

Community Garden Exchange

An e-digest hosted by Cultivate Abundance to inform and inspire community gardeners

Issue 1 | June 2019

Welcome to Community Garden Exchange!

Rick Burnette, Editor



The mission of Community Garden Exchange is to facilitate a network of community gardeners engaged in sharing information and inspiration for the benefit of our community-based stakeholders.

You are receiving this e-digest either because you subscribed, or we thought this was a publication that you might be interested in. If not, please feel free to unsubscribe at the bottom of the page.

This effort stems from a sense that many of us who are involved with community gardening might appreciate even more community; one of mutual support. We hope that Community Garden Exchange can be part of such effort.

In terms of such community, who do we hope to engage?

First, we should consider a definition of community gardens. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines community gardens as, "... collaborative projects on shared open spaces where participants share in the maintenance and products of the garden, including healthful and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables."

I'm sure each of us can easily conjure up an image of such a CDC-defined garden. It's probably a spacious area subdivided into an array of rectangular plots with convenient water spigots nearby. Some of us work in such places.

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The Conetoe Family Life Center and Garden Miracle

By Anna Anderson



Deep in the southeast corner of Edgecombe county, North Carolina, sits the community of Conetoe (pronounced kuh-knee-tuh, with the emphasis on the knee), often mispronounced, even among native eastern North Carolinians. The vitality of this little town, once a thriving farming community with some industry, has nearly dried up. Conetoe has a small post office, a Methodist and a Baptist church, railroad tracks that run through the heart of town, and a tiny "convenience" store that has opened and closed at least three times in the last two years. No gas is available here, no groceries are available here, no medical care is available here, no amenities of any kind are available here.

But hope is here. Hope is here in the form of the Conetoe Family Life Center and garden. Founded in 2007 by Rev. Richard Joyner, the pastor of the Conetoe Missionary Baptist Church, the garden has grown to over 20 acres of fruits and vegetables. Reverend Joyner, after officiating over 30 funerals in his first year of ministry at the church, observed that people were dying of preventable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. These were diseases that healthier eating could have prevented or may have been helpful in treating.

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Volunteers in the field



Potato harvest



Rev. Richard Joyner



"I wonder if communities of mutual support should be the foundational goal, and if growing food is the outcome."

Why is it Hard to Find and Keep Volunteers?

By Mark Buhlig

When I first began to grow food, I did not expect to join a movement. I wanted to grow food because it was what my grandparents did, and I loved them. Some of my earliest memories were of spending time with my grandma and grandpa. I loved working beside them in their garden, in their orchard, and on their farm. My first garden, the first garden that I planted on my own, was a small portion of a five-acre lot my parents had purchased. We had recently moved from a suburb to this land, where my dad was building a new house.

Not long before, the ground had been part of a large farm. There was an old windmill and a well near the road, and I put the garden near the well. That first garden was a success. I was only twelve or thirteen at the time, and there is much about it that I have forgotten in the forty some years since, but I do remember I had a huge crop of watermelons.

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Tell Us Your Secrets - An Interview with Roz Barminski

CGE: Tell us where you're from and a little about your background.

Roz Barminski: I grew up in Montrose Colorado. My parents made sure to turn me into a mountain woman



with constant backpacking, mountain biking, and rafting trips. Being outside all the time, it's a wonder I did not fall in love with agriculture before college, but it was not until a global food security class at Colorado State University that I finally realized how applicable agriculture is to every single person in this world.

This realization led me to declare International Soil and Crop Science, as well as Spanish, at Colorado State University. During my studies, I discovered a non-profit organization in Fort Myers, Florida called ECHO (www.echonet.org). The mission statement of ECHO, "following Jesus by reducing hunger and improving lives

worldwide through partnerships that equip people with agricultural resources and skills" instilled awe in me that the pursuit of agriculture could be a way to follow Christ.

Five years later, God was so good to perfectly lead me into an internship at ECHO as the community garden intern. It was through my ECHO internship that I met Hope Clubhouse, a community of support for adults with a mental illness in Fort Myers, Florida. With my advisor at ECHO, Brad Ward, we helped Hope Clubhouse map and brainstorm plans to turn their parking lot into a garden. A man who always encouraged me to "dream big" despite my fears, Brad dreamed big for me and spoke, "Roz, you could work at Hope Clubhouse and start the garden program there!" With no training in the mental health field, I quickly dismissed this. But when Christ living in us quietly whispers His desires for our lives, those quick dismissals become hard to ignore. One month later, the director of Hope Clubhouse, James Wineinger, asked me if I would be interested in a job as the garden coordinator after my ECHO internship. It has now been three years that I have been blessed to be at Hope Clubhouse.

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Food for Thought: A selection of current articles for community gardeners

['I wanted to do more for people than just pray': Pastor blends faith, farms to end food insecurity in black churches](#)

WTOP (February 4, 2019): Several years ago, Rev. Heber Brown III decided he needed to do more than pray. The now 38-year-old pastor at Pleasant Hope Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland, noticed more members of his congregation were suffering from diet-related illnesses. Turning to seeds, in addition to scripture, Brown started a garden on a 1,500-square-foot plot of land in front of the church. Today, that garden grows everything from summer squash to kale, and yields 1,100 pounds of produce — all to feed the community that meets weekly to worship.

[Urban Agriculture: What U.S. Cities Can Learn from Cuba](#)

U.S. News & World Report (February 13, 2019): Miguel Altieri, professor of Agroecology at the University of California, Berkeley, examines urban agriculture in Cuba where over 300,000 urban farms and gardens produce about 50 percent of the island's fresh produce supply, along with 39,000 tons of meat and 216 million eggs. Most Cuban urban farmers reach yields of **44 pounds (20 kilograms) per square meter per year**.

[Urban farms could be incredibly efficient—but aren't yet](#)

Ars Technica (December 27, 2018): In some ways, hyper-local food is a counterculture movement, focused on growing herbs and vegetables in the same dense urban environments where they will be eaten. It trades the huge efficiencies of modern agriculture for large savings in transportation and storage costs. But is urban farming environmentally friendly? According to researchers at Australia's University of New England, the answer is complex. Whereas urban agriculture is far more productive than conventional farming regarding land use, it is less so with labor and inputs such as fertilizer and municipal water. The researchers note that the materials issue could be

solved with local resources, and labor inefficiency may be a product of the fact that most urban farmers are hobbyists and are doing it for fun.

[Exposure to Glyphosate-Based Herbicides and Risk for Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma: A Meta-Analysis and Supporting Evidence](#)

ScienceDirect (February 10, 2019): As glyphosate is the most widely used broad-spectrum systemic herbicide in the world, L. Zhang, et al., investigated whether there is an association between high cumulative exposures to GBHs and increased risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) in humans. In accordance with evidence from experimental animal and mechanistic studies, their meta-analysis of human epidemiological studies suggests a compelling link between exposures to GBHs and increased risk for NHL.

[How A Seed Bank Helps Preserve Cherokee Culture Through Traditional Foods](#)

NPR (April 2, 2019): The Cherokee Nation's seed bank provides free seeds for any Cherokee; although limited to two varieties per recipients this year because demand is so high. Last year, the bank sent 4,905 packages of seeds to citizens of federally recognized Cherokee tribes. This year, they will distribute a record 10,000 seed packets. The bank offers 24 varieties of seeds, including corn, black and brown turkey gizzard beans, basket and jewel gourds, native tobacco, and a variety of native plants like sunchoke, trumpet vine and American basket flowers.

Something to share?

We are certain that many of you have tips, lessons, and cautionary tales that would benefit other community gardeners. If you have something to contribute, please follow this link for [submission guidelines](#).

We look forward to hearing from you!

Community Garden Exchange

hosted by



Rick Burnette, Editor

Rebecca Garofano, Co-Editor and Chief Reviewer

Ellen Burnette, Coordinator

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