

# The Heegel/Rambo Urban Farm

By Diane Meucci, Feb. 2013

**Gardensoyvey.com**

Diane Meucci & Wolfgang Marquardt

## Chris Cosby Gave me the Job.

He did not have time. He also recommended me to the Mirimichi Project.

I am Grateful.

So in the Middle of the Summer of 2012, The Fifth year of Drouth and with 110 Degrees in the Shade, Tony Chapman's Crew, Russell DeMotsis and I Began to Build an "Organic", "Low Maintenance", Terraced Private Urban Farm, as per the Wishes of Cliff Heegel and Carol Rambo.

Their Desires included...Terracing, Swales to catch Water...and 8-12 Inches of Fresh Wood Chips from a local Tree Company...Inoculated with Mycorrhiza to begin and accelerate the Biology of Decomposition and have a very low Maintenance Orchard in the Front Yard.

We began by Removing 6-12" of grass and weeds. In the Front...We were Delivered 10 yards? of Wood Chips. Russell Cut the Grass to 1/4", placed newspaper on top, and we placed 8-12" of Wood Chips on top of the Entire Front Lawn, REMOVING them to 1" where any Tree Roots Existed.

We Graded to 1" Where the Water Flows naturally through the landscape 3-8' wide.

This will become the Walking Path and a Possible Patio in the Front Yard Orchard.

We then Inoculated the Wood Chips with Mycorrhiza.

We dug Deep Swales into the Chips. Filled them With Pure Composted Manure.

Into This We Planted Figs, Blue Berries, Thick enough to Screen the Street and Act as Ground Cover, and A Native Magnolia that grows in Canyons in the Southeast, Magnolia macrophylla, Because it is so sexy. Had to.

I planted Daylilies because they are Edible and They are Beautiful they Control Erosion and it makes the Neighbors feel like we are not totally insane. 3 of the Best Colors.

We may plant more in the years to come...I Expect this Garden to Mature in 5-7 years.

For the Rear Garden....I pulled from my own experiences, and my heritage. Northern Italy.

In The Heat and Drouth, Tony's Men began the Laborious task of Hand Picking with 60 Lb. Pick Axes....

My Gladiators....All Core and Abs....Picked the Soil Clean of Grass and Weeds.

Then we cut INTO the hills...with pics... 8" Deep and 18" Wide.

Every 16 Feet. Down the Incline of the Rear Garden.

Into this we placed Bales of Straw and Barley...What ever was Available in a Drouth.

Then we Covered these Bales with the Soil we had Excavated, into Curved Mounds.

(Freshly Hand Picked Soil. 110 Degree Drouth....Stay Tuned...That Night we get a Damn Thunderstorm!!! Of Course. Naturally.)

Behind Each Curved 2 Ft. Mound...Spanning 30-60 ft. east and west, We Tilled In 3-6" of Gravel...

To Slow down the Impact of a storm on a slope...and to Slow the Flow of Water to feed the Mounds...

i.e. The Beds.

## A Nursery Inside A Garden

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Because it was HOT and a DROUTH....I had to plant Immediately with some thing i could Guarantee would work and hold the hills together....Cheap...My Reputation was on the line...as with The Mirimichi Golf Course, No one had done this on steep hills in drouth and heat....before a thunderstorm...and if it did not work...thousands of dollars lost. Both Projects had limited budgets.

So I chose Regional Annual Heat Loving "Wild Flowers". Not all Were Native. But the Would Germinate in 5 days...and Hold the Hill...and be 2 feet deep by November.

Cheaper than Mulch or any other material...

It worked....And A storm came...Both Times....Great Stories...You will have to buy the book.

Into This I Aug/Sept...With Irrigation on a timer once a week...just for the first year,

I planted all the Herbs in Memphis i could find. In August they looked miserable and were an inexpensive gamble.

The Mints Will hold the Hills and be Biological Consorts for the Bees.

The Rosemary, Will Companion Blueberries and Asparagus. On Each Hill.

Into This we will Scratch and Seed Seasonal Vegetables and Wild Flowers.

We will Use Sweet Potato as a Major Ground Cover and Food.

Sweet Potato's Feed the Soil and People...Magical plant.

Finally in November We Planted Some Black Berries and a few Prima Donna's Very Close to the Back Door that will need Coddling... Peaches. Patio Peaches....

Into the Hills I planted Asian Pear and Asian Persimmon for Food and Occasional Shade/Rest for the Humans.

That was Nov. 2012 and it is March of 2013. I have remained close to Cliff and Carol by Text and Email.

Coaching them in Planting and Management.

I will Visit it often...If they permit me. This is now a Love Affair.

Thank you Everyone. For the Work. And Thank You...My Extraordinary Gladiators.

Diane Meucci. Gardens Oy Vey.

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