

*Hi everyone!*

*It has been a while since I have seen any of you, but I am happy to be in touch with a few of you online. I care about my connection to this community and I invite you to connect with me, even if I am a ways away, now.*

*This article is about the Walnut Tree Guild! I'm so glad, it happened! That alone says wonderful things about this community and shows that you truly want to be the change. I know it's just one more of many, many things that are done at the church, a prayer shawl group being one I personally benefited from (thanks), but to add a guild on top of all these amazing things, that is quite something.*

*Thank you to Jayden, James, Taylor, Kirsten, Katrina, Cathy, Lily, Cory, Ralph, Liz, Debbie, Mauleek, Ingrid, Peggy and Christine for coming out!! It couldn't have happened without any of you.*

*So, the day was quick, relatively painless, and perhaps even on the enjoyable side of things. We prepared the bed by first digging a swale along the edge of the hill leading to the walnut tree. This was done so that the water would absorb more in this area of the ground, and build up more groundwater/moisture in the bed where the currants were to be planted. It will quickly fill in with clover, and should look nice by next spring.*

*Next, we dug the 4 holes for the currant bushes. These were spaced apart by about 2 meters. Over time, they will grow to be like bushes, and space between will allow for airflow, easy pruning, ease of picking, and an understory layer of other species, to be determined in the future. We dug the holes about twice as wide as the root mass of the tree, and put a small mound in the middle of the hole, so that the roots could spread downwards as the butt of the currant bush sat on the mound.*

*While all this was happening, a wonderful team of tape-removers were removing the tape off of the cardboard (to be put in the trash) and getting the cardboard really, really soaking wet. People brought all this over to where the bed was to be laid, and then tore it into pieces to cover all of the grass, while leaving the currant-holes and the swale uncovered. This is like giving the earth a huge hit of carbon. All the microbes and such will come on up, munch that cardboard at the bottom of the bed, turn it around into the soil, bring dense carbon into the soil, and you'll have a nice little explosion of microbial life. The cardboard will be gone, I hope, next spring.*

*After all this cardboard was laid, sopping wet, we began to shovel on a layer of mulch. This denser carbon will rot for a while after the cardboard is munched away, and it will continue to feed all those nice bacteria. After a layer about 2 inches thick, we laid a layer of the soil. Following that, a layer of leaf mulch from around the heritage fence was collected and tossed on, about 2 inches thick. The currant holes were still uncovered by anything. Following that, another layer of soil, another of mulch, another of soil, and then then a thin layer of mulch. We were graciously gifted the mulch from the lot by the church, so we took a few wheelbarrows from there to the*

*garden, as well.*

*These layers will create diversity in the soil, providing various types of habitat over the years, and a constantly decaying amount of carbon. This imitates how things collect and build on a forest floor, naturally.*

*While this was happening, Cathy and Lily thought it would be cool to do something like this with the walnut tree in their backyard, so we all thought that was a neat idea and went along with it. We moved some of the soil and mulch over to her tree, and started talking plans about what to plant and such. We figure it will likely be herbs as a result of the understory of the magnificent walnut tree, but it is still nice to build soil where one can. I mean, make good soil everywhere, why not? It is what all life depends on.*

*So, finally, it was time to plant the currants. We had a large ceremony, danced, burnt some sage and held each other from 2 meters away. Just kidding, but it was really nice and always feels wonderful to put another living being into the earth, like allowing something to find it's home for the rest of its life.*

*We made sure to soak their roots for 3 hours before planting so they had lots to drink already when they were planted.*

*So, we spread these roots out, and filled the hole in with a mix of soil and mulch, but mostly soil. We made sure not to plant up the stem too much, because that could cause the bark to rot.*

*Following that, white clover was scattered over the entire bed in a thick layer. White clover is an amazing plant that fixes nitrogen in the soil, and also attracts pollinators like crazy. It is a wonderful cover-crop, and will help contain the moisture in the soil very well.*

*The bed ended up being around a foot higher than the ground level, which is what we needed, so that a whole new layer of earth would allow for the currants to not compete with the roots of the walnut.*

*We proceeded to water the bed like crazy, as well as give extra to the currants that were just planted!*

*And lastly, for aesthetic flair, we had fun trying to arrange some shale rock we found by the shed around the bed, but we decided it didn't look too good to rim the bed with the shale. Rather, we found that putting all of the shale around the walnut tree itself would give the tree a nice little halo, and also help direct some of the water away from the base of the tree to be soaked by the surrounding garden.*

*We took a kinda meh group photo, and I think someone lost it. You can imagine a lot of smiles and laughs and love, though!*

*We finished around 5, with a few stragglers still holding on with the final shovelling.  
Thank you for holding out to the end.*

*All in all, it was a lovely day full of lovely folks, and we began a lovely thing that could  
make for lovely jam and a lovely gift from the lovely earth in perpetuity, in one way, or in  
another way at least as long as the currant bushes are alive.*

*Hope you are all well! I am making lots of music and thinking of you often as a result of  
this prayer shawl.*

*Take care.  
Keenan*