



Photo by Arden Miller

Inside this issue

- 2 A Challenge from the Board President
- 3 Produce Donations
Girl Scouts earn award
- 4 Set up an Insectary
- 5 HS floriculture class visits
- 6-7 Garden Volunteers



A Challenge from the Board President

by Tim Nicholas

It's been a tough year in the garden. The weather shifted from cold and wet in May and June to hot and dry later in the summer, which caused the harvest to be late and sparse.

I was curious about what happens to the produce the garden donates each year, so I decided to find out for myself. I shadowed one of our gardeners, Arden Miller, to St. Paul's UCC Loaves & Fishes, the Snyder County Food Bank Distribution site. When I arrived, there were dozens of volunteers downstairs bagging staples for distribution. Outside there was a bread station, a meat station, and a station where our produce donations were combined with other donations brought by the [Union-Snyder Community Action Agency Food Hub](#). Nicole Peterson, the Agency's Community Impact Director, and Cathy Spencer, Food Security Navigator, brought donations from a variety of sources, most notably Bucknell Farm and Bucknell Community Garden.

Loaves and Fishes services 80 -100 food insecure families each month. The organization of volunteers is well coordinated by Randy Tanner. I would be remiss not to mention the other East Snyder Community gardeners who came to help. Lynn Bressler, Terry Burns, Mark Cox, Bill French, and Roy Swazey not only grow the produce but also see that it gets to the people who need it most.

The latest information I found on food insecurity in the SUN Region (Snyder, Union and Northumberland Counties) is 12.5 %. That means one out of eight people in the area does not know where their next meal is coming from.

I challenge you all if you have extra produce, please donate, and if you have extra time, please volunteer.



*2026 Board members from left to right:
Vice President: Dan Ressler, Treasurer: Jennie Ressler,
Garden Manager: Roy Swazey,
Secretary: Bill French, President: Tim Nicholas*



Weighing in on Produce Donations

by Arden Miller



Besides canning, freezing, dehydrating and sharing produce with friends and relatives, gardeners are donating produce to local food pantries and groups that prepare meals for folks in the community. The first produce donation of the season on April 29 to GraceWorks in Middleburg was 7.72 pounds of spinach (picture the volume of that donation!) The lightest donated vegetable this season was fragrant basil followed by versatile flat leaf parsley. Our heaviest donation this season has been summer squash of various types spread over multiple, multiple donations of multiple squash! Our small, but mighty donation of hot peppers ranged from a mild 5,000 Scoville units for Jalapeños, to a whopping 1,001,304 Scoville units for Ghost peppers.

So far 553 pounds of fresh produce has been donated with more to come. Produce has been donated to several food pantries for their food distributions: Loaves and Fishes at St. Paul's UCC, GraceWorks at Grace Covenant Community Church, the Food HUB at the Miller Center, and the YMCA in Sunbury. Two organizations make meals for community members and have benefited from donated produce: Martha's Table at All Saints Episcopal and Shepherd's Pie at St. Pius X. Gardeners have also shared their produce at the food pantry at Kidsgrove and at High Street Manor senior housing in Selinsgrove.

Girl Scouts earn Bronze Award by helping ESCG

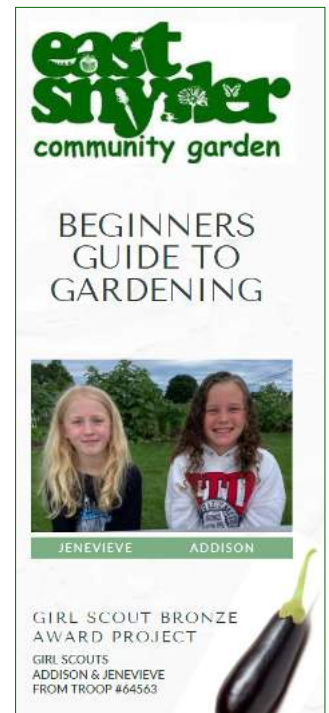
by Arden Miller

East Snyder Community Garden was fortunate that two members of Girl Scout Troop 64563 decided to assist the garden while earning their Bronze Award. Junior Girl Scouts are asked to explore their community to see where they can make a difference.

Scouts from Troop 64563 have volunteered over the years at the garden. The spring weeding they undertake is one reason the garden continues to have a zinnia circle.

Jenevieve Dziadosz and Addison Falk had completed the prerequisites for the Bronze Award and visited the community garden in addition to other organizations to discover how they could help. They proposed writing a [guide for new gardeners](#) to help them be successful. The proposal was accepted by the garden board. After some revising by the scouts, the final project was approved by the garden board. The scout's project was approved by the local council, Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania.

Troop Leader, Heather Carr, invited the garden board to be present when the scouts were presented their Bronze pins on September 8, 2025. Tim Nicholas, ESCG President, and Arden Miller, gardener, were proud to attend.



Do Yourself a Favor; Set Up an Insectary

by Antek Nowacki

Have you ever wanted the residents of your garden to do your job for you?

I'm not talking about your diligent pollinators, or soil-enriching earthworms. While these creatures are insanely helpful, many gardeners overlook another group of beneficients: the predators that keep your pest populations in check. They might not look friendly - some might even seem straight out of a scifi horror - but predatory insects can tremendously help with keeping your garden healthy and pest free. All they ask in return is a comfortable place to stay, which you can easily provide with an insectary.

Insectaries are essentially modified flower patches that remain beautiful while focusing on attracting a variety of insects. Turns out that bees and butterflies are not alone in their love for flowers - another group called parasitoid wasps share this interest too. Neither component of their name sounds like a guest you'd like to invite to your garden. After all, who hasn't had a violent run-in with a stray wasp?

But it's not the "wasp" part that usually gives people the ick. The "parasitoid" in their name comes from the alien-like fashion they deal with their prey. When a female is ready to lay her eggs, she seeks out another bug, injects it with her eggs and moves on. The eggs slowly grow within the still-living host, who may manage to get a few more bites of your crops before its time runs out. When that happens, the young wasps sprout from its body after feeding on the insides, ready to continue the cycle.

So how does this horror show benefit you? Why in the world would you want to invite such a creature into your flower patch? Well, despite their gruesome reproductive method, parasitic wasps are actually quite efficient at managing your garden's pests. Each species specializes in a different type of insect, which prevents them from going after your beneficients. Better yet, they are easy to attract - many are drawn to smaller flowers like those in the carrot or mint families, as they feed on their nectar.



Tomato hornworm covered in "good" parasitic wasp eggs

The alien freaks aren't the only beneficients you can get in an insectary! Your ol' reliable wolf spiders, while not nearly as interested in flowers, can still be helpful residents of your modified flower patch. These spiders love shade, and tend to live on the lower tiers of garden beds. Planting some alfalfa in your plot not only helps you enrich the soil, but it gives the wolf spiders a recluse to become regulars in your garden.

Do yourself a favor, and set up an insectary! Why pick hornworms off your tomatoes by hand, when you could have an army of wasps at the ready to deal with them all summer? While pollinators do their fair share in the garden, you have to remember the scarier bugs have important roles too!

Here is a good resource for insectary strips from the Rodale Institute!

<https://rodaleinstitute.org/science/articles/tips-and-steps-to-planting-insectary-strips-for-organic-pest-management/>

Antek Nowacki is a junior Animal Behavior Major at Bucknell University. As an international student from Poland, Antek has been working with the Bucknell Farm & Lewisburg Community Garden since freshman year.

Another Visit from the SAHS Floriculture Class

East Snyder Community Garden continues to be a resource for the community. The Selinsgrove High School floriculture class, taught by Valerie Fry, visited the garden again to cut flowers for a pressed flower project. The students ate nasturtium blossoms for the first time, and some took home produce. It was a lovely morning in the garden. We look forward to seeing photos of their finished work.

*"I must have flowers, always, and always."
— Claude Monet*



Thank you Volunteers!



Members of the **Sigma Alpha Iota** volunteered at the garden. They picked cherry tomatoes for donation and helped Roy move downed sunflower plants to various locations on the fence line for bird feeding stations.



SU GIVE

So much was completed on August 23, when freshman from Susquehanna University walked to the garden to volunteer as a part of **SU GIVE** (Get Into Volunteer Experiences). Some of the freshman had gardening experience, but many had never gardened. All came willing to help. ESCG gardeners enlisted help of the students in weeding, moving rhubarb, and other tasks in their plots. Freshman volunteers helped the garden in general by weeding along the fenceline and the zinnia circle. Others removed tape from cardboard that would be used in pathways between plots or between rows in plots. Many loads of mulch and manure were wheelbarrowed to plots. ESCG thanks every volunteer who participated that morning.





SU GIVE



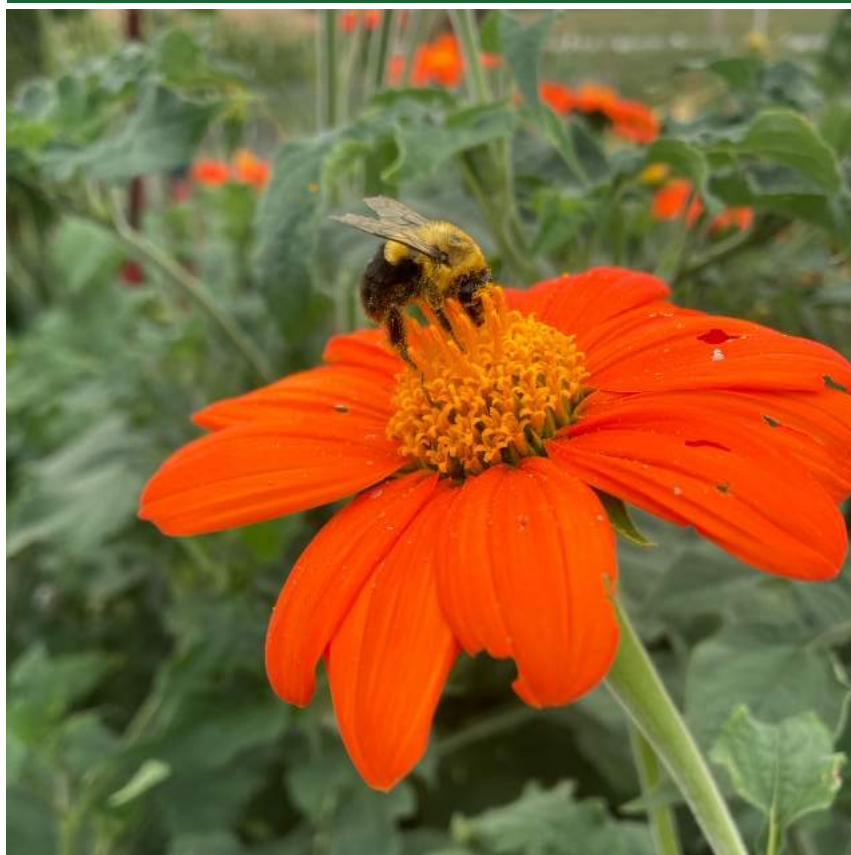
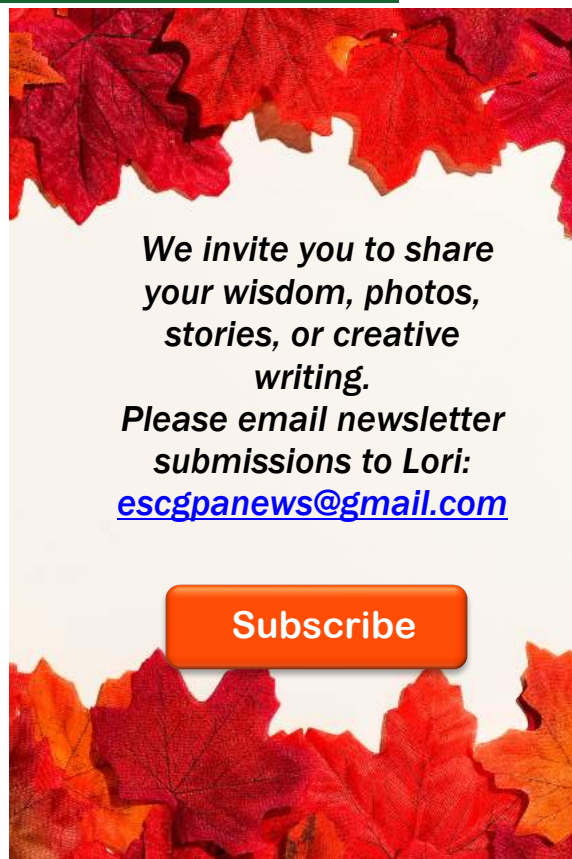


Photo by Arden Miller



*We invite you to share
your wisdom, photos,
stories, or creative
writing.*

*Please email newsletter
submissions to Lori:
escgpanews@gmail.com*

Subscribe

**east
snyder**
community garden

PO Box 310

Selinsgrove, PA 17870

www.escgpa.org

escgpa@gmail.com



Photo by Adam Wilks

Follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)!