By Elise Kigner

“…are popping up in cities around the country, where people tend to know little about where their food comes from. At Temple Israel, the garden is being used, among other things, as an educational tool for Hebrew school students.”

The garden is a congregation-wide effort. High school students constructed the raised beds and began the planting. On the temple’s Miztvah Day, second-graders planted cucumber seeds in yogurt containers, which they later transplanted to the garden. On August 15, Ganei Beantown and Temple Israel’s Riverview Project are hosting Harvest ‘N Tonics, where young adults will gather in the garden for drinks and to help the group grow to harvest vegetables, harvesting the ripe foods and planting new seeds.

Mallach said similar programs have bloomed at Temple Israel of Boston to help Temple Israel garden, Ganei Bean-town turns a series for young adults on food, sustainability and Jewish law. At a recent session, participants learned how to brew beer and talked about the counting of the Omer, the period between Passover and Shavuot when Jews each day brought barley to the temple as a sacrifice: “It is encouraging Jews to realize the agricultur-als traditions inherent in Judaism,” Mallach said.

The Temple Israel garden was planted in the space once used for a Biblical garden. It was aban-doned about 20 years ago when the synagogue’s garden club – a group of women who tended to the plants and made flower arrangements for Shabbat services – disbanded.

By growing food and herbs in the temple as a sacrifice, “It is encouraging Jews to realize the agricultur-als traditions inherent in Judaism,” Mallach said.

Anita Bender, who was a member of the garden club, said fellow congregant Alice Sherman came up with the idea for the garden, which was made up of plants men-tioned in the Bible, like bitter herbs, grapes, figs, ferns and prunes.

Bender said the Biblical garden served as a model for others all around the country. During the High Holidays congregants would sit in the garden to meditate, and congregants held wedding recep-tions there. Garden club members became fast friends.

“This was a way people who had something in common could get together and work together, and it built a community within a community,” Bender said. “It helped gardening is making a good comeback.”

For more information, visit beantownjewishgardensprojects.wordpress.com.

Jewish fundraisers report upswing in giving

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They Don’t Just Make Honey!

“It’s the time of year when stinging pests are looking for food and increasing their colony size. These stinging pests include Bald-faced Hornets, European Hornets, Yellow Jackets, and Honeybees.

Yellow Jackets, Bald-faced and European Hornets will build paper-like nests containing 2,000 to 6,000 cells and up to 4,000 workers. Nests will often reach the size of a basketball by late summer.

Nesting sites are often located in some protected area, like a wall void, attic or within the branches of a bush. The entrances are guarded and workers can quickly become aggressive if their nest is disturbed, resulting in painful and sometimes repeated stings.

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Second graders plant vegetables at Beantown Jewish Garden.