

Week of June 17 Sage Sassafras column
By Sage Sassafras

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Here's a twist on renting a plot that can give you pleasure while you're still upright. Come to think of it, after working this plot you may not be as upright as you were before, but those fresh greens you've weeded and tendered will help you to forget the aching muscles you now wear as a badge of honor because you, too, have a plot in a Community Garden!

In the Woodstock area there are three community gardens this year: King Farm, Woodstock Village; Chippers, Pomfret; and new this year Shepherd's Hill Farm, Taftsville. The Woodstock Garden Club has its own plot this year with the fruits of our labors going to the Food Shelf.

There's a need being expressed throughout the country to get a hold on who we were many, many decades ago. Especially in Vermont we've been told we were a self-sufficient, hardworking, community-oriented people who most years found ways to eat handsomely from the land we stood on. Today that need urges urbanites to their knees on their communal rooftops to sow, water and harvest just as if they lived here.

A Community Garden provides rental plots for growing edibles and flowers. But there's more of a reward than just growing and harvesting nutritious and delicious vegetables. The community that evolves while pulling crab grass and gout weed from around young potato plants nourishes in its own way. A handful of us this week thought what fun it would be to invite city folk up to partake of agritourism 'cause the weeds are so welcoming.

For just a few dollars, a Community Garden plot yields nutritious food, beautifies the area it's in, encourages self-reliance, creates opportunities for recreation, education and exercise, conserves resources, preserves green space, reduces family food budgets, engenders a love and understanding of the benefits of fresh, locally grown food and opens up new avenues for learning and sharing what we know.

Now's the time to rent a plot!