

GARDENING MATTERS

SUMMER 2011

Closing the Loop Through Collaboration

Though we currently face many global and community challenges, these moments of difficulty create great opportunities for change and innovation. Right now, many in our communities are coming together to do what we cannot do on our own. The focus of this issue is to share the success stories of collaboration, the diversity of activities taking place to improve our broken food system, and the local achievements underway within our good food movement.

Collaboration Highlights

Michael Cheney, with **Project Sweetie Pie** in North Minneapolis, is bringing together 28 different organizations to introduce youth and older generations to horticulture through gardens, integrating the arts, community and economic development, and food production.

Gardening and urban agriculture are powerful approaches being used to create more livable and sustainable communities, speaking to the heart of health, food security, the environment, and individual and community empowerment.

All across our community, people are working collaboratively to take back our food system.

In Minneapolis, the newly-launched Local Food Resource Hubs have brought together hundreds of people to make food production, preservation and consumption more do-able. Across the Metro, the budding Urban Agriculture Alliance is expanding communication among people involved in policy-making, neighborhood-building, education, and – last but not

least – growing food. And on Saturday, August 6, Community Garden Day is bringing together gardeners from all over Minnesota to celebrate these vital community assets.

With all of this synergy for change developing in our community, it seemed a natural response to shine a spotlight on it in our current newsletter. Where does real change come from? It comes from many people each taking on a role- planting, growing, buying, preserving, and especially sharing with others, to co-create a healthy and just food system.

As we do these things together, we create something larger than the sum of our individual contributions — A food system that we own collectively, that strengthens our communities and gives opportunity to all residents to participate.

There are many great efforts that deserve mention and celebration – we encourage you to share your story!

How are you working with others to build a better food system? What difference has your urban agriculture activity made in your lives or the lives of others?

Send your story to Gardening Matters (info@gardeningmatters.org) so we can share the good news and show how together we are improving the world we live in.

— Nancy Ward
Community Gardener and
Gardening Matters staff



Collaboration Highlights

Bob Albee of the **Phillips Local Food Resource Hub** is connecting people to garden spaces, and aligning the stars for the elements of a community-based food system, such as community meals with local produce, a community kitchen and youth-training programs.

Collaboration Highlights have been gathered by Nancy Ward, Gardening Matters volunteer extraordinaire.

Urban Ag Alliance Update – June 24, 2011

The Urban Agriculture Alliance (UAA) program is headed into the summer with some solid momentum.

Building on the energy generated this spring, the framework for how the Metro's urban agriculture community can work together more closely is taking shape. In April, over 80 people gathered at the McKnight Foundation to discuss what we can do together that we can't do alone. The group identified the following goals:

- Broadening communication among the various sectors of the urban ag community
- Identifying strategies for improved land access and land permanency
- Working to develop infrastructure for local food distribution
- Doing research to demonstrate the economic benefits of urban farms and community gardens

We're currently beginning economic impact research, which will help us illustrate the benefits of urban agriculture to both decision makers and the public. Earlier this month, the Land Access Working Group

(part of the UAA) held a workshop on identifying new partnerships to advance land access and land permanency goals. I have also been meeting with community groups, organizations, and individuals who want to connect with others involved in urban ag.

I've also spoken with a number of people involved in similar urban ag alliances around the country. Cities like Seattle, Cleveland, and Detroit offer models and lessons for how we can advance our work here. Learning about their challenges and successes as they work to expand local infrastructure to aggregate, process, and distribute local foods has been invaluable.

The initial meetings of the Urban Agriculture Alliance's steering committee launched with two kickoff workshops in early July. These meetings are open to everyone, and more UAA events will be scheduled in coming months. Please email john@gardeningmatters.org with any questions or if you'd like to expand your connections with the local Metro-wide agriculture community.

— John Brosnan
Urban Agriculture Alliance Coordinator

Summertime Visits to Community Gardens

We'd love to come and visit you in your community garden and learn how it's going this season. Let us know a good time to come! Email Nadja@gardeningmatters.org or call 612-821-2358.

Collaboration Highlights

Diane Dodge, an activist promoting local food systems, is a member of **St. Paul/Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission (FNC)** which is working with residents to identify barriers and opportunities for improving the food system. An overarching principle of the FNC, is to address institutional racism, "a systemic exclusion of low income communities from decision making about matters that affect them."

Garden Gleaning Project

The Garden Gleaning Project is getting ready for its first season of fostering relationships between gardeners and their local food shelves. Our Gleaning Task Force has been planning since winter and is working to make it ensure that fresh, homegrown produce is made available at our local food shelves. In this time of need, many food shelves are struggling to keep a sufficient stock of food, in particular fresh fruits and vegetables. We're working to encourage produce to be donated, improving the quality and freshness of food donated, and getting culturally relevant food into the food shelves.

In Minneapolis, two food shelves are partnering with nearby growers to supplement our food shelves. By localizing our food sources and promoting collaboration among neighbors to address issues of healthy food access and nutrition related illness, we hope to build a community food system that is more engaged, sustainable, and resilient.

If you are interested being a part of this inaugural year of gleaning, contact one of these partnering food shelves:

In South Minneapolis:
Waite House Community Center
2529 13th Ave. S Minneapolis
Contact Jared Walhowe
at 612.721.1681 or
walhowej@puc-mn.org

In Northeast Minneapolis:
Little Kitchen Food Shelf
1500 6th St. NE Minneapolis
Contact Jennifer Schultz
at 612.788.2444 or
Jennifer@necommunity.net

For additional info about the project, visit:
<http://www.gardeningmatters.org/gleaning-task-force>

— Jared Walhowe, Waite House Community Center



Sabathani Community Center
310 E. 28th St., #204B
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612-821-2358
www.gardeningmatters.org

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Urban Agriculture
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Community Garden Day

formerly The Parade of
Community Gardens

Saturday, August 6

On August 6, gardeners
from all over Minnesota
invite you to join them as they
celebrate community gardens!

- Learn what makes these community spaces special
- Tour gardens in your neighborhood
- See gardens focused on youth, food donation, horticultural therapy, and more!

Want to participate or visit gardens? See the map and REGISTER your community garden at: www.gardeningmatters.org (click on Community Garden Day link)



COMMUNITY GARDENERS AT NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN, ST. PAUL

Collaboration Highlights

Ian McNamara, also Phillips Hub member, says community gardens have "provided a way for this very diverse community to come out, meet neighbors that would not otherwise connect, and to get to know each other... We're producing more than tomatoes."

NEW AND IMPROVED COMPOST BIN AT 3437 GARDEN

THE COMPOSTADORES

The Compostadores helped gardeners at the 3437 garden build a compost bin last month -- one of 31 bins they've built in the last year. They plan to build another 50 bins this summer in gardens across the cities. For more info on the Compostadores and how you can get involved, check out <http://thecompostadores.wordpress.com/>

Working with The Compostadores to build our community garden's compost bin was a fun and educational experience. The Compostadores provided all of the materials, construction tools and know-how. The approach was very hands-on with plenty of encouragement for

builders to participate in each stage of construction. After only a few hours, the bin was complete. The end result is a very professional looking compost bin that fits perfectly into our garden. In addition to the build, the Compostadores taught us about building compost and maintain the bin. We had learned a lot, had fun, and now have a beautiful new compost bin!

The 3437 Garden broke ground in June 2010 and continues to create and grow a garden that serves its members and the Powderhorn community. Check us out at 3437garden.blogspot.com

— Sarah Sicheneder
3437 Garden, Minneapolis



Gardens Sprout

in 2011

Many new community gardens broke ground this spring all over the Metro Area and Greater Minnesota. Community groups, neighbors, organizations, faith-based institutions, and municipalities all helped start new gardens: many in neighborhoods or cities that have never had a community garden before! We asked gardeners from a few of these new gardens to share their stories.



Gardens Bloom in Brooklyn Center

For two years a couple of citizens in Brooklyn Center have attempted to start a community garden. We are so grateful to finally get that opportunity due to a Hennepin County grant and donation of a plot of ground behind the Odyssey Academy in Brooklyn Center. A goal of this project was to bring a diverse community together. Currently there are Asian, African, and Caucasian gardeners working together. With this grant we assembled 5 large raised beds and filled them with a mixture of soil and peat. It has been exciting to see the enthusiasm of the gardeners working together to spread wood chips between the garden beds. They also installed fencing to keep out the rabbits and discourage deer. Already the signs of green are appearing. We look forward to sharing garden ideas, meeting neighbors, and enjoying the "fruits" of our labor.

— Allan Hancock, Odyssey-Vinai Community Garden, Brooklyn Center

Completing the Circle

Until I was 12 years old, I lived near the present community garden site, along with my parents, my grandparents, and my six siblings. We had three lots where we gardened with our grandparents and aunt.

We grew everything we ate, even chickens. It is funny that after all these years the chicken is becoming popular again! We had corn, green beans, peas, lettuce, kale, cukes, carrots, potatoes, strawberries, and green peppers from seed brought over from Italy.

Dad had beehives in the back of the property and many plum, pear, and apple trees. Grandpa also had his own small vineyard. As children in this garden space, we learned how to appreciate the life around us, from the stars in the sky to the bugs and worms beneath our feet.

Now the community has a garden on the block I grew up on, and I will be there, gardening again with my family and my grandchildren, repeating our history in the West End.

— Linda Rulli Andretta, Fort Road Community Garden Jefferson and Victoria, St. Paul

A World Garden in St. Paul

The Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC) – Refugee Services is a refugee resettlement agency working with newly arrived refugee families on education, immigration, resettlement case management and employment. MCC started working to connect new refugee families with gardening resources in the spring of 2010. Community gardens are a great way to introduce families into a community so they feel safe, as well as a way for them to access fresh, affordable food. This summer, MCC Refugee Services worked with families to start new community gardens near two apartment complexes in St. Paul.



Wow!

Sixto and Maria are a Latino couple in their mid-thirties who are in their third year gardening at the IOC Community Garden. They were so enthusiastic about their experience after the first year that they got two plots last year and again this year. Sixto says that he was amazed how different the tomatoes tasted when he grew them organically in his own plot. Slowly his palate has changed as a result of having access to fresh, organic produce. He also stopped drinking pop and now only drinks water. Sixto has lost 60 pounds and Maria has lost 25. He is seen as a role model in the Latino community and often speaks about his weight and diet transformation. He says he has re-gained his energy and is not "sleepy in the head anymore."

— Beth Kackman

IOC Community Garden, Burnsville

At one of these locations, MCC teamed up with the District 2 Community Council to start a community garden with neighbors and apartment residents, many of whom are refugees. At the first work day, 10 families came out to start digging up their plots for their garden. Two apartment residents came out just to help with the digging, stating that they didn't know if they had time to have their own plots. By the end of the afternoon, they were so excited about the garden that they dug up their own plots and planted them!

MCC is looking forward to learning from the gardeners about their various farming techniques (gardeners are from Iraq, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nepal, Burma, Laos and the US!), and continuing to partner with great community organizations like the District 2 Community Council to make fresh food and safe communities a priority!

— Liz Mason, MCC Refugee Services, <http://www.mnchurches.org/refugee/garden/>

Collaboration Highlights

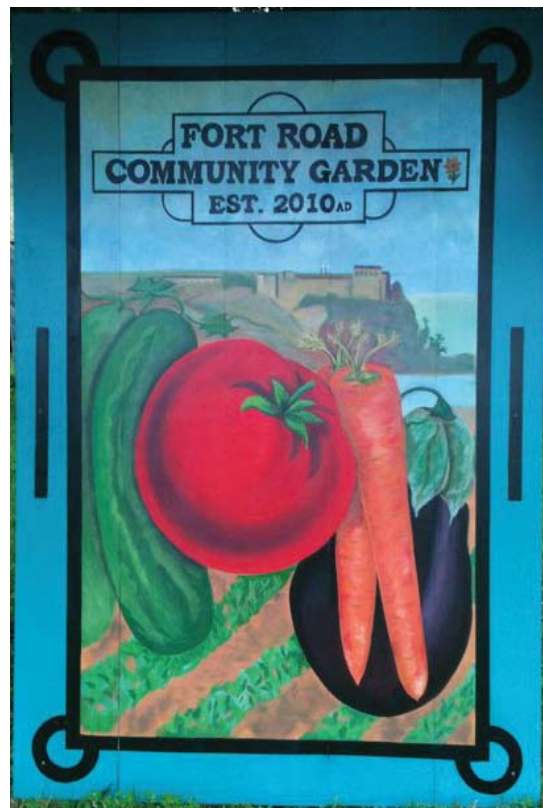
St. Olaf Community Campus, part of the Northside Minneapolis Hub, maintains communal teaching gardens and a hoop house for season extension. Doubled in size this year, their gardens serve long-term residents, immigrant communities, and youth training programs.

Growing Gardens and Sharing Our Stories

Zahanati, Inc.'s mission is to promote health and wellness to the community through nutrition workshops, our Urban Organic Youth Farm project, and Senior Backyard Garden Initiative. We want to make organic produce affordable and easily accessible to low income families. This will have a direct impact on improving the health of North Minneapolis residents, who are affected by ill health more than other communities. One of the biggest challenges has been the devastating effects of the tornado that swept over our city; therefore our Backyard Garden Initiative may not be forthcoming this year.

Our primary focus at this time is to promote interest in agriculture careers with students of color and to relate positive stories we've collected from sharecroppers about their love of farming, while recanting the past negative experiences of sharecroppers, so that these same experiences are not repeated. We are emphasizing the need to take ownership of our food by entering fields where we can have a voice over the type of foods that are culturally necessary to maintain our health.

— Renee Barron, Zahanati Inc., www.zahanati.org



MINNEAPOLIS LOCAL FOOD RESOURCE HUBS

We are honored to launch the first season of the Local Food Resource Hubs (LFRH) together with volunteer Hub Teams and City of Minneapolis, which provided seed funding, assistance and evaluation support. This membership-based program promotes the development of locally-based partnerships of individuals, neighborhood organizations, local businesses in order to deliver resources and education to where people live for success in growing, preserving and cooking healthy foods.

In less than one year, we collectively developed a program that has already offered beginning gardener and other gardening classes, and held two successful (though weather-challenged) seed and seedling distributions this spring. Currently at 600 members, the program aims to connect gardeners to each other to share talents, skills and resources among Hub members and across the Local Food Resources Hubs Network. The Network currently consists of three Resource Hubs: Northside (below), Southside and Phillips, which distributed over 12,000 packets of seeds and 15,000 seedlings! Thanks to the many people who helped pack seeds and helped with administration tasks! If you want to get involved with the Hubs, contact Lina@gardeningmatters.org

Northside Resource Hub Seed Distribution

Saturday, April 30, began as a day for the ducks more than a picnic. With a temperature in the low forties (yes, 40s) and steady rain, it seemed unlikely that anyone would come to an outdoor event. Those of us who arrived early to set up for the 10am plant distribution were willing but somewhat skeptical. When we voiced that skepticism to Mustafa Sundiata, who was leading the effort, he said without reservation, "We're doing it in the parking lot. Let's get to work."

Putting up the shelter and tables went fast (gotta move with velocity to keep warm) and the food vendors set up the grills. Perhaps a few hardy souls might venture out in this cold wetness...

Thirty people. Yep, thirty, were waiting patiently as we finished setting up the stations. Their patience was rewarded

by seeds, plants, music, and good free food. Everyone was friendly, even taking time to fill out the surveys David Johnson (Mpls Dept of Health and Family Support) handed out to every attendee. His intention is to show the success of the project in helping people eat healthy food. The questions asked about gardening experience and skills and resources needed to raise one's own food. The city will have a follow-up in the fall to ask Hub members if they had access to the resources and training they needed.

By the end of the day, over 140 people had signed up to become members of the Northside Local Food Resource Hub. Contact Steve Lomen at 612-508-1138 to learn more about the great offerings at the Resource Hub.

— Jim Lovestar

Northside Hub member and Community Gardener

THANK YOU GARDENING MATTERS SUPPORTERS

OUR FUNDERS: McKnight Foundation McNeely Foundation Nash Foundation Wedge Co-op Green Patch Program WedgeShare

VOLUNTEERS	Melodie Chiodi	Rachel Henderson	Mary Leoni	Kerri Norman	Claudia Slovacek
Awaken Community	Chrestomathy	Michael Higgins	Bill Leskee	Patsy Parker	Abby Stern
McKenna Bernard	Anna Dadabo	Horizons Youth Program	Rachel Lewis	Ann Putnam	Allison Steward
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota	Mollie Dean	Hubs leaders and volunteers	Linda Littrell	Dan Reddan	Lois Swenson
volunteer seed packing team	Lisa Erb	Anna Jacob	Elise Maxwell	Ava Rolf	Target – volunteer seed packing team
Aryssa Burton	Laura Goetsch	Rochelle Jansen	Shannon McWalters	Sabathani Seniors	Blake Traylor
	Marcie Golden	Brittany Johnson	Barbara Melom	Jenna Sandoe	Nancy Ward
	Angela Gunlogson	Lea Karlssen	Milan Moscovich	Nick Schneider	
	Emily Hanson		Marie Mosman	Ann Shields	



A band plays during the 2010 Parade of Community Gardens at the IOC Community Garden, Burnsville

Goodbye Kelsey... Welcome Lina and John!

In August, Kelsey Barale will finish her 2nd term of service as a Minnesota GreenCorps member at Gardening Matters. She will be moving back to California to study International Agricultural Development at UC Davis. Maybe she will come back to Minnesota when she is done!

Lina Rodriguez
Local Food Resource Hub Coordinator

Lina is thrilled to be combining her passions for food justice and community organizing as the Project Coordinator for the Local Food Resource Hubs. Lina has extensive community organizing experience, having worked as the Community Organizer for PPNA, for Volunteer Alexandria! in Virginia, and on projects in Costa Rica, Peru, and Argentina. As a new gardener herself, she is especially excited to be involved with Gardening Matters and the Hubs program!

John Brosnan
Urban Agriculture Alliance Coordinator

After volunteering with Gardening Matters in developing a Twin Cities-wide urban agriculture coalition over the last year, John came on board as the new project coordinator for the effort in February 2011. John has worked with agriculture and land conservation for the past 12 years. Most recently, he was the market manager for the Kingfield Farmers Market in Minneapolis. Before that, he spent 10 years in the Bay Area, coordinating stakeholder groups as a program manager for Sonoma Land Trust and the San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Restoration Program. He studied natural resources at the University of Michigan and is currently working toward his masters in public affairs and nonprofit management at the Humphrey. When he's not working or studying, he's likely home cooking up a new recipe.

Dakota County Gardens Party for Community Garden Day!

Community Gardens have been flourishing in Dakota County, thanks to enthusiastic and committed citizens and funding from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). In the past two years, more than 15 community gardens have started or expanded, providing gardening opportunities for over 1000 county residents.

Several Dakota County community gardens plan to join in the festivities for this year's Community Garden Day on August 6, and they are already working together to plan fun ways to connect the participating community gardens. If you visit Dakota County on Community Garden Day, you can expect to hear music, sample foods from many different cultures, learn about mandala gardens, and much more! Look for more details about what the gardens are planning and who is participating on the online map at www.gardeningmatters.org. See you August 6!

Stay up to date with Gardening Matters! Check out our online calendar at www.gardeningmatters.org for up-to-date information on community gardening and local food classes, events and workshops.

AUGUST 6 Community Garden Day!

Community gardens across Minnesota invite you to their gardens!

Details and map at www.gardeningmatters.org, or call 612-821-2358

SAT. AUGUST 18–21 ACGA's 32nd Annual Conference

"Community Gardening Works!"
Columbia University, New York
www.communitygarden.org

AUGUST 18 – OCTOBER 1 "Alcina's Island" – A Picnic Operetta

www.mixedprecipitation.org for locations and times

SEPTEMBER 29 Harvest Dinner: A Gardening Matters Fundraiser

Join us for an evening of food, beer, and fun supporting Gardening Matters!
Summit Brewing Co, St. Paul
Details at www.gardeningmatters.org
(Click on Harvest Dinner link)

CALENDAR

Gardening Matters
310 E. 38th St., #204B
Minneapolis MN 55409

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Harvest Dinner

A Gardening Matters Fundraiser

Enjoy a fun evening supporting Gardening Matters' work in providing training, resources, and support for successful and sustainable community gardens across Minnesota.



Join us at Summit Brewery
for a six-course feast, music,
and fantastic local beer!

Thursday, Sept. 29th
6PM to 9PM
Tickets: \$75

Summit Brewery: 910 Montreal Cir, St Paul, MN
Corporate Sponsorships Available



Chef Nick Schneider of Spoonriver and Mill City Market will prepare a delectable meal showcasing produce from community gardens in the Twin Cities, along with locally produced meats, cheeses, breads and desserts.

The event will be limited to 150 people.

To make your reservation and purchase tickets for this special culinary event, please visit:
www.gardeningmatters.org and click on the Harvest Dinner link