

Biogaian Meeting

10/28/2013

Present: Sadhana, Patricia, Douglas, Kathleen, Laura, Katie, Brent (late)

Check-in question: what's your favorite crop?

Budget:

We reviewed this year's income/expenses and the Biogaians are over budget about \$140. There was discussion at the Roundtable about separating HOA expenses from Songaia Assn expenses, which could mean separating landscape expenses from garden expenses. The food program and garden expenses could come under a food club (501 c 7), which is apparently not difficult to set up. Such a club could accept fees for workshops and vegetable sales. Patricia, Brian and Helen will form a subcommittee to propose details to discuss at the next meeting. Eventually a 501 c 3 might be needed in order to get grants.

Interns:

The intern program for 2013 was reviewed at a recent Circle. Responses were positive and upbeat, with very few suggestions for changes.

In 2014 Patricia proposes seeking three interns from May-October. Most college students are only available mid-June to September, so we would be unlikely to fill all spots. Housing in the Life Song Commons for three (same gender) would require a bedbunk. Brent is aware of possible housing through the horse farm, but this would entail coordinating work at the horse farm.

Two other areas that could be improved:

1. The current arrangement with Journeys hasn't been very satisfying for the interns. We initiated the connection for insurance coverage, and could look into alternatives. Doug will research the current Songaia homeowner's policy.
2. A more formalized curriculum, perhaps in modules. Different groups of interns have come with different levels of knowledge and different areas of interest. Piglets will look into building some modules that articulate what we are already doing.

Crops:

2013 evaluation:

1. Successes: carrots, parsnips, green beans, kale and chard/white beets, turnips (rogue!), pears (especially with refrigeration).
2. Problems: We had difficulty getting things started early. Soil blocks were more successful than pots. Could use the new hoop house for everything that doesn't need lights. A number of things were planted late, squash and tomatoes in particular, which also got late blight. Compost would probably help with blight. Harvesting with interplantings is more difficult and the blackboard wasn't always up to date. Cabbages got a lot of pillbug and slug damage. Brassicas gone to seed led to some odd crosses.

2014 changes:

1. Should we install a rabbit fence, which is costly and takes time? Katie suggests a bunny garden at the edge of the forest.
2. Laura has some experience with diatomaceous earth for slug control.
3. Paul offered us the Asian pear trees in his front yard, which might still be

- small enough to transplant.
4. Further planning for 2014 was tabled for lack of time.

Evaluating the CSA:

Patricia will give a financial report and what percent of garden produce went to home use. In 2011 home use was 29%, in 2012 it was 30%, and so far in 2013 it's 47%. We will ask for time at the next house meeting, and also put out an electronic survey. Laura will suggest questions, Helen can put the questions into a SurveyMonkey.

Field trip reports:

1. Doug and Brent went to an excellent composting workshop through WSU Extension. Several speakers, one of which was panel discussion of farmers using compost. Included visit to Lenz Composting.
2. Rain barrel construction class: Doug also attended a class that included receiving a rain barrel, and a rain garden handbook. Put on by Conservation District, who is happy to help us make and install multiple rain barrels.
3. Doug bought an Italian stone pine tree at a permaculture sale, which will need to be situated.

Note: Goats were not on the agenda since neither Brent nor Brian were present initially.

Next meeting: Monday, November 25, 7:30

Helen is convener, Kathleen is scribe. Patricia will be gone for three weeks late November/December.