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*In this issue:*

- 2011 Urban Farms and Gardens Tour Draws 2000 Visitors Over Two Days
- Missouri Legislative Committee on Urban Agriculture Holds Hearing in KCMO
- It's Time to Get Growing, Kansas City!
- Long-Time Urban Grower Steve Mann Joins Cultivate KC
- Your Gift to Cultivate KC Touches Many Lives
- Unusual Edibles Bring Together People from Around the World
- KCK Market Success Improves Community Health
- Field Notes from the Gibbs Road Community Farm
- Calendar of Events

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### **2011 Urban Farms and Gardens Tour Draws 2000 Visitors Over Two Days**

*Tour of urban agriculture sites connects visitors to the earth and to each other.*



Visitors at the Gibbs Road Community Farm during the 2011 Urban Farms and Gardens Tour.

By Janet Brown Moss

On June 25 and 26 more than two thousand people from Kansas City and beyond went out to visit 37 urban agriculture sites across KC to see urban food production techniques ranging from home gardens, rooftop gardens, and fish farming to institutional gardens, community gardens and small commercial farms. It was part of the 4th Biennial Urban Farms and Gardens Tour put on by Cultivate KC, its many wonderful sponsors and volunteers.

The two-day tour was preceded by more than a week of related events including workshops, film screenings, food events and children's activities. There was tremendous interest in all these events and, to me, it seemed as though the local food movement had really found its supporters in Kansas City.

"We don't create movements," says Jim Wallis of Sojourners, "What we do is prepare ourselves and others to join in the movement when it arrives." Doing that has been part of my life since 1972, when I became involved in community education and action in the KC metropolitan area. Those words gave me a valuable perspective to work on myself and with others to bring about change. It feels easier to continue that work knowing that we don't have to build movements; that they form when most needed and, as agents of change, we keep ourselves and others prepared and ready to join together when the time is ripe.

The KC Urban Farms and Gardens Tour has offered a healthy dose of preparation for folks who make it happen, attend, read about it or “catch” the ideas in the breeze as it blows by, from and to, who knows where. This year 1,144 volunteer hours helped make possible 6,874 visits to farms and gardens by 2,028 individuals during the two-day tour. Attendance at 18 pre-tour events was a total of 829.

The tour has a history of preparing us. In 2009, volunteers made possible more than 2000 visits by 900 individuals during a one-day tour, which was half again larger than 2007's six hundred individuals, which was three times larger than the 200 visitors in 2005. This year's two-day tour allowed more than double the number of individuals to visit more than triple the number of farms and gardens than the previous tour. That is a lot of preparation in six years.

The 2011 tour was new and different in several ways. First, of course, it continued for two days instead of one. Also, the tour showcased the food revolution in neighborhoods that do not have easy access to quality food from farmers markets and grocers. Ten of the 37 sites on the tour were on Troost Avenue and east. Cultivate Kansas City collaborated with Emmanuel Community Center and Garden to provide a shuttle bus for neighborhood residents without transportation to visit the gardens in their neighborhoods at no cost.

Working in community education and action I have had many experiences of bringing people together across lines of difference in a number of settings. That is certainly born out during the food movement. Stories of people learning from one another abound and the learning goes both ways and is not all about food. Folks from far-flung neighborhoods venture to addresses in the city which they usually do not visit. One gardener whose site was on the tour told us that some visitors “were very surprised by the appearance of our garden and neighborhood. I think they were a little apprehensive about coming in the ‘hood’, so they were pleasantly surprised.”

Another new addition was to showcase the art of farmers and gardeners and food from neighborhood gardens. One farmer, as he was leaving the art show, said to me, “Thank you. I have learned a lot tonight. I learned that people in the city grow food.” Then he continued: “Farmers don’t know people in the city. The only way we know about the city is from television and then we get scared and think it is dangerous.” He said he learned something new during a conversation with an African-American woman who brought art created by youth from the site of the community garden and community center where she worked. “Now I know some people and I want to go to their garden and invite some of the youth to our farm, because she says they have never seen a farm.”

We also increased the number of chefs doing cooking demonstrations at tour sites this year. One farmer wrote, “We had so many lovely conversations with visitors. They all really appreciated the food demo because it taught them ways to use our produce that they may not have otherwise purchased.”

A food revolution movement has arrived. The wave is rolling and we are learning to ride it together. Dirt and food are great equalizers and who knows, we might learn to “unprocess” ourselves a bit. Perhaps we can heal from the lack of nourishment foisted on us by Madison Avenue which too often aims to convince us we could be nourished from substances disconnected from the earth and one another. We *can* work together across lines of difference and be active participants in the movement of good food for all. Thank you for embracing the 2011 KC Urban Farms and Gardens Tour, its events and ideas!

*Our sincere appreciation goes to Janet Brown Moss of BridgeWorks for once again expertly organizing the Urban Farms and Gardens Tour for Cultivate KC and for contributing her stories to Urban Grown. Thank you, Janet. You can reach her at [janetbridgeworks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janetbridgeworks@sbcglobal.net).*

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## Missouri Legislative Committee on Urban Agriculture Holds Hearing in KCMO



Cultivate KC's Katherine Kelly testified before the Missouri Legislature's Joint Committee on Urban Agriculture

By Katherine Kelly

On July 11, the Missouri Legislature's Joint Committee on Urban Agriculture held the first of four public hearings on the reality, opportunities, and needs of urban agriculture in the state, with the goal of developing a set of policy recommendations that could help the state more fully benefit from urban food production.

The hearing was held on the campus of the University of Missouri, Kansas City, with support from the UMKC Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design. It was chaired by Rep. Jason Holsman and attended by several committee members and advisory subcommittee members. Approximately 75 members of the public turned out to testify or follow the proceedings.

A local committee met several times in advance to recruit testers, plan out testimony, and do some basic research on potential policy initiatives. We set out the goal of introducing legislators to the basic framework of urban agriculture and presenting some initial thoughts on areas of policy. We learned from Rep. Holsman that the committee will be looking at urban agriculture from a production, distribution, and access viewpoint, so we recruited and prepared testimony from speakers to focus not only on the many ways that people are growing food in the city but also on how urban residents can access food grown on area farms through farmers markets, mobile markets, grocery stores, etc.

Our ad hoc committee, Beth Low from the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition, and Cultivate KC staff researched urban ag policies in other states, hoping to glean best practices. Interestingly, we found that most of the urban ag policy work has happened at the municipal and county levels, with state level action being a relatively new phenomenon. Some of the issues we'll be looking at include:

- Costs and challenges in developing empty lots including soil contamination/degradation and water access: are there ways that the state can provide incentives, support or guidance to municipalities and to individual growers to help Missouri cities create and protect productive greenspace on currently blighted land?
- Food distribution: while some Missouri cities have created or are on their way to creating food hubs and models for ensuring that locally grown food--both urban and rural--can get to city residents, there is still a need across the state for improved distribution models. Can the state more actively encourage and support food hubs?
- Participation in federal food assistance programs that benefit both consumers and local farmers: Missouri doesn't participate in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program nor does it allow for WIC coupons to be used at farmers' markets. While there is some complicated history to this, these federal programs benefit consumers and both urban and rural growers who sell at markets serving low-income residents.
- An issue that has come up in nearly all the discussions around this process (as well as in several other food planning efforts in the metro area) is the tax on food. Both Kansas and Missouri have a sales tax on food. While it is hard to imagine in our current economic climate that we could remove (or even reduce) that tax, we are going to raise the issue and know that others will also. Sales taxes on food are regressive and hit low income consumers the hardest and farmers, unlike grocery stores, generally "eat" the sales taxes out of their posted prices at market, rather than adding them on top of the price per pound or unit. Eliminating the sales tax on food in general, or on locally grown food, would assist consumers and local farmers both.

The Committee will hold three more hearings, most likely in Columbia, Jefferson City, and St. Louis. We're looking forward to working with the urban ag communities in each of those areas to ensure that the Joint Committee gets good information about the reality of what is happening in our communities and that we present policy options that would be real and meaningful for the folks on the ground.

Reach Katherine at [katherine@cultivatekc.org](mailto:katherine@cultivatekc.org).

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### **It's Time to Get Growing, Kansas City!**

*A new outreach team is getting ready to help gardeners and farmers across the metro.*



Katherine Kelly (l) and Sharon Goldstein (r) are role-playing during a training session for the new Get Growing KC outreach team.

By Teresa Kelly

Cultivate Kansas City is excited to announce that we are combining efforts with Lincoln University's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP), and Kansas City Community Gardens (KCCG) to launch the Get Growing Kansas City Campaign. Overwhelming interest in urban agriculture, community gardens, access to healthy, fresh food and a hunger for knowledge and resources to grow it were the impetus for this innovative campaign. The three partner organizations bring together depth of knowledge and expertise in order to address the demand for technical assistance and resources, whether the desired outcome is creating a community garden, reclaiming a vacant lot next door, installing a school yard garden, growing vegetables for one's family, or starting a farm-based business.

For the next two years, Get Growing KC aims to increase the number of people growing food, develop community relationships, establish education programs and improve access to healthy food. A talented team of ten individuals representing the three organizations will be hitting the pavement in response to what Cultivate Kansas City's Katherine Kelly has referred to as a "teachable moment." They will bring the message of community, health and good food home to community groups, families, individuals, neighborhood associations, schools, garden clubs, budding entrepreneurs, congregations, individuals. Anyone who wants to get growing healthy and good food.

After cross training in all three organizational offerings, the Get Growing team is networking and doing outreach to provide a personal connection and to build community. Over the next few months Kansas Citians will see team members doing things like visiting local farmers' markets and community gardens, making connections and offering assistance. Look for a Get Growing KC website and social media network to come soon. For now, to learn more about the Get Growing Kansas City Campaign, you can follow this link: <http://www.cultivatekc.org/programs/get-growing-kc.html>

And in true community spirit, we are asking you to pass the word along to anyone you know who wants to Get Growing!

And now, meet the team members hired by Cultivate Kansas City to represent the Get Growing campaign (Lincoln University and Kansas City Community Gardens are providing additional staff to the team).



Sherri Harvel

[Sherri Harvel \(sherri@cultivatekc.org\)](mailto:sherri@cultivatekc.org)

Many of you are familiar with Sherri, as she has been involved with Cultivate Kansas City for some years now. As an urban farmer she's long been an informal mentor to many trying to start a farm business. Now she's stepping up this effort as a Get Growing Team Member. Listen to her reflections on her new assignment:

"What better opportunity to educate and learn. As an urban grower I've unexpectedly learned so much about community and the impact of having fresh produce available to the community. At this point most of us have heard about food deserts and having liquor stores and fast food chains as our primary source for food. How many of us live that

reality? Honestly, I do not because many years ago I was given the opportunity to be a part of a neighborhood garden.

When thinking about my community, what has bothered me for many years is the thought of it being number one on every list of bad things that affects our lives on a daily basis. African Americans are at high risk for diabetes, strokes, heart disease, lack of jobs, lack of education and lack of healthcare. Urban agriculture can be part of the solution by providing opportunities for making a living growing food. Access to fresh whole foods gives individuals the ability to improve health.

Education, opportunity and encouragement are what Cultivate Kansas City can provide. Root Deep Farm is the result of my desire to grow good food, technical assistance provided through Cultivate Kansas City programs, one-on-one mentoring and a lot of hard work. Without it being part of my original plan, I've found that my farm-based business has inspired my neighbors and become a community resource. In the past two years a few neighbors have started gardening at their home and church. I've provided technical assistance without giving it much thought until a neighbor mentioned that when she sees me working on something at the farm she goes to the church garden and does the same thing. Neighbors stop by often with questions and it's so exciting when they mention their harvest! I love knowing that I have helped them by being an example and an informal mentor. This is a true testament to the positive influence of urban agriculture on a community!

After having the support to grow from community gardener to owning my own farm-based business, joining the Get Growing Kansas City Team feels like a full circle moment with the opportunity to give what has been given to me."



Teresa Kelly

[Teresa Kelly \(teresa@cultivatekc.org\)](mailto:teresa@cultivatekc.org)

Teresa's passion for over 15 years has been growing food and community that creates health and wellbeing for people and the planet. She served as Chair of the Technical Committee for the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) in Montana as well as being Education Chair for the NW Organic Farm Club. As partner in a trial garden for Garden City Seeds, she grew a variety of speculative vegetables, herbs, flowers and fruits utilizing hoop houses, row covers, and cover crops to increase yields and extend the season. Distribution channels included on farm sales, a farmer's market and wholesale to restaurants and natural food stores. A Harvest Festival added an education and community building component to the project. Results of the trials helped the local organic growers choose new varieties, incorporate new technology and helped increase awareness of local produce by the general public.

Teresa and a partner followed with their own endeavor, Twin Apple Farm, market gardening 1.5 acres of organic specialty produce, herbs and flowers selling retail at a farmer's market and wholesale to a local resort hotel, deli and health food store. After honing her skills, she followed her heart and opened Copper

Moon Herbs, an organic retail herb nursery and retail store. Teaching classes, growing herbs, selling at farmer's markets and restaurants, and a seed-to-market apprenticeship program became her focus.

She has continued to be an advocate for healthy, organic and locally grown food. Most recently Teresa co-founded C.H.I.R.P. (City Hens in Roeland Park) successfully seeing the way to the creation of a special permit for the keeping of backyard hens in the city of Roeland Park, KS. Currently she sits on the Roeland Park Sustainability Committee. Teresa is excited about the opportunity to use her wide skill set to provide technical assistance to local growers and promote the mission of Get Growing Kansas City.



Sasteh Mosley

Sasteh Mosley ([sasteh@cultivatekc.org](mailto:sasteh@cultivatekc.org))

Sasteh Mosley is a farm, food, and community activist. His focus most recently is on increasing the number of urban farms and gardens on the east side of Kansas City through East Meets West of Troost and Green Acres. He runs The Mosley Farm, an energy efficient home located on the Smart Grid, focused on training youth for employment in the green industry. He also has a strong background in electrical engineering specializing in conservation engineering, wireless networking and, in the past, military and nuclear power plant engineering. Throughout his life he has actively promoted strong cultural and community connections through educational projects, political action, and the arts, strongly focused on at-risk, low-income youth living on the Eastside of KCMO.

Sasteh's farming career began with Will Allen at Growing Power in 1993. During that time he wore many hats including marketing, wholesale purchasing, CSA organizing and Alabama farm research. His Growing Power experience laid solid groundwork for the culmination of his life work making the connections between growing food, community development, and neighborhood empowerment.

Reach Teresa at [teresa@cultivatekc.org](mailto:teresa@cultivatekc.org).

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### Long-Time Urban Grower Steve Mann Joins Cultivate KC



Steve Mann

We're happy to share with our readers news of the hiring of Steve Mann as Cultivate KC's part-time site developer. Steve has a long history as an advocate for urban food production, a grower, a permaculture teacher, a food-not-lawns expert and much more.

Steve planted his first garden behind his dad's barbershop when he was eight years old. He learned organic gardening techniques working at the Common Market Cooperative's gardens in 1971 while attending college in Denver. After over 30 years in construction, engineering and business systems analysis, Steve returned to his roots as an urban farmer at Platte Prairie Farm. Steve is a gardening educator with Food Not Lawns Kansas City and does sustainable agriculture consulting through his business, Prairie Ecosystems Management.

Here at Cultivate KC, Steve will focus his efforts on finding farmable land in Kansas City, KS, in the vicinity of Cultivate KC's Juniper Gardens Training Farm. He will also help with the design of a new greenhouse at the Juniper Garden Training Farm. Thanks, Steve, for coming on board and bringing your skills and talents to Cultivate KC.

Reach Steve at [steve@cultivatekc.org](mailto:steve@cultivatekc.org).

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## Your Gift to Cultivate KC Touches Many Lives

By Jill Erickson

Ever wonder what happens to those dollars you contribute to Cultivate Kansas City? Consider this. It costs Gibbs Road Farm approximately \$10,000 to employ one seasonal apprentice. Because it is a working farm, we earn income from sales of our delicious and quite beautiful vegetables. This income naturally helps pay for the hands that planned, planted, tended, harvested and brought those vegetables to market.

Vegetable sales, however, do not fully cover the cost of production at the Gibbs Road Farm. Because we employ apprentices our goal is not to maximize hours of labor at the minimum expense. Our goal is to grow new farmers and to teach, demonstrate and engage the public in our food system. That takes extra time. And money.

"Each season takes on the unique personality of the crew and they bring new life to the farm, new questions, new experiences," says Alicia Ellingsworth, farm manager at Gibbs Road Community Farm. "We are building our community and learning from each other on a daily basis and that isn't something that happens by placing a 'help wanted' ad in the paper."

Your dollars afford our farm manager time to conduct weekly field walks with the crew and allow crew members to conduct field experiments and learn valuable lessons. Our apprentices do more than harvest and wash carrots. They teach and supervise hundreds of volunteers each season. They give public tours, some table at community events and some even get interviewed on TV. At the heart of our mission, apprentices share common goals with Cultivate Kansas City and are dedicated to sustainable agriculture.

"I love being an apprentice because the farm gives me just as much to me as I give it," says first-year apprentice, Jessie Wiard. "It makes me appreciate real food and the hard work that goes into it."

Your dollars helped teach and inspire former farm apprentice Julie Coon to start her own farm one year ago this June. This is not unusual as 40% of our apprentices go on to work on farms or start their own. Julie apprenticed with us in 2007.



Julie Coon (l) & Natasha Karsk (r) run Peas on Earth Urban Farm in Kansas City, MO.

Peas on Earth Urban Farm is located on Summit in the West Side neighborhood.

Julie had been growing food on a small portion of an empty lot for three years before she and Natasha Karsk decided to convert the entire quarter-acre lot into a farm and beautiful community space.

"It had been an empty lot since the 70's," explained Natasha Karsk who farms with Julie. "Julie is the one with all of the growing experience and I am so excited to be in a city that is so supportive of what we are doing."

In just one short year, Julie and Natasha have partnered with local catering chef, Heather Hands, and the Charlotte Street Foundation to host two farm-to-table meals at her farm feeding nearly 50 friends, neighbors and supporters. That was *your* contribution helping feed people. They also participated in Blue Bird Café's farmer dinner and this year, their farm hosted 400 visitors during the 2011 Urban Farms & Garden Tour, which means your contribution helped teach more Kansas Citians about good food!

“Cultivate KC has been a huge help with our farm,” Julie explains. “Before we took the leap, Katherine Kelly came out and we sat and talked about all of the business models that might work.”

They decided to focus on selling to three area restaurants, but due to demand from neighbors they also began an on-site market stand this season. Just think: your contribution just boosted the local economy! Julie and Natasha are unsure what they want to do with their farm over the next three to five years, but they want to remain in the neighborhood and want to find permanent land.

“One of the huge take-aways from working at Cultivate Kansas City is this is incredibly hard work!” shared Julie. “If I hadn’t spent time working on a farm, I would have given up by now. But I knew going into that farming is way different than gardening and it is hard.”

Cultivate Kansas City was founded to build a sustainable food system for Kansas City. With your help, we do this by helping urban farmers like Julie and Natasha dream, and succeed. Thank you for making this possible.

Want to see more photos of Julie and Natasha’s farm? Visit their Facebook page at *Peas on Earth Urban Farm!*

Reach Jill at [jill@cultivatekc.org](mailto:jill@cultivatekc.org).

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### **Unusual Edibles Bring Together People from Around the World**

*Farmers share their crops and culinary traditions at Juniper Gardens Training Farm.*



Cleome (Cleome gynandra) is grown by farmers from Burma.

By Cathy Bylinowski

Imagine leaving your soil, your climate, and most familiar vegetable crops behind for life in a country thousands of miles away. That is what all sixteen of the farmers in the New Roots for Refugees program at the Juniper Gardens Training Farm have done; left their known world for Kansas City, KS. When they enter the farm business training program, they agree to sell their produce at a farmers market, to save 20% of their profits, and build a market farm business. So they are challenged by the fact that they are going to need to sell crops they are not familiar with in order to make money in the United States.

This year program staff presented two cooking workshops for the refugee farmers to increase their knowledge and understanding of commonly used vegetables in America. Over the years our farmers have received a great deal of instruction to grow salad greens for sale at market, yet most of the farmers do not eat salads or use edible greens raw in this manner. Program staff members felt it was important to have them try various salad and roasted vegetable recipes so that they have a better reference point for selling their produce to American customers.

If they are lucky enough to have even small communities of their fellow country people living near them, as some of the resettled refugees at the farm are, the refugee farmers can grow and sell some of the crops they feel are essential to their food ways. We know that during field walks in farmers’ plots we will probably see some plants that we do not recognize as edible or useful. In order to understand these crops, unusual for Kansas City, the Juniper Gardens Training Farm staff will begin photographing them and collecting information on these crops, to add to our knowledge and crop diversity at the farm. We will collect common names, scientific names, and what the plant uses are to create a directory for the staff, to

make it easier to purchase some of these seeds for the next growing season, and to inform adventurous American customers about their use.

The Karen people, an ethnic group from Burma, highly value the sour flavor of chin baun or roselle leaves, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*. The leaves are used in soups and with fish. Chin baun looks like a short, bushy okra plant. Our growing season in Kansas City is not long enough for this plant to flower. Some of our farmers have started growing chin baun in our new high tunnel and if they are successful, perhaps the plants will flower and set seed in October or November. I realized that while chin baun was new to me, the dried flowers are an ingredient in many herbal teas that gives them their tart flavor and bright red color.

Another plant that is being grown this year is cleome, *Cleome gynandra*. Kansas Citians might recognize it as spider flower, a common annual flower border plant. It also looks like clammy weed, a wild flower native to Midwestern prairies. The Karen farmers use the leaves and seed pods with their very distinctive pungent and savory scent, to make pickles. Fermentation was a common way to preserve vegetables for later use in pre-refrigeration days. Think sauerkraut and kosher dill pickles. Fermentation also adds digestive flora and B vitamins to food, boosting the nutritional value.

Last fall and this spring, small patches of a mysterious variety of basil appeared in several gardens. It smells like a clove-scented basil/oregano blend. The leaves are fuzzy, the stems purplish, and the plant has, now in late July, a panicle of small white flowers. A Karen farmer told me that it tastes good with meat dishes. But what is it? A quick search of basil turned up a strong possibility: holy basil or Thai holy basil, *Ocinium tenuifolium*, a very interesting plant with culinary, medicinal, and religious uses in some cultures.

The farmers from Africa grow plants that Americans will recognize, but perhaps in forms and with uses that Americans might not be familiar with. One example is corn or maize. Farmers from Burundi and Somalia are not familiar with sweet corn, but they love to grow field corn for use in stews. They use varieties that Americans call Indian corn and use for fall decorations. Another crop that they grow, use themselves, and sell to fellow Africans is edible amaranth or machicha. The leaves are chopped fine and cooked with meat, tomatoes, and salt. Of course most Americans would pull amaranth out of the garden as a weed. Edible amaranth reseeds prolifically and can crowd out other crops, but the nutritional value is outstanding.

These different edible plants here at Juniper Gardens Training Farm challenge, nourish, and delight us. Exploring each culture's edible plants widens our nutritional and culinary knowledge and choices. It is an adventure the program farmers and staff will continue for many seasons to come.

Reach Cathy at [cathyb@cultivatekc.org](mailto:cathyb@cultivatekc.org).

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## **KCK Market Success Improves Community Health**

By Ami Freeberg

In June, the Kansas City, KS, Greenmarket at Juniper Gardens launched its fourth farmer's market season. This market is located at 3rd Street and Richmond Avenue in Northeast Kansas City, KS, adjacent to the Juniper Gardens Training Farm. Currently, all of the vendors are farmers in the New Roots for Refugees program, a partnership between Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas and Cultivate Kansas City to provide entrepreneurial farm training to new Americans. While the customer base is becoming more integrated and diverse, many shoppers are Burmese refugees who come to buy produce they cannot find anywhere else, such as chin baun, bitter melon, pumpkin vine, and Burmese pumpkin.

This market has been successful during its short lifespan as a result of the collaborative efforts of many organizations, programs and individuals. In 2010, the KCK greenmarket at Juniper Gardens took off with the support of Beans&Greens—a program that matches Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program dollars (SNAP, formerly food stamps) at farmers markets. Doubling SNAP dollars goes a long way

toward making fresh, healthy food an affordable option for low-income families. In 2010, total sales included over \$6,000 in SNAP dollars, which with the Beans&Greens match resulted in more than \$12,000 dollars invested in local, urban farmers, more than double sales from last season.



Tamekia Cooperwood (l) and Judith Smith (r) are members of the Juniper Gardens Healthy Food Team.

Another important component of this diverse and collaborative market is the Healthy Food Team, a partnership with The Family Conservancy's "Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids" class. To teach and engage more neighbors, each week a two-person team reaches out to the community, or hosts a cooking demonstration at the market to show that fresh, healthy food is also pretty tasty. Judith and Tamekia, Healthy Food Team members, choose what recipes to share—so far they have prepared sesame slaw, corn and tomato salad, cucumber salad, and sautéed green beans with tomatoes and garlic.

The Kansas Health Institute joined the partnership this season with a mini-grant allowing us to extend our outreach and educational capacity. The grant challenged us to utilize the Community Guide created by the Center for Disease Control to find innovative and evidence-based ways to help communities become healthier. The Community Guide has assessed the effectiveness of more than 210 public health interventions in 18 topic areas and settings designed to promote healthy behaviors/reduce unhealthy behaviors, reduce specific diseases, injuries, or impairments and promote healthy behaviors in community settings (e.g., schools, worksites). It is a free resource and more can be found:

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/about/index.html>.

One way we are using this grant is to offer gift baskets to residents of the Juniper Gardens neighborhood. In the first round of distribution, the team identified seven of the neighborhood's oldest residents and delivered to each of their homes a beautifully prepared basket full of fresh vegetables, along with recipes and information about the market. The reactions were wonderful— everyone was surprised and delighted by the gift. We also worked to help seniors get Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program information which will enable them to receive \$30 in vouchers and a \$30 match through Beans&Greens to use at the market to purchase fresh, healthy food.

We continue working toward goals we set for this market, such as recruiting new farmers to offer more diversity in products, or hosting live music at the market. We are encouraged by the growth we have seen over the past three years and already this season. While distributing flyers at businesses and organizations in downtown Kansas City, KS, Judith and I repeatedly got enthusiastic responses. "Do you guys have tomatoes yet?" "I'm going to be up there next week to get my fresh collard greens!" "Wow, you double the value of food stamps, I will spread the word with all of our clients. I had no idea!"

It will take time to make changes in Juniper Gardens to improve health, but we are well on our way. Of nine surveys completed last week, seven respondents were first time customers who said they would likely be back. We will continue to partner with community organizations, programs and individuals who are committed to creating a healthy community with fresh, healthy food at its core.

Reach Ami at [ami@cultivatekc.org](mailto:ami@cultivatekc.org).

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## Field Notes from the Gibbs Road Community Farm



Funky Fresh -- August version.

By Alicia Ellingsworth

Welcome August. It looks like we will be surpassing the heat wave of 2010. We are into our sixth straight week of temperatures hovering at 100 degrees or so. The field and the vegetable crops out there are showing it. The crew is growing crispier each day. There is opportunity in this. I'm searching for it.

Some crops enjoy the summer heat. Some cope with it. None love it the way squash and sweet potatoes do. We find opportunity here. One of our year-round staples has become a crazy little thing called *Funky Fresh*. It's a braising mix, a sauté or stir-fry mix and

some use it for salad. Funky Fresh is what is green and growing at any given time. For this reason, the ingredients of the mix change with the season. In the winter and spring it includes kale, chard, collards, turnip greens, broccoli raab and about five other seasonal greens. In early summer we add beet greens along with buds and flowers. Last week as I walked the field in search of inspiration, the watermelon and winter squash plants were dancing and the sweet potatoes were reaching way beyond their beds' borders to grab my attention. Inspiration. Funky Fresh last week became a mix of sweet potatoes greens (yes, you can eat them); watermelon leaves; winter squash leaves, tendrils and flower buds along with wild amaranth and a few beet greens. Strangely delicious.

Opportunity arrived this week, too, as we watched the field continue to suffer. We water, but the air temperatures never cool down enough to give the plants a rest. With regret, we cancelled CSA distribution for the first time in recorded history. We'll add a week to the end of the season. Opportunity arisen. We share and we experience the meaning of CSA. Community Supported Agriculture. It means eating good food. It means farming sustainably. It means more. Community Supported Agriculture is an agreement to share the risk. Late freezes hurt early field crops, too much rain can ruin or delay plantings, drought kills, heat stifles, weeds grow and pests invade. Up until now we've been fortunate making do with what comes making little adjustments here and there. Any farmer (and that is every farmer I know) who values customers and the farm itself will do anything to uphold the CSA agreement. This week's forced skipping of the CSA is nothing we planned or are proud of. We did it because CSA is not only about the vegetables. It is also about the people who bring the vegetables from the fields to the tables. Our crew has incredible heart and endurance. Still, 112 degrees is just too much. Community Supported Agriculture must take into account the health of those out in the fields doing the work. I'm grateful our CSA appreciates our crew. I'm grateful for this community's support of our urban agriculture experiment.

The heat makes us turn around and look for more opportunity where we haven't yet seen it. While we've been doing fall and winter production at this farm for years, we now feel an imminent need to learn to grow more while and where we are able. We are beginning to plan for this winter's crops. We'll plant more in the field using low tunnels. We'll build on what we've learned in years past in our high tunnels and incorporate more low tunnels inside them. We plan to grow more in the greenhouse through the winter.

As always we will try to add to the bank of agricultural knowledge accumulated over many thousands of years. We humbly call on those before us to come to our aid in this time. We feel great responsibility to those who depend on us today and greater responsibility to those who are to come. Let us step up and rise to this opportunity. And let it cool down soon.

Reach Alicia at [alicia@cultivatekc.org](mailto:alicia@cultivatekc.org).

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## Calendar Of Events

*Farm Aid 2011.* Saturday, August 13. LiveSTRONG Sporting Park, One Sporting Way, Kansas City, KS 66111. Each year, Farm Aid board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and Dave Matthews headline a Farm Aid concert to bring together a wide variety of musicians, farmers and fans for one mission: keeping family farmers on their land. Farm Aid is the longest running benefit concert series in America, raising more than \$37 million to help family farmers thrive all over the country while inspiring millions of people to learn about the Good Food Movement. Tickets are \$29 - \$149 and can be purchased online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Visit [www.farmaid.org](http://www.farmaid.org) for more information.

*Abolish Food Deserts with Will Allen.* Saturday, August 27. Various Kansas City area locations for daylong series of events. Green Acres Urban Farm and Research Project has invited Will Allen of Growing Power to lecture on food deserts, food sovereignty, aquaponics, composting and year-round land production. He will also lead a hands-on Master Builder's Workshop, building aquaponic bunk beds. Project participants will leave the workshop with improved skills that they can take back into their communities and pass on to others. Ticket prices vary. See <http://www.wix.com/abolishfooddeserts/events?ref=nf> for complete information. You can also email [greenacreskcmo@gmail.com](mailto:greenacreskcmo@gmail.com) or call 816-304-7240 for more information.

*foodNow.* Saturday, August 27, 6:30pm Reception and Silent Auction, 8:30pm Dinner in the Street. 1222 W. 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64102. This exciting food event will feature local chefs and proceeds benefit Cultivate Kansas City, Kansas City Community Gardens, Beans&Greens and the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition. Attire: Garden Party. To learn more, donate an auction item, reserve a seat or volunteer visit <http://www.foodNow.org>, email [contact@foodnow.org](mailto:contact@foodnow.org) or phone 816-221-7901. Cost for dinner is \$125 Single and \$1,000 Table.

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For editorial comments please contact *Urban Grown* editor Daniel Dermitzel at [daniel@cultivatekc.org](mailto:daniel@cultivatekc.org).  
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