



Left to right - Wendy Weiner in her garden. Her home on River Road, Rumson. Green shoots of spring. Mary Grubert's garden.

# Grown in Rumson

## The sustainability movement gains ground in an unlikely corner of the triCity region

BY STEVEN FROIAS

RUMSON – A few weeks back we wrote about the community Gardens of Joy throughout Asbury Park. Who knew we would be revisiting the sustainability movement again so soon? And in such an unlikely locale?

But here we are down in the dirt again.

In Rumson.

That's right. Though in so many ways Asbury Park and Rumson are worlds apart, when it comes to going organic they share a bond. Each has a fierce advocate for cultivating the land in either – and every - place.

In Asbury Park, that woman is Pat Betty – whose Garden of Joy, Inc ([www.the.gardenofjoy.org](http://www.the.gardenofjoy.org)), incidentally, was the reason the city was awarded a \$10,000 sustainability grant from Wal-Mart between our last bit of organic journalism and this go round.

In Rumson, the Earth mother who catches our eye this week is Wendy Weiner.

Wendy's set up is a little different than Pat's, which reflects the differences between the two places in which they toil.

The Garden of Joy, Inc. is a non-profit, community based organization. Wendy Weiner's for profit The Front Yard Farmer ([www.thefrontyardfarmer.net](http://www.thefrontyardfarmer.net)) is no less community minded, however, for having a price

tag attached to it.

What she does is help her customers learn how to grow their own food – in their own front (or back) yards. She does this by getting the appropriate materials together (from local sources) and then building and installing the beds which become a suburban horn of plenty.

To ensure that her clients remain a growing concern, Wendy visits a few times a week, planting, seeding, watering and weeding as needed. But more importantly, her goal is to teach her 'students' the lay of their own land.

That's because even though The Front Yard Farmer is a business, it's roots dig deep into the same sustainability movement that's found in the Gardens of Joy – or First Lady Michelle Obama's White House garden.

Wendy tells triCity that with The Front Yard Farmer she's trying to make a statement in addition to a buck – that it's OK to farm your own property. Indeed, that it can be attractive aesthetically as well as environmentally to do so.

She lives what she preaches and teaches. On her own River Road, Rumson front lawn you'll find her garden beds. In fact, they've become a community touchstone.

People frequently stop and ask questions or give a



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yell out the window when stopped at the light, questioning her through the window about what's going down – literally.

So far, Wendy has assisted about 10 other property owners with their own front yard farms, she says, throughout the more Arcadian areas of the triCity region like Wayside, Little Silver, and Marlboro after her own patch of hometown, Rumson.

In Rumson, Mary Grubert engaged Wendy's green thumb and conscious. Mary says she fondly recalls visiting a back yard farm on the shore as a child, and wanted to pass on the experience to her own three chil-

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