



Aerial view of Judea Garden in the morning

JG: 15 YEARS AND GROWING

In 2008, a group of Washington residents seeded a community “Giving Garden” at SRA’s Macricostas Preserve to provide healthy organically grown vegetables to Litchfield County residents in need. Since then, Judea Garden (JG) has doubled in size and grown over 24 tons of fresh produce, nearly 2 tons of food annually that is enough to help feed 200 families per week.

But why is Judea Garden still needed? As we celebrate JG’s 15th season, this is the question. Unfortunately, hunger and food insecurity are pervasive problems, and the need has only escalated. To understand the issues and what can be done in response, SRA is hosting a provocative **Roundtable on Food Insecurity in the Litchfield Hills on July 20th** then bring your family to **“Kids in the Garden” on July 29th** and have fun helping us grow good food. We’ll wrap up JG’s 15th season with our annual **Open Garden Celebration on August 19th**. And don’t forget our **JG art show and competition**. Come celebrate our success and help Steep Rock continue to make a difference in our community. Details and registration info below.

See you in the Garden!

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Judea Garden 15th Season Celebration Calendar

Wed., June 7-Aug. 23, 5:30pm Weed & Wine Wednesdays at Judea Garden

Thurs., July 20, 6:00pm – Round Table/Potluck: Does Food Insecurity Really Exist in Litchfield County? (Info and registration below)

Sat., July 29, 9:00am – Kids in Judea Garden (Info and registration below)

Sat., Aug.19, 4:00pm-7:00pm – 15th Season Celebration and Open Garden

Every Tuesday June-Sept., Plein Air Judea Garden

June 1 to Aug.11 - Painting, Photography, and Mixed Media Contest

Featured Highlights



Welcome Trustees

Steep Rock is thrilled to welcome Carol Maxwell, Richard Rosen, Andria Budd, and Steven Fisch (clockwise from top left) as new Trustees to our board. With diverse backgrounds and a shared love for nature, these individuals bring valuable expertise and a deep commitment to our mission. From Andria's hiking experiences to Carol's extensive community involvement and passion for outdoor education, Richard's legal expertise and philanthropic contributions, and Steven's real estate development experience, our board gains a wealth of wisdom and dedication to further Steep Rock's mission. [>more](#)



Restore This Iconic Trail in Steep Rock

Steep Rock's River's Edge Loop, a historic gem also known as the "Goat Trail," is in desperate need of repair. Years of foot traffic and natural wear and tear have taken a toll on this iconic trail, diminishing its splendor and safety. With your generous support, we can restore this trail to its former glory, providing hikers with a breathtaking experience for years to come. [Click this link](#) and Merlin Ennis, our Trails & Preserves Manager, will show you the spots in most urgent need of repair and how you can contribute to this effort.



Judea Garden Distribution

It's that wonderful time of year! Judea Garden will begin weekly fresh produce distribution to our neighbors in need in on Monday, July 10th from 12pm-5pm at 116 Christian St. For more locations and info [>more](#)



Volunteer Spotlight

We recently sat down with Erin Pierson, a dedicated Steep Rock volunteer who exemplifies the transformative power of volunteering and the lasting impact it can have on future generations. Check out our interview here: [>more](#)



Photo by Peter Marteka

Best Hike in CT!

Steep Rock Association's Macricostas Preserve "might just be the best hike in CT" according to Peter Marteka, who wrote a feature article in the July issue of *Connecticut Magazine*. In fact, he ranks trails in three of our preserves among his Top 10 favorite hikes in the state. And we couldn't agree more! The July issue also features a terrific article on land trusts and land conservation. Don't miss this issue, or just click [>more](#)



Unfriendly Encounters: Pets and Wildlife

We all love a happy, tuckered out dog, but please remember - **the happiness and safety of pets, wildlife, and human visitors in our preserves depends on leashing.** In July, offspring of wildlife are abundant and especially vulnerable. Baby birds are leaving nests, fawns are increasingly mobile, and bear cubs are busy learning. Pets are also vulnerable to snake bites, porcupines, and other wildlife encounters. With a simple leash, you can avoid negative interactions while protecting your dog, fellow hikers, and our wildlife babies and broods of summer.

Upcoming Events



Lake a Hike with LWA and SRA

July 9, 2023, 10:00am

We are proud to again co-host Lake a Hike with the [Lake Waramaug Association](#). Join us for a moderately challenging guided hike, approx. 4.75 miles. Explore SRA's Boulders Trail in Macricostas Preserve. This trail meanders through woodlands, glacial erratics, waterfalls, and vernal pools, and will include a short side-loop to Waramaug Rock, with its breathtaking views of Lake Waramaug, Info and registration [>more](#)



3 Peaks in 3 Hours

July 15, 2023, 8:00am

Join us for a fast-paced, challenging hike starting at 8:00am at Steep Rock Preserve, followed by Hidden Valley and ending with Macricostas Preserve. We are excited to welcome our special host Carla Mascaro for this challenge! Info and registration [>more](#)



Odonata (Dragonfly & Damselfly) Survey

July 15, 2023, 9:00am-5:00pm

Join our team of "dragon hunters" for an educational and scientific day of sampling odonates in SRA preserves. We'll start by overviewing odonate ecology, transition into capture technique training, and then begin the hunt for as many different species of dragonflies and damselflies at a given survey site. 9am-5pm, Macricostas Preserve. Info and registration [>more](#)



Monthly Trail Work Party

July 15, 2023, 10:00am-12:30pm

Our Monthly Trail Work Party meets the third Saturday of the month from April through November, and is a great opportunity for you to participate in building and maintaining our nearly 50 miles of trails. This month, we will be constructing bog bridging at Hillside Farm at 397 Nettleton Hollow Road. Info and registration [>more](#)



Mindfulness Hike at Boulders Trail

July 16, 2023, 8:30am

Scientific evidence overwhelmingly shows that children and adults of all ages experience positive impacts from mindfulness and nature while hiking. Being in nature is a sensory immersion and Steep Rock's many miles of trails provide a wonderful landscape for exploring nature and mindfulness. Join special hosts Roxanne Kraft and Alan Arellano on a 4-mile mindfulness hike at the Boulders Trail on Macricostas Preserve. Info and registration [>more](#)



Summer Saunters: Macricostas Hayfield

July 18, 2023, 5:30pm

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch on a series of causal walks through Steep Rock's Preserves. Tuesday, July 18 we will explore the hayfield at Macricostas Preserve with stops at the Clark Bridge to discuss beavers and Viewing Platform to observe waterfowl in Meeker Swamp. Info and registration [>more](#)



Round Table Potluck: Food Insecurity

July 20, 2023, 6:00pm

Does food insecurity really exist in Litchfield County? The simple answer is YES. Bring a dish, join us for dinner, and learn from professionals in the field of food insecurity about the effects of hunger on our neighbors and what we can do to change it. Info and registration [>more](#)



Kids in Judea Garden

July 29, 2023, 9:00am - 12:00pm

Introduce kids to vegetable gardening in a fun new way. Unleash their excitement through an enjoyable blend of activities. Vegetables will never look the same! Info and registration [>more](#)



Steep Rock Preserve: Tunnel Road Bridge Closed in 2023

The Town of Washington is replacing Tunnel Road Bridge over the Shepaug River. The bridge will be closed until November. There is **no parking or access to Steep Rock Preserve coming from River Road or Lower Church Hill Road**. The only vehicle access is Spring Hill Road off Route 199/Roxbury Road. **Horse trailers are prohibited and SR1 and SR2 campsites are closed for the 2023 season**. Large group gatherings are discouraged. We apologize for the inconvenience and welcome you to [visit our other preserves](#). Please [contact](#) SRA if you have questions.

[>Donate](#)



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