

Community Gardening



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Why are Community Gardens important ?

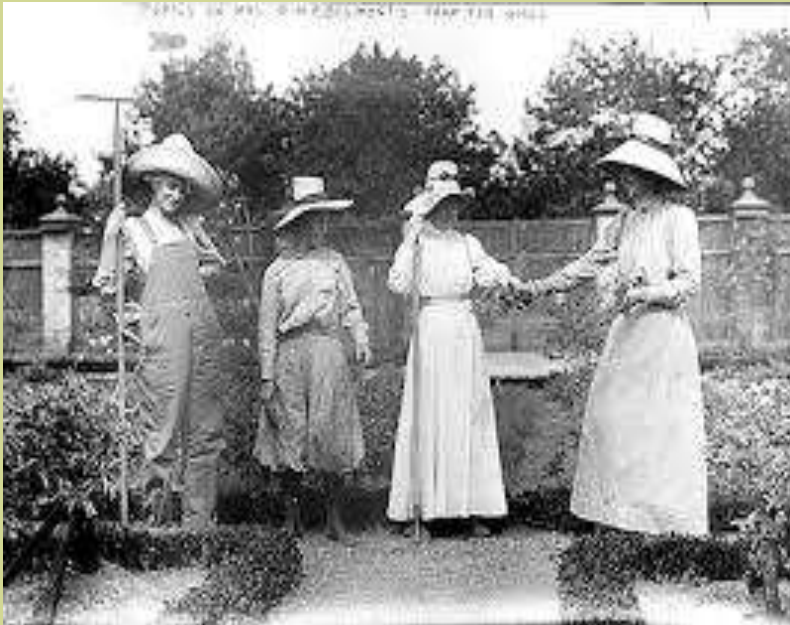
Today's community gardens are important places in cities across the United States.

They can help to -

- revitalize neighborhoods affected by urban decline,
- build a sense of community,
- grow healthy food,
- teach environmental education,
- create a sense of place.

Community Garden History

The community gardens we see in cities today have evolved from a long history.



When did it all begin ?

Since the 1890s, Americans have turned to the garden to confront social problems such as economic recession, war, urban decline, and environmental injustice.



View of the
Children's Garden
Plots at DeWitt
Clinton Park, 1909.

It all began in Detroit

First community gardens in the USA were vacant lot gardens.

Detroit was the first city in the United States to create an extensive municipally sponsored urban gardening program using vacant lots in the city.

The program began in response to the economic recession that began in 1893, which left many of the city's industrial laborers, particularly recent Polish and German immigrants, unemployed and hungry.

Mayor Pingree (fourth from left) poses for a picture with one of the gardeners (right) in 1896



**THE DETROIT PLAN — MAYOR PINGREE, CAPTAIN GARDENER, AND OTHERS,
IN THE MIDST OF THE POTATO PATCHES.**

Gardening was a success !!

Known as “Pingree’s Potato Patches,” the program provided unemployed workers with plots of land on vacant city lots, seeds, and tools, and instructions (printed in three languages) on how to cultivate gardens.

While Pingree’s plan could not fulfill all the demand, it was successful in alleviating some of the hunger and poverty in Detroit. The Detroit Plan was so successful that other cities from Boston to San Francisco developed similar plans.



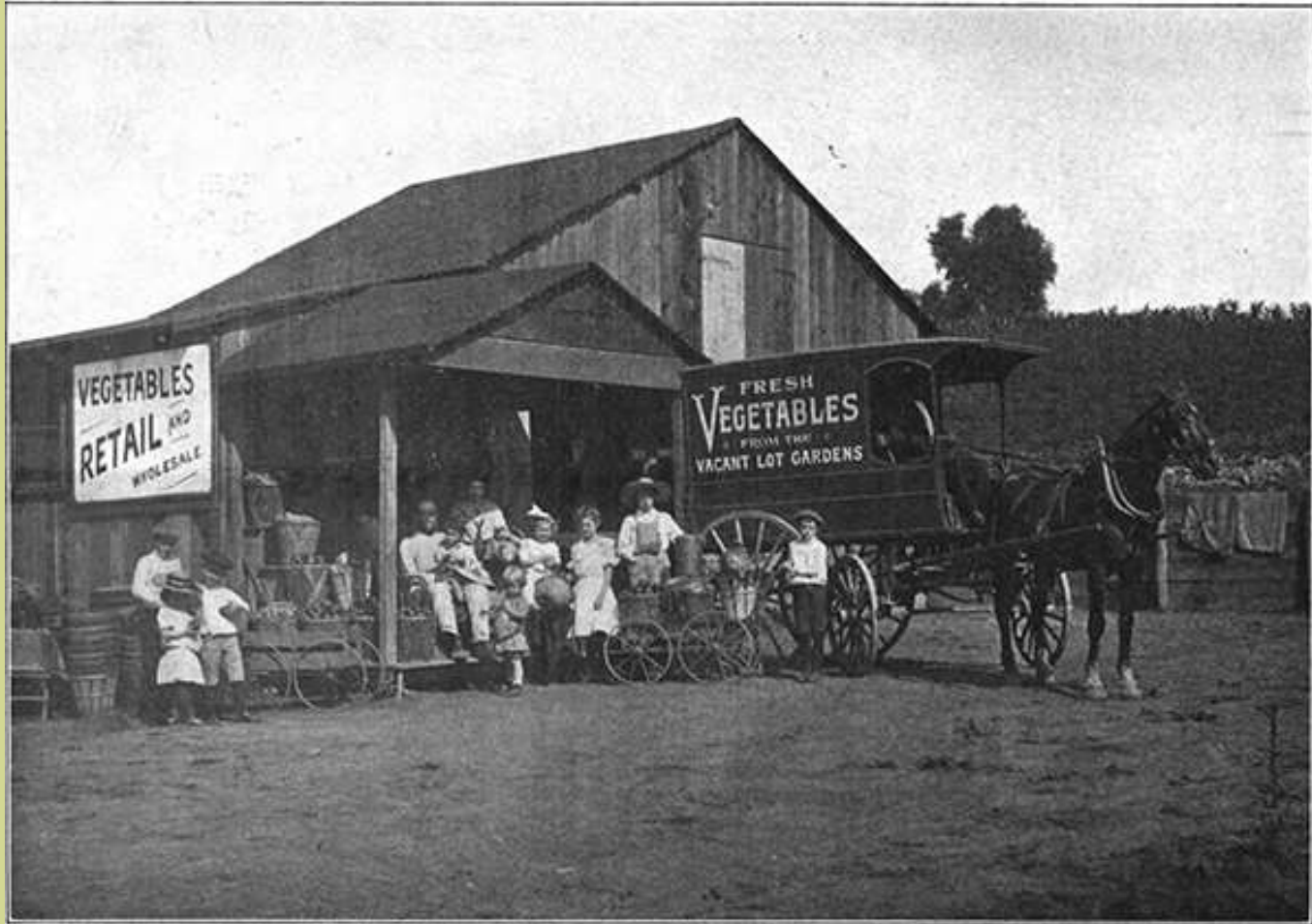
Community gardening moved across the country

Participation in Detroit's vacant lot gardening program, like most, tapered off by 1900 once the economy began to improve.

Philadelphia, however, developed a particularly robust program that lasted into the 1920s.



Gardeners prepare to sell their produce in Philadelphia, c. 1904



MARKETING THE CROPS.

A woman picks vegetables in a vacant lot garden in Philadelphia, c. 1917.



Not a square foot of ground wasted on these intensive gardens.

School Gardening begins

While adults' use of vacant lot gardens began to fade, many urban reformers began to create school gardens for children, particularly those of immigrants and lower-income residents.

Educators feared urban life would have negative effect on children. Gardens, they hoped, would be a way to connect youth to nature, teach them responsibility, and improve their physical health.

This is still relevant today !



Today, teachers also embrace gardens as a learning tool, although their motivations are different.

In schoolyards across the country, teachers have made gardens an important part the curriculum to promote nutrition, environmental stewardship, and teach topics in many subjects such as science art, literature, and history.

The school garden continues to be a tool for engaging students with hands-on experience.

Girls work in the Wainwright Garden in Philadelphia, c.1911



SECOND PLANTING, WAINWRIGHT GARDEN, PHILADELPHIA

Gardening becomes a patriotic act

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, a need for food, rather than education, became the primary motivation for cultivating community gardens.

Europe was in the midst of a food shortage. To increase exports, the national War Garden Commission called on citizens to become “soldiers of the soil” by planting “liberty gardens” or “war gardens” to meet some of their domestic need for food.

Women working in War Garden 1918



War Gardens in WW1



The War Garden Commission reported there were 3,500,000 war gardens in 1917, which produced some 350 million dollars worth of crops.

Community gardening projects continued after the war.

In many cities, residents often participated in civic horticulture campaigns by holding gardening contests to improve the appearance of their neighborhoods, which were often neglected by city leaders.

The Great Depression = Subsistence Gardens

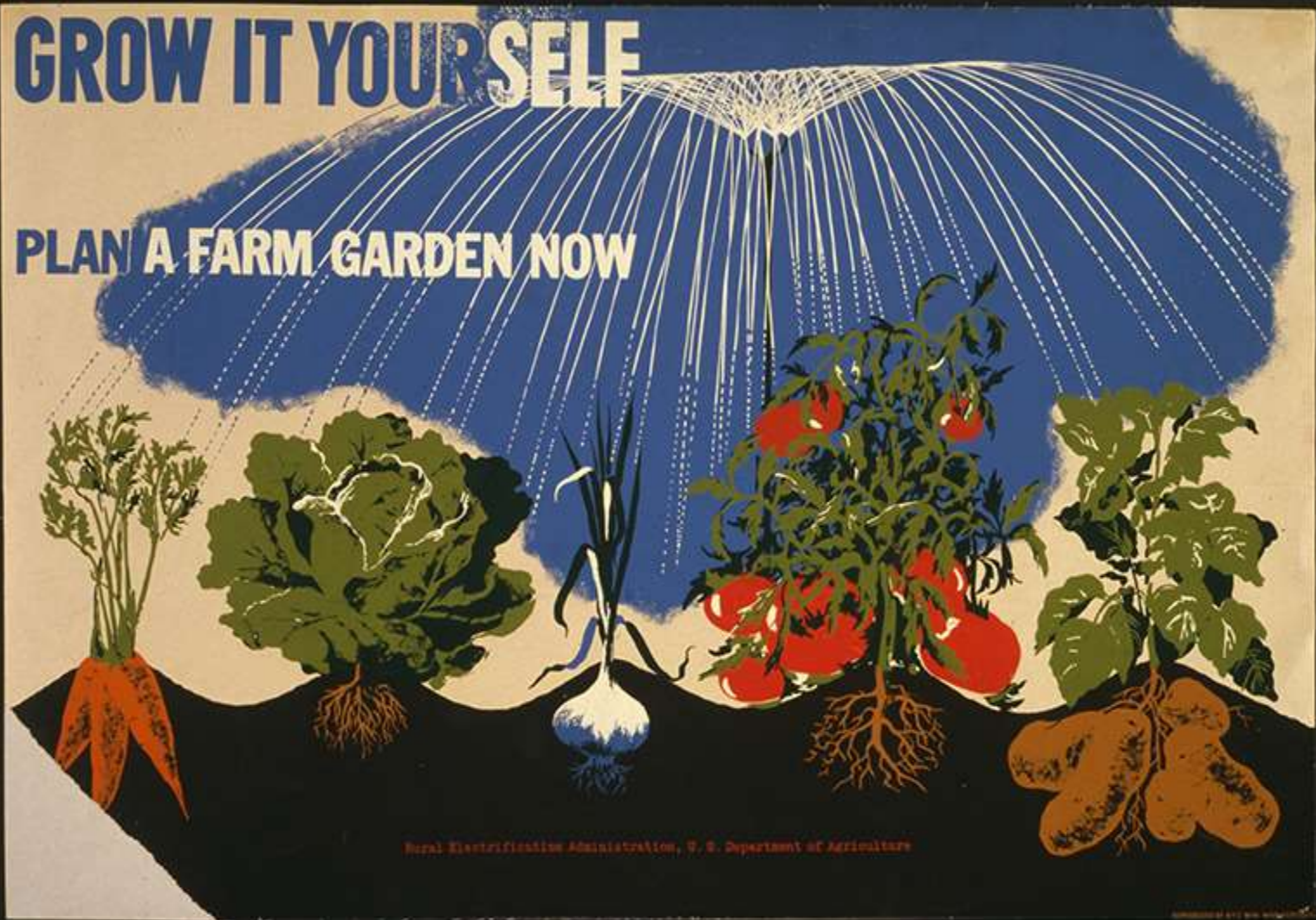
The nature of community gardening changed with the onslaught of the Great Depression.

Like vacant lot cultivation during the 1890s, the subsistence gardens in American cities during the 1930s were created in response to an economic crisis and intended to help meet residents' immediate need for food.

They were often supported through partnerships between municipal government and community organizations.

GROW IT YOURSELF

PLAN A FARM GARDEN NOW



Rural Electrification Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture

AMERICAN ARTISTS ASSOCIATION

Gardening resurges in WW2

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, many Americans began to rekindle the patriotic liberty gardens of WWI.

At first the government was skeptical of supporting these efforts, thinking large-scale agriculture was more efficient.

However, citing the health, recreational, and morale-boosting effects of gardening, the government again supported a national gardening campaign during World War II.

"We'll have lots to eat this winter, won't we Mother?"



**Grow your own
Can your own**

"I see we're fighting the war together"



FOOD FIGHTS FOR VICTORY

PLANT A

Victory

GARDEN

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

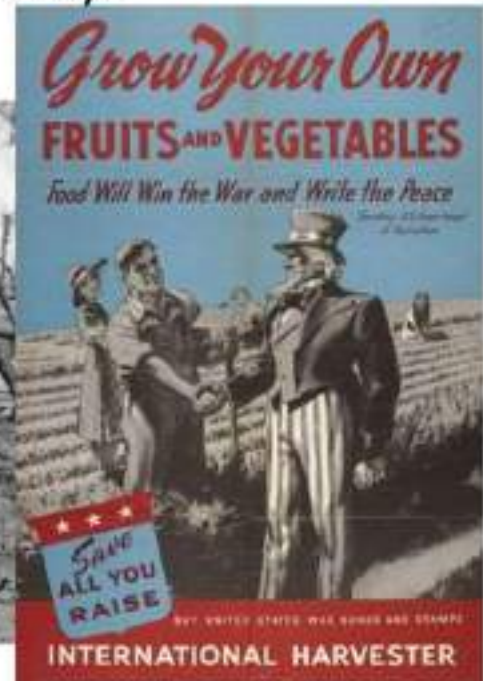
The Victory Garden was born 😊

Reports estimate that by 1944, between 18-20 million families with victory gardens were providing 40 percent of the vegetables in America.



Victory Gardens

- Vegetable, fruit, or herb garden planted in backyards
- Why? To reduce the pressure on public food supply (things you'd buy at the grocery store).



The Victory Garden fades away ☹️

Following the victory gardens of WWII, however, there were fewer community-focused gardening projects.

The United States experienced unprecedented suburban growth and many gardeners opted for the privacy of the backyard.



Environmental Action & Urban Revitalization

Since the 1960s and 1970s, people and grassroots organizations have come together to build community gardens that –

- promote environmental stewardship
- and revitalize urban neighborhoods affected by disinvestment.



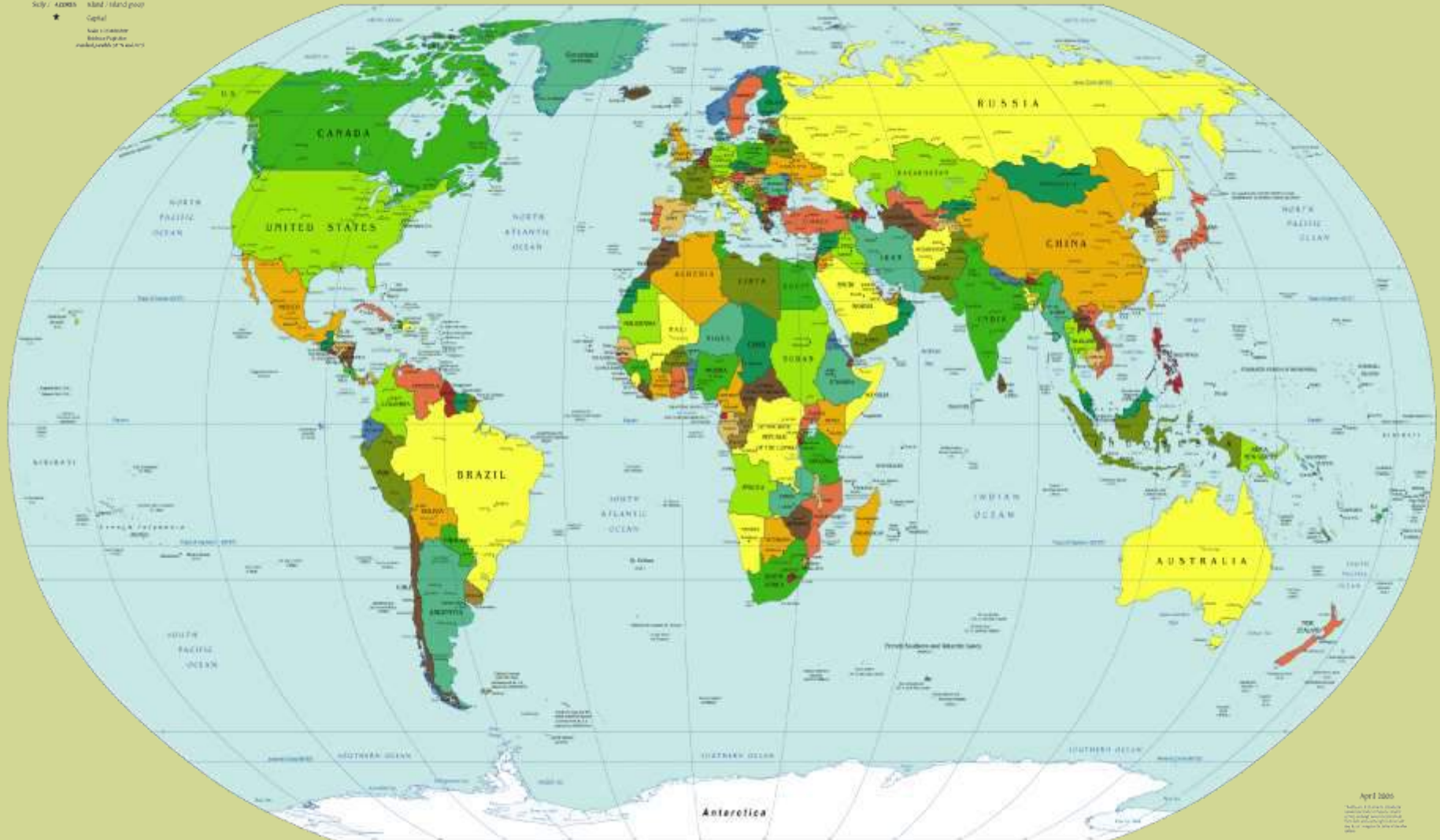
gettyimages
Paul Popper/Popperfoto

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The “Grow your Own” movement has not only exploded here, but all over the world

Political Map of the World, April 2006

INDEPENDENT STATE
DEPENDENCY OR AREA OF SPECIAL SOVEREIGNTY
ISLAND / ISLAND GROUP
CAPITAL
SEA TERRITORY
BOUNDARY OF TERRITORY



April 2006

Map data © 2006 National Geographic Society
Map labels © 2006 National Geographic Society
Map design © 2006 National Geographic Society

For example, Community Gardens exist in Europe, Kenya, Philippines and Cuba .



Urban Community Gardens - Cuba

Cuba – Soviet Collapse led to food shortages
Government gave rent free land for fruit and veg cultivation
Organic because no chemical available
Now provide approx 60% Cuba's produce !



HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

*Victory gardens
are coming back!*



Victory 2020

GROW A BIG GARDEN !

Today, home gardening is blooming around the world, due to coronavirus lockdowns. In fact, there is a world wide seed shortage !

Other benefits of Gardening

1. Gardening burns a lot of calories
2. It can lower your blood pressure
3. Spending time outside can increase Vitamin D levels
4. Growing your own food encourages healthy eating
5. Gardening reduces stress
6. Provides a sense of community
7. Gardening gives faith in the future, “Growing something green, something real, something alive, is a hopeful thing to do.”
8. There is a natural antidepressant called *Mycobacterium vaccae* found in soil. The bacterium stimulates serotonin production, the stuff that makes you feel happy.

In fact, Doctors are now prescribing gardening instead of drugs

- Scientists have found that spending two hours a week in nature is linked with better physical health and well-being.
- As a result, doctors are prescribing “green prescriptions” to patients to spend more time in nature and to join community gardening projects.



Scottsdale Community Garden Club

:9000 E Chaparral Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85256

- A History from 1976 to 2025



Scottsdale Community Garden Club

Community gardens offer

- ~ Food
- ~ Fresh Air
- ~ Exercise
- ~ Cultural exchange
- ~ Companionship



Urban Community Garden - Scottsdale

May not provide 60% of Scottsdale's produce needs, but –
may provide 60% of individual gardener's needs !!



Community Garden Location

The Club is tucked away on the North East corner of the Scottsdale Community College campus.
Sited on 7 acres of the Salt River Pima Indian Reservation



College Mascot – An Artichoke !



How the club began

Founded in 1976 by Mark Miller

Originally 4 people, a hose and some shovels !

Plots were 20' x 30' (still are today)



Club beginnings

In 1977 club grew to 15 members and they got organised !

~ Monthly meetings

~ Plot fees to purchase tools

~ Rented rototiller until saved enough money to buy one

~ Student government bought them a metal storage shed

Early Irrigation Issues

The club grew over next 2-3 years – more spigots were added

By 1978 club had 50 – 75 plots, no more water pressure at end of line

Members trenched across to college irrigation lines and put in proper irrigation.



The 80's

Club now had 10' x 10' greenhouse with evaporative cooler and a hoop house

Seeds purchased in bulk and seed sorting group divided them into smaller packages and then sold them to members

Grew plants in greenhouse for sale to members in Fall and Spring



The 80's

Monthly meetings included :-

~ Newsletter which had club info as well as gardening advice, such as a suggested watering schedule.

~ Door prizes



~ Speakers – often from the Co-operative Extension



The 90's

Club now had 270 plots – 1/2 size of original ones

Now had several committees :-

The “board”

- ~ President
- ~ Vice President
- ~ Treasurer
- ~ Secretary



The 90's

The sub committee volunteers :-

- ~ Telephone
- ~ Equipment Maintenance
- ~ Beautification
- ~ Seed Packaging
- ~ Greenhouse
- ~ Weed Control
- ~ Grievance
- ~ Refreshments
- ~ Honey Helpers !



Bees

One of the members was a beekeeper

Kept approx. 10 hives

Members brought their own jars at a specific time for honey



Noteworthy events in the 90's



~ Pumpkin growing contest

~ Many trees were planted at the garden



~ 5 tillers were stolen

~ 101 Freeway was going to be built and so the whole garden had to move location. This was a huge undertaking.

The Big Move !

1997 - Whole garden had to move to a different location on college campus

Members dug up perennials such as asparagus and strawberries

New garden area was formerly alfalfa field.

Garden moved by Fall 1997, old garden became a parking lot !

300 plots at new site

Took 2 years to install all the irrigation. Greenhouse never resurrected, new storage sheds.

Junior Gardeners in the 90's

1997 – 3rd grade class took a plot.



Brownie and Scout troops have had plots.



Many gardeners enjoyed sharing their gardens with younger family members.



The College Relationship



Several years ago, the college realized that none of its enrolled students were members of the garden club.

A non credit “gardening” course was created for all club members to enroll in, thus meeting the needs of the college educational mission, as well as MCCA policy requirements.

This also extended the college operational benefits to the club.

College relationship changes -2001

Lots of problems –

~ Bank account issues with college and club.

~ College was under pressure from Governor to reduce water consumption.

~ State budget problems caused all non-credit community college courses to be cancelled.

~ Possible college development of garden area – would have to give up garden again !!

Problems are resolved !



College needed more land for a baseball field – what were the gardeners to do ?

The community garden club shared this part of college land with a model airplane club. (Garden at this time was $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres)

Fortunately both groups were able to come to an agreement with the college – airplane club gave up land to college for the baseball field and the garden gave 3 acres of its land to the flying club, so they could stay in current location.

The intent of college is to maintain this agreement until such time as this land is needed for future college growth.

The Flying Club and the Gardeners

The Garden Club has a symbiotic relationship with the Flying Club.

In 2007 the college required that the West and South parts of the Garden be fenced off from the college or the Club would have to leave.

The Air club paid for the fence and an access gate - \$5,000 - very generous !!

Consequently we put up with being occasionally “buzzed” with low flying model planes and always invite them to our annual picnic !!



The Flying Club leaves SCC

- About 2019, the flying club left SCC and now the land is set aside by the college as a habitat for the Burrowing Owls.



Other Issues in the 2000's

By early 2000's the garden club had an unkempt appearance and by 2006 it became apparent changes were needed, if the club was to grow and survive.

New committee – spruced things up – took away 10 dumpsters of old fences, barbecues etc.



Domestic Bees were relocated and wild bees were removed.

Began to look for new members through publicity with local papers and with Master Gardener members.



The Club and Media

Throughout the years, articles have been written about the club.

In August 2006, the club won best Community garden in the publication “Best of Phoenix”.

In November 2006, the AZ Republic ran an article on the club. At that point the club only had 65 members. Due to that article and exposure through the Master Gardener program, by the end of 2010 the club was full !

March 2009 the Phoenix slow food movement (with 100 people) visited the garden as part of a local tour, where there was a talk on eating locally and a cooking demonstration.

Winter of 2007



2006 – 2007 we had an exceptionally cold winter.

Many birds came to the garden – trees which had been planted in the 90's were mature and provided sanctuary from the harsh weather.

Also only place with food for miles around – the birds decimated everything.

Since then, there is an ongoing bird problem and now most gardeners have to “cage” their entire plot.

Caged Plots



The Garden in 2011

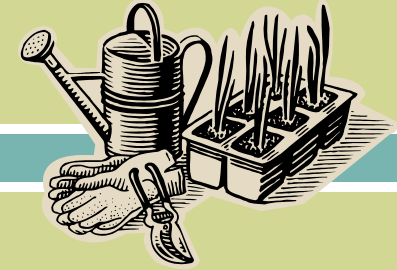


The college relationship – after a rocky few years, things started to greatly improve !

The club worked with the College Culinary School :-

- ~ Giving advice on composting their waste.
- ~ Helping with planting a small vegetable and herb garden by their facility.
- ~ Donating extra produce for the novice chefs.
- ~ Planned to offer a small scholarship.

2025 Facts and Figures



Currently the Club has 122 Primary Gardeners and 70 co-gardeners on 190 Plots. We have a waiting list.

The club year runs from July to July, this works out best for our planting calendar.

Dues are \$200 per year (plus a one time equipment fee)

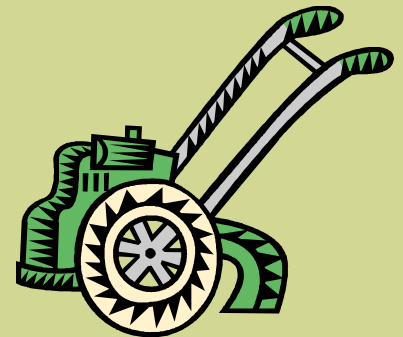
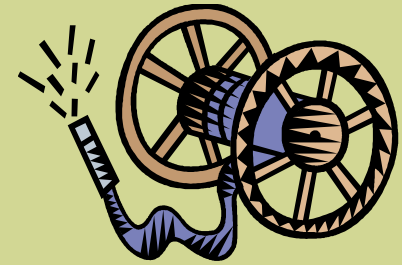
4 main officers run club – President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. (the board) They are assisted by several committees.

We continue to give a scholarship and food bank donations.

Committee Responsibilities

As well as the general running of the club, the board and the committees are also responsible for:-

- ~ Membership
- ~ Water usage
- ~ Ordering Manure
- ~ Community compost piles
- ~ Mulch
- ~ Equipment maintenance – Tillers/Tractor and tools
- ~ Community Areas
- ~ Grievance
- ~ Fundraising



<https://www.scottsdalecommunitygarden.com/>

Our Mission

This corporation is organized and shall be operated as a nonprofit corporation solely and exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes, and specifically for providing garden plots and teaching hands-on gardening to members.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing or the character of the affairs that the corporation shall conduct in the future, the corporation initially shall conduct the following business: operate a community garden at Scottsdale Community College

2020 - The club gets a new sign !



Club Activities

~ Bi-monthly meetings



~ Equipment Training



~ Onion/Tomato Sales

~ Quarterly Work Days

~ Annual Picnic



Work Day – March 2011



Volunteers working hard

Lunchtime !



Continuing Challenges

Water usage

Abandoned plots / Inactive gardeners

Commercial gardeners

Tiller /tractor usage

Plot sizes

Problems from previous years



Need to create a sense of ownership within club members – to instill a feeling of responsibility not only for their own plots, but also for the garden as a whole.

Very hard to contact members who do not have E mail.

Equipment Storage



Tractor Shed



Tiller Shed



Mulch, Manure and Compost

1. Rough mulch for roadways and paths
2. Manure and compost for the garden plots



Composting

Members are encouraged to compost their garden waste



The club tried creating a large scale garden waste compost area. Sadly it led to a rodent problem.

Community areas



Plot designs - Fences



Plot designs - Gates



Raised Beds



In ground vegetable beds

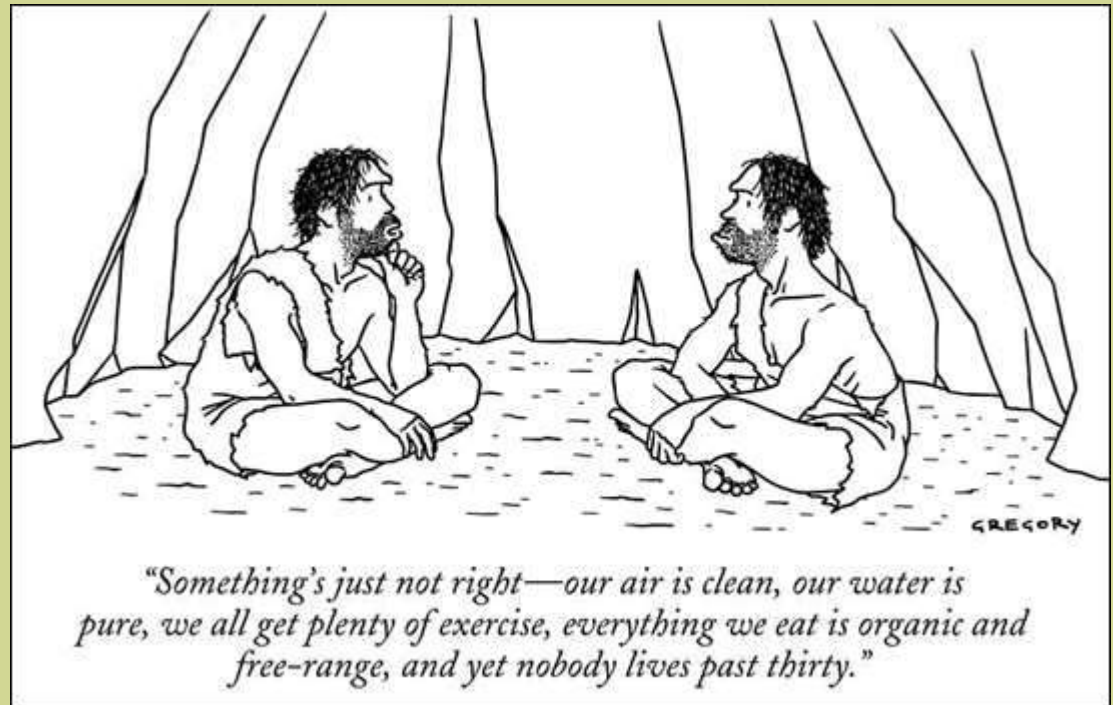


More Garden Photos



Organic?

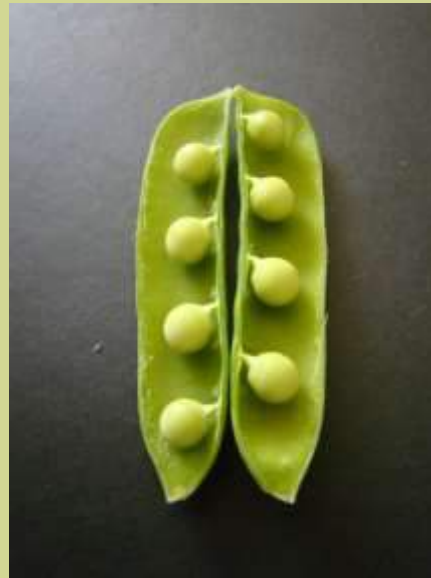
- Statistics show that a high percentage of gardeners take the organic route in home vegetable gardening
- Many of our
- members are
- organic
- gardeners



Happy Gardeners !



Some of our Crops



2 and 4 legged Garden visitors

Coyotes like to steal the melons.

Nuisances include pack rats, wild bees and wild dogs



We also have a flock of peach faced lovebirds and burrowing owls.



How to start your own community Garden

7 steps:

1. Find some land
2. Engage your community
3. Find resources to support the garden
4. Set up a board/committee in charge
5. Determine and write rules etc
6. Prepare and build the site
7. Maintain and Grow 😊



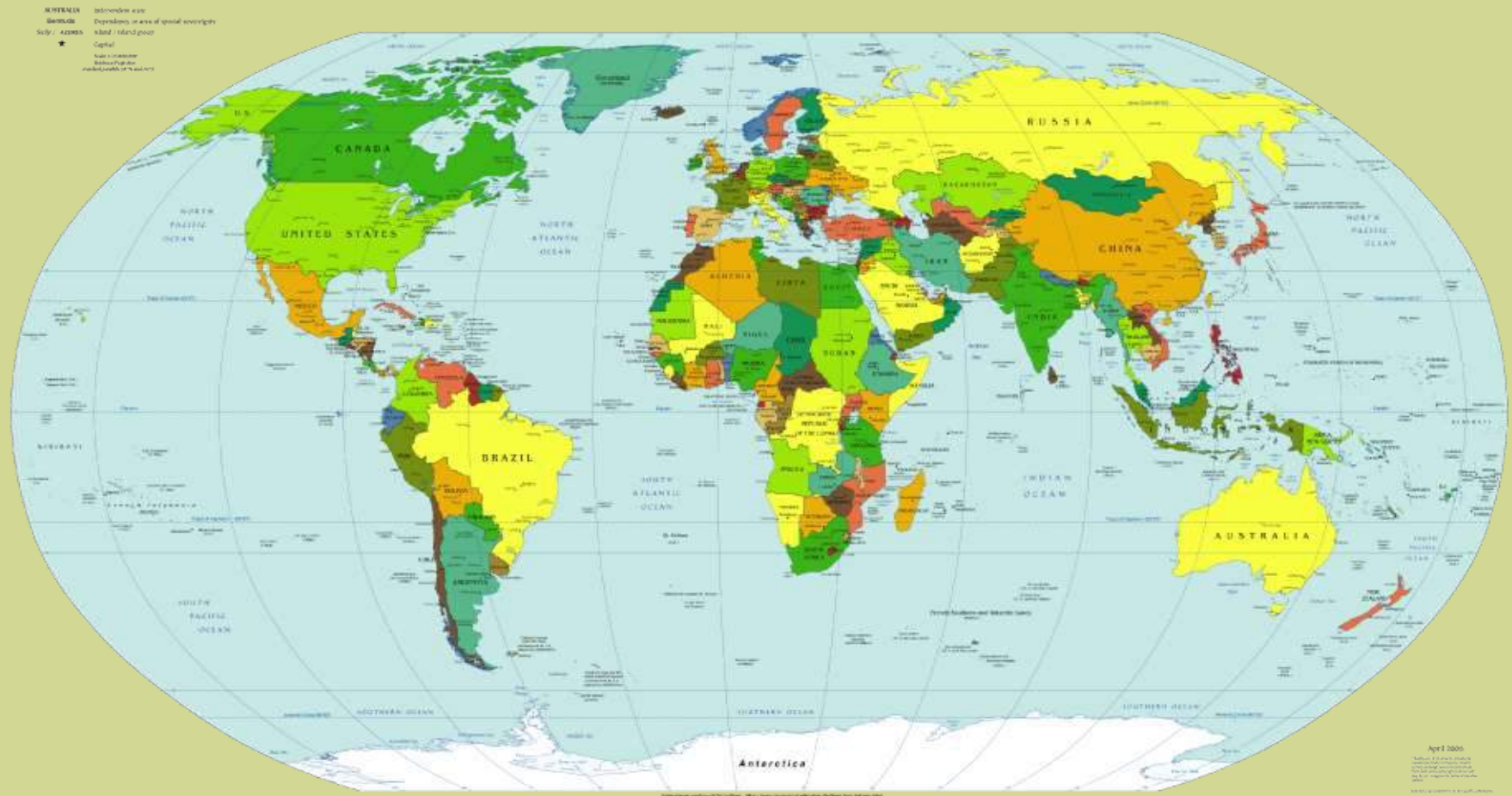
Low Desert Gardening

Things low desert gardeners have to consider:

- Two growing seasons,
- Weather,
- Critters (gophers, desert rats),
- Soil supplements (compost, mulch, cow manure, chicken manure & everyone's own secret soil supplement formula).

Vegetable gardening in AZ is not like the rest of the World !!

Political Map of the World, April 2006



The Phoenix Area is in USDA Climate Zone 9 Classed as Low Desert



We have 2 Planting Seasons

□ SPRING



FALL



Thus, this divides the types of vegetables we can grow into roughly 2 groups :-

- Fall (cool season) – typically leafy or root plants
- Spring (warm season) – typically fruiting plants



The best varieties to grow in the low desert are –

Quick maturing - have the shortest period from sowing/planting to harvest.

For cool season crops, this allows a succession of plantings to stretch out your harvest.

For warm season crops, this allows them to mature before the wicked summer heat hits.



Thus, in the low desert, you can grow and harvest something fresh from the garden every month !



Resources

- Website -
<https://www.scottsdalecommunitygarden.com/>
- <http://www.maricopamastergardeners.org>

- Seed Companies
- MG Press

- Nurseries

Final Thoughts

Definition of a Garden :

- One of a vast number of free outdoor restaurants operated by charity-minded amateurs in an effort to provide healthful, balanced meals for insects, birds and mammals

I am still devoted to the garden.... Although I am an old man, I am but a young gardener

(Thomas Jefferson)

Garden Wisdom



"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; industry and thrift; above all, entire trust."

Gertrude Jekyll
1843-1932