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URBAN GROWN

The Newsletter of the Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture, April 2007

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Kansas Citians To Get A Rare Close Look at Urban Farms

Preparations are underway for day of farm education, local food, music and family fun.



On Sunday, June 24, between noon and 5:00pm, you're invited to visit up to twelve farms on a self-directed tour of urban and suburban farms in the KC Metro Area. Farmers will walk you around their farms, there'll be organized activities for kids and young people, we'll even have live music and cooking demonstrations at some of the farms! You'll be amazed at the variety: Lew Edmister's farm at 17th & Belleview is less than 1/4 acre, but it produces a lot of vegetables, unique garden art, and character for the neighborhood. Pov Huns' farm is 4 acres with a stunning view of downtown KCMO, Asian vegetables, and a high tunnel producing bitter melon. East Wind Gardens in Independence grows on several acres on the Drumm Farm Institute, a non-profit residential program for young people; their

flowers and vegetables are just lovely! Troostwood Youth Garden at 52nd & Paseo has educational signage, raised beds, and young people growing and selling veggies.

Tickets for the event will be \$5.00 for individuals, \$12 for a family and can be purchased from any of the participating farmers and from KCCUA. The event has already been sponsored by Boulevard Brewery, Planter's Seed, J-14 Enterprises and Windswept Worm Farm. However, we still need more sponsors, so let us know if your business would like to sign on! We're also looking for help organizing the event, let us know if you'd like to help out! Email us at info@kccua.org or call 913-831-2444.

Field Notes

1. Record low temps hit KC area farmers

Supplies of cool season crops such a broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Swiss chard, etc. may be lower than usual this spring as farmers try to recover from record-breaking cold several nights in a row. Here at the KC Community farm we spent more than a day covering crops, weatherizing and trying to shift from being able to deal with 80 degree plus temperatures to temperatures in the teens. While most of our hoophouse crops survived we are faced with having to replant many of our field plantings.

2. New Hoophouse

We constructed our sixth high tunnel this spring just in time for the early tomato planting in mid-March. The tunnel is 20' x 96' with 3' tall roll-up side walls and a double layer of poly sheeting for a cover. In order to reduce the overall cost of this high tunnel we chose a new design with increased spacing between bows and lower sidewalls. In spite of this, the tunnel is very solid and strong. The KC Community Farm is now home to six high tunnels, each with different design features and price tags. Farmers and others are welcome to visit and tour our tunnels. We'll be glad to assist anyone who's considering building a high tunnel with information on design, suppliers, construction and cropping.

3. Hoophouse Soil Fertility Trials

As part of our ongoing research into high tunnel crop production the KC Community Farm is also this spring participating in a collaborative trial with several other regional growers under the leadership of Prof. Ted Carey at K-State Research and Extension. Growers will experiment with various organic fertilizers on tomatoes to identify which are most cost-effective.

4. Tomato Grafting Trials

Finally, we are also joining forces with Prof. Carey on a small tomato grafting experiment. Grafting (the cutting and re-joining at the stem of different plant varieties to combine desirable traits) is becoming increasingly common among tomato growers. Certain varieties are especially vigorous and resistant to soil-borne diseases. Others produce the best flavored tomatoes. By joining the varieties at the stem when they are still very young, we can create plants that will produce great-tasting tomatoes but also stand up well to soil-borne diseases. Grafting is a completely natural and organic technique to develop healthier and more vigorous plants.

Come Out; Come Out, Wherever You Are!

Farmers Markets Are Opening Up Around Town



The Brookside Farmers' Market will begin every Saturday from 8am-1pm starting April 14th and will run through October 13th. For our first market, we'll have tasty spring veggies such as kale, Swiss chard, salad mix, head lettuce, pac choi, herbs, micro greens, Asian greens, scallions, turnips, spinach and a handful of early summer squash and cukes. Please come out, show your support for local farmers and keep you and your family eating healthy. For more information about the Brookside Farmers Market visit the market website at www.farmerscommunitymarket.com.

Late freezes notwithstanding, urban-grown produce is also going to appear at other farmers markets around town. You'll find it, for example, at the 39th Street Market,

Merriam City Market, KCK Greenmarket, City Market and the North KC Market. For a more complete list and contact information please visit our website at: <http://www.kccua.org/areafarms.htm>.

Thanks for supporting local farmers!

Community Projects Update: Area Non-Profits Work With KCCUA to Establish Market Gardens

The Refugee Women's Market Garden at Catholic Charities, KCK is up and growing! 2006 was the first year for the Somali, Bantu, and Sudanese women as market gardeners; they grew and sold vegetables at the KCK Greenmarket and for their own families. That experience whetted their ambitions; they want the gardens to be more productive and they want to sell more in 2007. Working with Sharisa McDaniel, the Catholic Charities staffperson who has been the lead organizer on the project, KCCUA provided advanced training for an expanded group of gardeners and has been working with them on production planning. For the 2007 season, their goals are to do a better job with plant spacing and succession planting (to maximize yields out of their relatively small plots), to go to market more consistently, and to become better sellers of their farm products. The women will be selling at the KCK Greenmarket on 6th & Tauomee from 8:00-12:00 starting in June.

Last fall, KCCUA Board Chair Tina Hoover introduced us to the Cross Lines Cooperative Council, a non-profit organization that seeks to address poverty and hunger in Kansas City, KS. They had a piece of land right next to their building, they were going to start a work training program, and they were considering putting in a garden as part of the program. They had other assets as well including Dr. Glenn Hodges, a board member who is an experienced Master Gardener, an organizational focus on the root causes of hunger, and staff people excited about producing healthy food. Over the winter, KCCUA helped them develop a plan for starting a garden to grow and sell fresh produce. We did a series of market gardening workshops, covering everything from the soil to irrigation to how to display and sell at a farmers' market. Cross Lines also brought in KC Community Gardens to do the plowing and tilling of the land, which worked up quite nicely! Participants in Cross Lines' Ready-to-Work program will be planting, weeding, harvesting and selling their produce, with the sales to be banked for them to help out with living costs upon completion of the season. Produce will be available on site (the location of the Monday edition of the KCK Green Market) starting in June from 8am to noon.

KCCUA Screens Documentary on Green Cities

First In Occasional Series of Educational Events

On March 10 a small audience of about a dozen folks gathered at the KC Community Farm for a special, free screening of the PBS documentary series *Design e2*. The films are exceptionally well-produced with many examples of extraordinary individuals of courage and vision changing how we think about architecture, urban design and sustainability. While urban

agriculture was mentioned only a couple of times in the six episodes, the implication that urban farms could and should be an important new tool in sustainable urban planning was hard to miss throughout the series. Viewers were left with a better understanding of the opportunities for advocates of urban agriculture to interface with city planners, architects, environmental engineers and related professionals.

At KCCUA we hope to be able to conduct similar educational events in the future. Check your inbox for announcements and drop us a line if you come across any films or speakers you think could advance our understanding of urban agriculture and sustainable urban design. Meanwhile, if you would like to know more about the Design e2 films go to www.design-e2.com or request a copy at your local library.

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Calendar of Events

Opening Day at the Brookside Farmers Community Market, Saturday, April 14, Wornall & 63rd St., 8am - 1pm. Come see us, say hi, and get some of our fresh, local, organic produce. More info at www.farmerscommunitymarket.com.

And after the Brookside Farmers market on Saturday, April 14, join a virtual march on Washington and *Step it Up on Global Warming and Climate Disruption*. 1pm - 3pm, Southmoreland Park at 45th and Oak in KCMO. There'll be music, speakers, opportunities to learn from area nonprofits and businesses about how to reduce your carbon emissions and a group photo (BE THERE at 2pm!) which will be compiled with photos from other rallies around the country and sent to Congress. For more information visit www.climateactionkc.org or call 816-452-6707.

General Plant Propagation and Production for Vegetable Growers, Monday, April 16, 4pm - 7pm. A Growing Growers Workshop at Master's Community Church, 2548 S. 42nd, KCK 66106. To be followed by a tour of the KC Community Farm. To register go to: www.growinggrowers.org

Urban Agriculture Presentation, Tuesday, May 1, 2007, 7pm. The Thomas Hart Benton Group of the Sierra Club. Discovery Center, 4750 Troost, KCMO. Free.

2007 Urban Extension Conference: The Future Urban Extension Agenda--Reaching New and Diverse Audiences. May 7-10, 2007 Hyatt Regency, KCMO. May 9, 2007 at 1:30pm conference participants can tour KC Community Farm. For more information visit: <http://extension.missouri.edu/urbanconf/schedule.html> or contact

The 2nd Bi-Annual Urban Farms Tour, Sunday, June 24, 2007, Noon – 5pm. Twelve area urban farms will be featured as well as urban agriculture related presentations, food demonstrations and kids' activities. Tickets are \$5 per person or \$12 for families of 3 or more. Tickets can be purchased at the Brookside Farmers Market, the 39th Street Market, the City Market in downtown Kansas City, MO or at the KCK Greenmarket. Visit: <http://www.kccua.org/uft2007.htm>.

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