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To:
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Subject: News from the Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture

[if you have difficulties reading this newsletter see our online version at www.kccua.org/urbangrown.htm]



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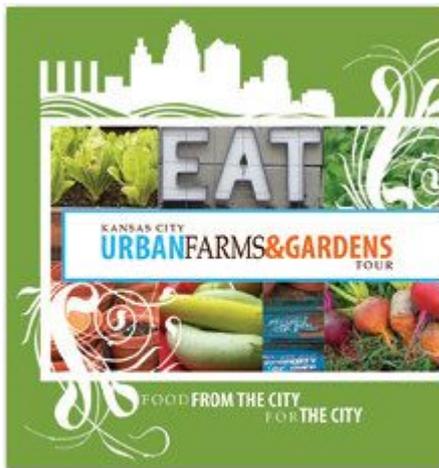
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THANK YOU!

Food from the City for the City: KC's Local Food Event of the Year Starts June 17

Across the region, farmers, gardeners, and residents from all walks join in celebrating urban food production.



Get complete event info & tickets at www.urbanfarmstourkc.com

By Janet Brown-Moss

How many times in recent months have you read or heard the words local and food in the same sentence? In the newspaper, on television, on the internet, during speeches? I can't remember so many mentions at any time before this year.

Perhaps you're asking yourself: Why is that? What's going on? Well, it's about our health, about the environment, about flavor and freshness, about the planet and all its people, about neighborhoods, quality of life, and about residents coming together to solve the problems they're faced with right where they live.

It's also about worms, greens, body butter, granola, bath fizzies, farm animals, homesteading, edible cities, raw food and eating out local. It's all connected in Kansas City's growing food web.

Still unsure? Okay, let's get down with it and make the picture crystal clear.

Worms are eating compost and turning it into rich, nourishing earth which then grows greens and flowers, some of which we eat and some of which make their way into scented body butter and bath fizzies. Some hardworking urban homesteaders even harvest their own grains, which can make yummy, healthy granola to go with milk from small goats and eggs from city chickens. Then, after a long day's work, why not treat yourself to a meal at one of Kansas City's restaurants whose menus include locally sourced ingredients?

To me, all this feels like an urban and local food revolution and we're celebrating it big across Kansas City from June 17 to June 28. We're calling it *Food from the City for the City* and its ten days of events, happenings and classes, culminating on "Tour Day" (Sunday, June 28) when more than two dozen farms throughout the metro area will be opening their doors to you, the public.

So where to begin sorting through all the events and sites? First, go to www.urbanfarmstourkc.com for the latest event and tour information. Read about what's happening each day, start mapping your route for Tour Day and don't forget to

contribute your thoughts and related event information to our blog.

Food from the City for the City officially kicks off June 18 with a gathering of Kansas City's leading practitioners and visionaries to talk about the area's urban food production and how it is changing city neighborhoods and family diets. Join us at the Downtown KCMO Public Library at 6PM for an inspiring conversation preceded by a reception featuring local food and wine.

A couple days later, head over to the Ruiz Branch Library, KCMO, and learn about "Farm Animals in the City", a topic that got quite some press recently here in Kansas City. Then check out the just-released documentary *Mad City Chickens* to be screened on June 23 at All Souls Unitarian Universalists Church. It is a sometimes wacky, sometimes serious look at the people who keep chickens in their urban backyards.

If you're new to urban agriculture and just want to know how and where to find locally produced foods, check out the How to eat local in KC workshop held at libraries in Olathe and KCMO.

Or perhaps you want to get your family together to grow food in the yard or at a local community garden; maybe you're a teacher wishing to learn how to start a school garden; or perhaps you're an experienced hobby gardener who is interested in scaling up, in becoming an urban farmer and selling produce to your neighbors? Check out the all [listings](#) and find an event that's right for you.

Finally, if you're an architect, engineer or city planner, looking for reasons and ways to design tomorrow's sustainable cities with urban agriculture in mind, Building Edible Cities on June 24 will get you there.

Then, on Tour Day (June 28), I will be having me some fun visiting as many of the 28 farms and gardens I can squeeze in between 10AM and 5PM. What a great opportunity to learn about and enjoy urban agriculture, live music, storytelling, cooking demos and much much more. Some children whose parents can't make the tour will be with me that day, enjoying a virtual scavenger hunt at several participating farms.

Sure, this June I could try to not pay attention to urban and local food but it would be pretty hard. Instead, I suggest you pay a lot of attention and make it a priority for you and your family; have fun and learn at all the venues around town and help make *Food from the City for the City* a huge success.

Remember, for event details and tickets for Tour Day, go to www.urbanfarmstourkc.com or pick up a booklet at a farmers market or library nearby.

Janet Brown Moss is coordinator of the 2009 Food from the City for the City Urban Farms and Gardens Tour. Reach her at janetbridgeworks@sbcglobal.net.



Customize Your Farm & Gardens Tour With Bing.com

Online mapping tool makes charting a route easy and fun!

By Dave Lawrence

For your convenience, we've set up a collection of map points at the new Bing.com. Click [here](#) to view the map points along with pictures and descriptions of each participating farm or garden as well as details on what to expect at each site on Sunday, June 28 (Tour Day). You can use the information in deciding which farms and gardens to visit (time won't allow to see them all). If you need assistance with coordinating or printing your customized tour route or driving directions, we will try to provide you with direct, personalized help. For more info on using our mapping tool go to the official *Food from the City for the City* website at www.urbanfarmstourkc.com and click on "Interactive Map of Tour" (check several times as we'll be uploading further directions soon). For assistance contact me at maphelp@kcfoodcircle.org. I'll do my best to help as many of you as possible to get the most out of the tour.

from the City for the City website at www.urbanfarmstourkc.com and click on "Interactive Map of Tour" (check several times as we'll be uploading further directions soon). For assistance contact me at maphelp@kcfoodcircle.org. I'll do my best to help as many of you as possible to get the most out of the tour.

Many many thanks to Dave Lawrence for his generous help in setting up the online mapping tool.

"You Can't Eat Gold"

Urban farms tour volunteer chooses to invest in food, relationships during economic crisis.

Emily Akins is an editorial director at Hallmark, Inc. by day and an avid locavore by night. She is a member of Fair Share Farm in Kearney, MO. She is on the coordinating committee of the Kansas City Food Circle, works with the Kansas City CSA Coalition and is a first-time volunteer with KCCUA. She blogs about food and more at www.everythingbeginswithane.blogspot.com.

By Emily Akins



Farm tour volunteer and devoted locavore Emily Akins.

There are only a few weeks left until all the efforts of KCCUA staff and volunteers culminate in the 2009 Urban Farms and Gardens Tour, aka *Food from the City for the City*. Our committees have been meeting and planning since the cold, long evenings of December. But my path here started even before then.

Last September I went to Salina, KS, to attend the Land Institute's Prairie Festival. Barbara Kingsolver and Steven Hopp--authors of *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*--were guest speakers. I had just finished reading their book over the summer and had been transformed. Actually, that was not the very beginning either. In truth, the transformation began in 2005 when my decision to join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) planted the first locavore seed in me. The cycle has long since taken hold and I can't imagine my culinary world without my weekly share of genuinely fresh vegetables, my trips to the farmers markets to get the best of each season, and, now, my preserved harvest during the winter.

After I read Kingsolver and Hopp last year, my interests grew even stronger, and when I was presented with the opportunity to help plan the 2009 Urban Farms and Gardens Tour, I gladly took the chance. I am impressed with KCCUA's not-just-local-but-urban approach that brings the vital process of growing sustenance right into our own neighborhoods. I believe it is significant to have farming in the foreground since food is an everyday element in our lives. Urban agriculture and the local food movement make farms more visible so that perhaps some day growing will be as familiar as groceries. Even as I love the beautiful land of the more rural farm of our CSA, I also love knowing that I can happen upon an urban farm on my way to an art gallery during First Fridays; I love that more farmers are creating productive urban spaces and making the city limits a lot less limiting. This broad range of farms makes for a rich and valuable agricultural portfolio right here in Kansas City.

But back to Barbara Kingsolver's talk in the big red barn at the Prairie Festival: Kingsolver told us that a friend of hers had asked if, given the economic crisis, we all should be investing in gold or something. Kingsolver's response was to tell her friend that "you can't eat gold." The essentials should be our focus. "Food," she told us, "is the one consumer choice we have to keep making." Food is fundamental and isn't to be overlooked, even--and especially--at times like these.

In the process of getting to know my food and where it comes from, I've begun to see how critical it really is. Yesterday at work I was eating a salad I'd brought from home. I came across a surprise sprig of thyme and in my excitement hollered to my cubicle neighbors: "Hey! There's thyme in my salad!" One colleague seemed surprised and asked incredulously if I'd gotten my salad in the cafeteria; "No," I told her, "it came from the farmers market." But beyond that it came from Lew, Steve, Sherri, Brooke and Dan and I surprised even myself when I found that I was actually able to point out which parts of my salad came from which farmer. This is how urban agriculture and local food build community. It is essential in more ways than one--it is food, yes, but so much more.

Being a locavore has taught me about new vegetables and recipes and about the nutritional value of food. Being in a CSA has enabled me to see relationships that surround food. Being a volunteer for KCCUA has given me the opportunity to learn more about the impressive effort that goes into producing good food, urban food. And I know that the effort it takes to grow food goes a long way to grow communities and relationships, too. Growing food in sustainable, reliable ways is an incredible investment to which I am pleased to be able to contribute.

Our thanks to Emily and ALL the wonderful volunteers working on Food from the City for the City. Reach Emily at emilyjakins@gmail.com.

Intensive and Intelligent: Urban Agriculture in Ogawa-Machi, Japan

Potatoes and bunching onions are harvested from tiny plots between buildings, parking lots and roads.

By Katherine Kelly



Urban agriculture in Ogawa-Machi, Japan

I just returned from a trip to Japan with nine other farmers, food activists and academics as part of a Japan-Kansas exchange looking at organic agriculture and food movements. The goal of the exchange is to share strategies for building a local organic food movement here and there.

We spent a week in the Saitama prefecture, northwest of Tokyo, visiting organic and urban farms and food businesses; in June, a group of ten Japanese visitors will come to Kansas, touring Lawrence area farms and coming into Kansas City for the Urban Farms & Gardens Tour.

During the planning phase of the trip, I wondered if there would be enough urban agriculture for my interests, since the descriptions of the farms on our itinerary seemed mostly rural. On the first day though, as we left the Tokyo airport by train, I realized that it was likely that all of the agriculture we were going to see fit my definition of urban. (If you can see homes and businesses while standing in your field, you are probably an urban farmer.)

Looking out the train window, I saw that every bit of land that wasn't a mountain and that wasn't developed was planted to vegetable and grain crops. Rice paddies, wheat fields, and vegetable gardens and farms lined the railroad tracks and could be seen interwoven with houses, apartment buildings, and businesses. The fields were tiny--perhaps a quarter to half an acre, sometimes there were multiple fields abutting each other, vegetables next to rice paddies next to wheat fields next to the mountains.

The majority of our time was spent in Ogawa-Machi, a town of 30,000 which felt more like an extension of Tokyo than the small rural town I had expected. As we walked around the streets, I took picture after picture of urban agriculture until I realized that what I had seen along the train tracks held true here, too. At houses with no lawn (most of the city was composed of what we would call townhomes) there would be pots of flowers or vegetables or herbs. It wasn't unusual to see the tiniest bit of ground bordering a parking lot planted to potatoes, or the little triangles of land formed by streets joining at an angle covered in bunching onions. Land between apartment buildings had several hundred square feet of potatoes and multiple long rows of onions and cabbages and garlic chives as well as other vegetables. At the edges of town, butting up against the mountains, you could see small trucks parked alongside fields, tractors working in the rice paddies and individuals and families out working in their plots. It was hard to tell what were commercial plots and what were home gardens; everything was managed so intensively and so intelligently.

For part of the trip, we had home-stays at organic farms. I was privileged to stay at the Frostpia Farm, an organic vegetable, rice, soybean, and wheat farm. It was described as the grandparent of organic agriculture in that area; for over 38 years, they have trained hundreds of apprentices and helped give birth to some 30 other farms. Their vegetable production was at the scale of KCCUAs Community Farm, with perhaps 2 plus acres under cultivation. In addition, they kept another three to four acres in rice, wheat, and soybeans. Mountains enclosed the farm on two sides, the other two sides butted up against small homes and city streets. Deliveries of vegetables to buyers were quick, taking as little as ten minutes from farm to grocery store and restaurant.

In the kitchens as well as on the streets, healthy vegetables were everywhere. Many small stores and restaurants carried produce; in one highly developed Tokyo neighborhood, we saw a "green grocer" driving around a neighborhood selling fresh fruits and vegetables to people directly from the truck. Each meal was dominated by vegetables; we guessed that most people eat their five-a-day before breakfast is even over. Even the prepared foods so widely available were composed primarily of vegetables.

Japan has one of the healthiest populations in the world, and you could see it in the bodies and faces of children, adults, and seniors alike. Women in Japan have the longest life expectancy in the world; girls born today are expected to live to 86 years of age; boys to 79 years. The obesity rate there is around 3% (here it is around 30%). The causes behind such good national health are complex, attributable in no small part to the fact that this is a nation of walkers and bikers; but healthy, plant-based eating and the powerful daily connection to vegetable production are clearly central to their healthier lifestyles.

The cities I saw offered me a vision of what food-productive urban spaces might look like. The streets seemed friendlier and safer because of the presence of so much green space; the modest and patient work of planting and maintaining gardens somehow grounded the intense pace of living we saw. It occurred to me that if natural or man-made disaster should strike, their cities would be much better able to feed themselves; they have the know-how, and the basic infrastructure. In the face of intense development and population pressure in their cities, the Japanese have generally maintained a commitment to small scale agriculture and food production as a social and an economic good. The Ministry of Agriculture recently re-affirmed its commitment to greater food self-sufficiency, and is backing that commitment up with

substantial financial and human resources.

Reach Katherine at katherine@kccua.org.

Raze a Parking Lot and Put up a Paradise

Philadelphia urban farm has turned brownfield into greenfield by placing raised beds on top of concrete slab.

By Mary Seton Corboy

(This is part one of a two-part series; in part two Mary will discuss hydroponic production at Greensgrow)

In March 1998 Tom Sereduk and I began our quest to open an urban farm in Philadelphia, PA. Many people thought we were crazy and few thought we would succeed. We had, quite frankly, more dreams than resources, more ideas than reality. Today Greensgrow Farms continues. Seventeen employees work at the 1-acre farm, a former EPA Super Fund site. A vibrant nursery specializing in plants for urban growers and heirloom vegetable starters and a 300-share CSA and Farm Stand share space with composting toilets, green roofs, vermicomposting, a biodiesel processor that turns 150 gallons of grease into fuel a week, honey bees and hydroponics systems. Hard work, dedication, tears and blisters, sunscreen and thinking combined with a keep it simple stupid strategy turned an abandoned galvanizing plant into our farm.



One of two concrete-encased raised beds built on top of concrete pavement at Greensgrow in Philadelphia.

In the 2001 growing season Greensgrow undertook a project to design an effective raised bed for use in urban agriculture. Greensgrow had attempted to use a raised bed (15' wide x 96' long x 14" deep, built from used railroad ties) at the farm the previous year, but found that it was unsuccessful. After some investigation, two factors that had kept the bed from being productive became clear: siting of the bed and soil quality. In this article I will address the siting issue as soil remediation is an issue in and of itself.

The original bed had been built on a spot that was underlain by a concrete slab, part of the original industrial development at the site. This impermeable concrete slab (on which we sited the structure in the first place because we knew the thick concrete would act as a barrier to any residual contamination) had apparently kept the bed from draining adequately. This could easily be seen by digging into the soil (imported) of the bed; the year 2000 had been a very wet growing season, and it was not

unusual to find the soil completely saturated 4-6 inches beneath the surface. These conditions made it impossible for the soils to aerate properly. Small gaps in the railroad ties were not enough to insure drainage. Hence, a crop of potatoes that was planted in the spring of 2000 rotted in the soil for the most part, before ever sprouting.

To address the problem of providing the bed adequate drainage, we decided to cut one-foot wide ditches, sub-dividing the soil into individual beds, each three feet wide. Then we filled each of the ditches with crushed rock. Crushed rock is a generic term for what is more properly known as recycled concrete. Concrete and other stone that is removed from demolition sites is often broken up, washed, and then sorted by size for resale for other construction uses. The crushed rock that we used for this project was classified as 2" - 4", meaning that this was the general size range of the pieces we received. It was our idea that having the crushed rock up against the soil profile would allow water that had entered the soil from precipitation to drain horizontally into the drainage ditches. We had taken the extra precaution of burying 3 PVC drain pipe in the crushed rock (like a French drain) to carry away from the bed any extra water that would accumulate in the bottom of the ditch. As an added benefit, it also seemed that the porous rock would allow for better aeration of the soil profile, increasing available soil oxygen in the lower root zone of the bed.

To minimize the labor requirements for the cultivation of the bed, a simple irrigation system utilizing T-tape type irrigation hose was anchored onto the top of the beds, and black woven polypropylene ground cloth (also known as weed barrier or geo-textile) was then laid over the beds as mulching to deter the growth of weeds. The sheets of the woven weed barrier were anchored with quick ties to pieces of pipe which rest on top of the drainage ditches. Anchoring the weed barrier to the pipes makes it easier to move the barrier out of the way if we want to direct seed rows of crops or till the soil. For transplanted crops, we burned holes into the weed barrier at 4 intervals with a small propylene torch. The use of the torch sealed the edges of the hole and prevented fraying of the material.

Crops were initially started in our nursery or seeded straight into the soil. The first crop to go in was spinach, followed by beets and chard. Following this harvest, the mulch was removed, the earth tilled, then the covering was reattached. Potatoes were then planted. Following the harvest of the potatoes in late summer, spinach, mache and arugula were planted. As of early December, (due to an unusually warm fall) we were still cutting these crops for sale to our

customers.

The original raised bed has since been joined by two others built with the same general properties and specifications (15' x 96' x 16") but made from poured concrete (12" thick) rather than railroad ties. Compared to using wood, this is a more expensive design: wood for the original bed was \$500.00, pouring concrete foundations using borrowed forms was \$1200.00 and an entire summer of backbreaking labor which could have been minimized had we had any idea what we were doing. However, the concrete beds will last longer, allowed us to plant the upright posts for a hoophouse directly into the beds while the concrete was curing and eliminated the creosote issue associated with railroad ties. Drainage tubes in addition to the French drains were run through the concrete sides so the water could escape every eight feet. The original bed has been slightly modified over the years by the addition of a hoophouse for year round growing. Our hoophouses are made from used steel bent and drilled at a waterfront yard in Wilmington, DE, where they recycle salvaged or #2 pipe. They cost approximately \$900 for hoops, purlins, cross ties, etc. And yes, the soil issue mentioned above has been addressed as well. All beds are now used for successful vegetable production of a variety of crops; and having three beds allows us to rotate the crops each season.

Editor's Note: Please remember that growing food on urban sites may expose you and others to hazardous substances. Seek advice from qualified individuals before designing urban agriculture sites in such environments.

You can reach Mary Seton Corboy at mary@greensgrow.org. Visit the farm website at www.greensgrow.org.

Field Notes from the Kansas City Community Farm



Doing what it can under the circumstance: Broccoli heading up prematurely.

By Alicia Ellingsworth

Sometime in early March it was sunny and warm. The crew carried the cold season crops from the greenhouses protection out to the cold frames in preparation for field planting. A few days later we transplanted four rows of cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower (aka Big Brass) into the field. Then it got cold. Then it got colder. All hands raced against the arctic front spreading layers of fabric row cover, hoops and even plastic row cover to protect the tiny seedlings. Thousands of transplants were carried back into the greenhouse. It snowed a couple of times. Six inches one of those times. Then April came and brought more showers.

We worried, inspected and crossed our fingers. We asked advice from many and everyone said this years Big Brass crop wasnt gonna do nothing.

Maybe theyre right about the cauliflower. Its not doing much. But the cabbage has bounced back and heads are forming. Last week, I laughed out-loud as I harvested broccoli. I laughed that while we fretted and frowned, the broccoli just got busy. It put on buds. Now back in April that really concerned us. The plants were still very small-too small to be budding. But like bees and bears, you never can tell with broccoli. The heads arent the largest weve seen, but not the smallest either. Incidentally, the most impressive plants Ive grown never produced a head. In spite of us all, the broccoli harvest has been decent. The plants did what they could under the circumstances. Im grateful.

Farming is hard work and challenges ones faith. Come autumn all seems well, but this time of year its a constant juggling of chores, racing the rain clouds and sometimes the sun, outsmarting the flea beetles and cursing the slugs. The weather this year has been like the weather in all past years. Unpredictable. Too wet and soon-to-be too dry. The lessons to learn are patience, perseverance, planning and being open to change of well laid plans. Given all that, we learn each day that little of the outcome is up to us. The plants do what they can under the circumstances. Im always amazed.

So, now as we look to June, we see the fields are shaping up pretty well. Being a farmer, I still wonder what if the tomatoes never ripen and the potatoes dont form tubers? This question stays with me and I search for peace. A simply beautiful thought came today. Could we give up pride, competition and individualism? If need be, we feed each other. We are fortunate in this city to have a close community of farmers and foodies. Maybe it wont be necessary this season, but I think we would do what we could under the circumstances. For this, for sunshine and for rain, I stand at the edge of the field grateful. And amazed.

You can reach Alicia at alicia@kccua.org.

Urban Agriculture Draws Crowds at Annual Planners' Conference

City farming said to promote resilience, build "belonging capital"

Marcia Caton Campbell is the Milwaukee Program Director of the Center for Resilient Cities. Prior to joining the Center in

2006, she was an assistant professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison), where she taught community food systems planning. Marcia is a member of Growing Powers board of directors and of the Milwaukee Food Council. She is also an associate of MetroAg: Alliance for Urban Agriculture and serves on the American Planning Association's (APA) Food Planning Steering Committee. Marcia holds two degrees in city and regional planning and has been a member of APA for over 20 years. She's working on persuading her husband to put raised beds in the front yard of their small city lot--it's the only place in the yard with full sun.

By Marcia Caton Campbell, PhD

Urban agriculture was hotter than a habanero pepper at the recent national conference of the American Planning Association (APA). For five days in late April, 4,500 APA members--urban and regional planners, planning commissioners, and student (future) planners--convened in Minneapolis for the organization's 101st annual conference, themed Headwaters to the Delta.

The conference featured 11 sessions and/or workshops related to urban and peri-urban agriculture, ranging from zoning for healthy food to public markets and street vendors and agricultural conservation easements. *MetroAg: Alliance for Urban Agriculture* (www.metroagalliance.org) offered a discussion session led by four MetroAg Associates: Joseph Nasr (Toronto), Ghaliya Chahine (Montreal), Jennifer Blecha (Minneapolis), and myself. It was attended by some fifty participants--among them practicing planners, academic researchers, student planners, and local government officials--who talked over a variety of issues pertaining to urban agriculture such as brownfield cleanup & reuse, chicken and bee ordinances and the inclusion of urban agriculture in the new LEED-ND standards put out by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The next morning, more than 250 planners in a standing-room only crowd attended a presentation on the future of urban agriculture by Growing Power CEO and 2008 MacArthur Foundation Fellow Will Allen, Wayne Roberts (Toronto Food Policy Council), and Jerry Kaufman, Professor Emeritus of Urban & Regional Planning (UW-Madison). Using dozens of photographs, Will Allen illustrated the dramatic growth of Growing Power over the organization's history. Growing Power now employs over 30 staff in Milwaukee and Chicago and is developing regional training centers to extend the organization's reach in providing good, healthy food to everyone.

Noting his city's motto, You belong here!, Wayne Roberts emphasized the importance of community gardening, farmers markets, and urban agriculture in building social capital in Toronto. Roberts, author of *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food*, coined a new term belonging capital to describe the sense of place, cross-cultural interaction, and community that urban agriculture can provide for recent immigrants as well as longtime residents of a place. In his remarks, Jerry Kaufman also reflected upon and honored the life and work of Jac Smit, founder of The Urban Agriculture Network, who was unable to attend the conference because of ill health.

An even larger audience turned out the next night for Farmers, Gardeners, and Planners: A New Urban Strategy for Health and Wealth. This special event was hosted by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) at the Minneapolis Urban League. Allen, Roberts, and Kaufman were joined by Jim Harkness (IATP's President) and Stella Whitney-West (CEO, NorthPoint Health and Wellness, and Tri-Chair, Homegrown Minneapolis). Another crowd of 165 folks joined a panel discussion about the APAs *Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning: Transforming Food Environments, Facilitating Healthy Eating (PAS Report 554)* by Samina Raja, Branden Born, and Jessica Koslowski-Russell. The panel, on which I participated, fielded questions related to food policy, zoning, economic development, and urban design (designing foodscapes into cities). The report, which was on sale at the conference bookstore, had sold out by the time of the panel session, causing the cancellation of a planned book signing!

Jerry Kaufman, Professor Emeritus of Urban & Regional Planning at the UW-Madison, remarked with amazement on the growth in planners' interest in urban agriculture: "Five or six years ago," Kaufman said, "a food planning session at APA would have fielded an audience of about ten people, eight of whom were your friends. Now, planners have really caught on to the importance of food."

Growing food in cities and on the metropolitan fringe can help cities adapt and become more resilient in the face of social, economic, and environmental change, as well as address health disparities and food justice issues. Planners are beginning to understand this potential. Across the U.S., planners are seeking hard numbers related to the economic development potential of urban agriculture to help them respond to local officials' concerns about turning over vacant lots for community gardens and urban farms. Such data is not readily available, indicating that it is time for urban agriculture practitioners to partner with researchers to document their outputs--as a part of project evaluation and of community food assessments ranging from the regional to the neighborhood in scale. In quantifying these outputs, however, it is critical not to overlook urban agriculture's equally important community building and neighborhood stabilization benefits (Wayne Roberts's belonging capital). A long-term goal for urban agriculture proponents should be to help planners and decision makers reframe their current thinking from urban agriculture as a *temporary* land use to urban agriculture as a *permanent* land use, as they revise their cities' comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and other food-related policies.

Next year's APA Conference, to be held in New Orleans, will focus on the theme of resilience. Expect to see even more

food planning and urban agriculture topics on APAs conference schedule in 2010!

Editor's Note: Kansas City-based urban planners, architects and other urban design professionals are invited to attend a free lecture / panel discussion entitled Building Edible Cities: Urban Agriculture for Planning & Design Professionals on June 24, 2009. For details and to register download our [Edible Cities Flyer](#).

Reach Marcia by email at marcia@resilientcities.org.

St. Louis Urban Farm Returns to its Roots

Stretched between community building, teaching and growing food, urban farmers decide to change course and spend more time with their hands in the soil.

New Roots Urban Farm in North St. Louis, MO, is an attempt to re-design inner-city living through urban food production, income sharing, cooperative housing and community service. Over the years New Roots (no connection to the Kansas City-based New Roots for Refugees immigrant farming program), has become increasingly involved in community-supported agriculture (CSA), youth education, community organizing and developing sustainable agriculture models for urban spaces, such as a SARE-funded project on hydroponics & tilapia production. In this story, New Roots co-founder Molly Dupre describes how the group has changed course for 2009 and turned its attention back to its own needs and to those of its closest community. Our thanks to Molly Dupre and Trish Grim for contributing to Urban Grown.



New Roots Urban Farm, St. Louis: "Many hands make light work."

By Molly Dupre

There seems to be change afoot, and here at New Roots Urban Farm, we're no different. For those of you unfamiliar with our project, we are an eight-member, collectively run urban farm in St. Louis. For the past four years, we've run a CSA of about twenty members, participated in a garden training program for homeless folks, provided children's programs on food, ecology, and nutrition and attempted to improve the food security of our very food insecure neighborhood by selling produce at below market prices at a low income farmer's market we helped start. We are nestled in the Catholic Worker community in North St. Louis--a community with which

we share deep ties.

For 2009, we are making some changes in how we operate, such as discontinuing our CSA as well as the formal educational programs we started, and concentrating instead on providing food for ourselves and on being farmers before being teachers. While our changes are not primarily in reaction to the current economic crisis, they are an appropriate response.

We appreciated the connections we made through our CSA with different families across our city, and welcomed the revenue it generated. However, in the end we were watching too much of the food leave not only our neighborhood but even our own plates. While we were always able to feed ourselves well during the growing season, we were unable to set food aside for the winter and unable to share food with the community with which we feel so intimately connected. There was rarely enough produce left over to preserve, and when there was, it only augmented our winter meals, but did not provide a substantial part of them.

The farm collective also decided to stop all formal educational programming. We feel we've only had varying successes with that aspect of the urban farm. Some of us are educators and some of us are parents, so teaching comes quite naturally to many of us. However, as far as New Roots Urban Farm was concerned, more often than not, we wanted to grow crops, not teach.

More importantly, our educational programming had placed us in the position of having to find grant funding, like a nonprofit organization, which we are not. New Roots has always intended to function like a farm and a collective. Our members always felt like they wanted to spend more of their time with their hands in the earth, and not having to search for and develop funding opportunities. That being said, New Roots Urban Farm does have infrastructure to maintain which means we need to have some revenue to operate. Two of our members, therefore, have a partnership to grow for farmers markets to generate income. We've also taken on some contract growing for a local non-profit to bring in money. And some of us are relying more on off-farm employment to make ends meet.

So far the season has found us happily spending a lot more time on the farm, with a few new collective members and lots of children--some are children of our members, some of community members who drop in to work and visit. Our goals for this season mostly include taking care of our families, our friends, and ourselves. With a global economic and environmental crisis at hand, it seems like a good time to slow down, take stock, and pull up our bootstraps to do as

much for ourselves as we can. We're growing plenty for fresh eating, concentrating on some varieties specifically for canning, freezing and pickling, and experimenting with things that keep: dry beans, dent corn for cornmeal, and various potato and sweet potato varieties.

Farming is hard work, and we wholeheartedly advocate for that work to be shared. Increasingly, folks are being drawn to garden and to farm. But the family farm model that many aim for, is, in some ways, outdated. Family farms thrived when there were vibrant rural communities to support one another and to share the burden of large tasks. In the Midwest those communities have been declining for a long time. An important and underutilized alternative for those wishing to farm on a small scale is to form community farms and to work together. Working in a collective or in a partnership with one or two other people is a great way to maximize energy as well as yields. The old adage, "many hands make light work," rings true today and we hope it inspires you as much as it inspires us!

You can contact Molly Dupre at molly@newrootsurbanfarm.org.

Calendar of Events

Urban Agriculture and Horticultural Therapy--A Keynote Address. Thursday, June 4, 10:45am - 11:15am. KCCUA's Katherine Kelly addresses the 3rd Annual Horticulture Therapy Workshop in Wichita, KS. For more information, visit www.sedgwick.ksu.edu.

Urban Agriculture: Feeding the Movement. Friday, June 5. A daylong symposium focusing on the nexus between urban agriculture, food security, and job development. KCCUA's Katherine Kelly talks on a panel on "Funding for Urban Agriculture" (scheduled for 1pm). Chicago Botanic Garden. For more information, visit www.chicagobotanic.org.

Growing Growers Workshop - Post Harvest Handling. Monday, June 8, 4:30pm to 7:30pm. Lexington United Methodist Church, 1211 S. Highway 13, Lexington, MO. This workshop will include a presentation on how to keep your vegetables fresh, flavorful and safe after harvest. Following the presentation will be a tour of Fahrmeier Farms which includes two acres of Haygrove high tunnel production. For more information on this and other Growing Growers workshops visit <http://www.growinggrowers.org/Pages/workshop.htm> or email Laura at growers@ksu.edu. Cost for this workshop is \$15.00.

Heartland Harvest Garden: Public Grand Opening. Sunday, June 14. Celebrate the newest expansion of Powell Gardens featuring edible landscapes, authors' gardens, a vegetable quilt garden and much more. Ribbon cutting at 10am. For more information visit www.powellgardens.org or call 816-697-2600.

2009 Urban Farms and Gardens Tour "Food From the City for the City". June 17 - 28. Kansas City's Local Food Event of the Year. Complete information at www.urbanfarmstourkc.com.

Agriculture in the Classroom. Tuesday, July 14 and Wednesday, July 22. Teachers participating in Agriculture-in-the-Classroom trainings will visit KCCUA and learn about local, organic food production. For more information contact the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom at kfac@ksu.edu.

From Commodity to Community: Food Politics and Projects in the Heartland. Save the date for the Community Food Security Coalition's 13th Annual Conference. October 10-13, 2009, Des Moines, IA. Info at <http://communityfoodconference.org/>.

To subscribe or unsubscribe please send an email to info@kccua.org.

For editorial comments please contact *Urban Grown* editor Daniel Dermitzel at daniel@kccua.org.

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