than are listed here. Contact them or [campinthegarden@yahoo.com](mailto:campinthegarden@yahoo.com) if you feel that you have run out of things to do.

Slow Down (3 MPH!) You're on Garden Time! Enjoy!

Contact both [Kristin Phillips](#) & [Maria Beach](#) to contribute the Weekly Weeder.



---

Copyright © 2023 Sunshine Community Gardens. All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

