The Community Garden: Addressing Food Security & Much More!

Linda I. Teener
Kansas State University

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THE COMMUNITY GARDEN: ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY & MUCH MORE!

Linda Teener
UFM Community Learning Center
Community gardening has been around for many years.

It became popular in the 1960's as a way to maintain green space in towns while also supplementing gardener food budgets.

The last 8-10 years has seen a resurgence of interest in Community Gardens.

Interest in growing food, but other benefits as well.
The Manhattan Community Garden began in 1974 and is the oldest community garden in Kansas, coordinated by UFM Community Learning Center.

- Utilized Urban Renewal Land
- Created Green Space
- Provided space for growing food
- Originally 60 plots on 2 acres.
Currently the Community Garden has two locations with a total of 280 plots.

- 124 plots at 9th and Riley Lane on City land
- 156 plots at 1435 Collins Lane with room for expansion as needed. This land is leased from
Last year, 185 families with diverse ages and backgrounds were served by the Manhattan Community Garden.

KSU students, Faculty/Staff Fort Riley and many from the Community participate.

Fun to see the variety of gardening styles and the kinds of crops grown

New gardeners may rent one plot with an average size of 625 sq. ft.

Returning gardeners may rent a maximum of three plots, with an average size of 1,875 sq. ft.
Renting a Plot at The Manhattan Community Garden

- New gardeners may sign up beginning in January each year. Returning gardeners begin signing up in the fall.
- Plot rent is determined by the size of the garden plot.
- The full rate is 8 cents per square foot.
- Those on low incomes are given a reduced rate of 3 cents per square foot.
Families use the Community Garden for many reasons:

- Provides space to grow nutritious, home-grown foods
- Builds community & social interaction
- Health Benefits

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FAMILIES USE THE COMMUNITY GARDEN TO CUT FOOD COSTS

More cost-effective than buying produce

Gardeners can grow what they eat most.

Just buy the less cost effective produce.
Gardening provides low cost fresh produce

- For the average $100 investment in plot rental, seed and plants, the return from one plot can be somewhere between $600 and $800 in produce.

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At the Community Garden you can grow what you like, food, flowers, herbs, all...

Home grown produce is fresher and has more flavor

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Community Gardens Provide Space

Provide sunny space, good soil not always found at home.

The Community Garden provides amenities harder to get at home:

- Some tools
- Compost
- Mulch
- Water
- Advice
  
  all included in plot rental
COMMUNITY GARDENS: MUCH MORE

Positive Physical and Mental Health Benefits

Opportunities for Social Interaction
COMMUNITY GARDENS PROVIDE PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

The Physical Benefits of Gardening

- WEIGHT LOSS
- BLOOD CIRCULATION
- FLEXIBILITY
- REDUCED BONE LOSS
- STRONGER IMMUNE SYSTEM
- VITAMIN D
- STRENGTH
- IMPROVED COORDINATION

Photo from “Gardening: The Wonderdrug” by Jane Gates

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Community Gardens provide mental health benefits:

- Contributes to overall well being
- Reduces Stress
- Mycobacterium Vaccae, found in the soil, may help reduce depression
- Improves self esteem and a sense of accomplishment
LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Basic Gardening Classes
Classes on Equipment Use
Cooking Classes

Growing Specialty Crops
Forming Compost Piles

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MENTORING PROGRAM

- An opportunity for new and experienced gardeners to share knowledge & experience
- Learn from each other
- Improves Success and Self Esteem

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Some plots are used to grow produce for the local food bank. Individual Gardeners often donate excess produce.
Mentoring the Future

Teaching the next generation about food security and sustainability.

Gardening offers chances for intergenerational learning.
CREATING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Contact UFM Community Learning Center to learn more about the Manhattan Community Garden
- We can provide resources for starting a community garden
- [www.tryufm.org](http://www.tryufm.org)
- 785-539-8763 info@tryufm.org

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