

1993 Project Abstract

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 1995

This project was supported by the MN Future Resources Fund

TITLE: Urban Community Gardening Program - Continuation
PROGRAM MANAGER: Sue Gunderson
ORGANIZATION: Sustainable Resources Center
LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 1993, Ch. 172, Sec. 14, Subd. 10(u)
APPROPRIATION AMT: \$110,000

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The Urban Community Gardening Program sought to rehabilitate marginal and vacant urban open land into productive and beautiful community green space, and to encourage vegetable and fruit gardening in low-income neighborhoods and by under-served populations.

OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS

Over 55 new urban community gardens were established with the assistance of the project, serving from 6 to 50 gardeners each. The gardens transformed unused, vacant, and blighted lands into community natural resources, and added value and beauty to neighborhoods ranging in socioeconomic status from St. Paul's Frogtown to Minneapolis' Uptown. Project organizers helped community volunteers achieve their goals through one-to-one assistance, informational printed materials, and telephone referrals; and by providing tools and physical assistance. \$14,450 worth of untreated seed was distributed to low-income gardeners. Technical assistance (in the form of materials, information, or administrative help) was provided to over 50 established gardens throughout the metro area, ensuring that the gardens remained productive and well-maintained. Approximately 600 callers received telephone referral to garden sites. Gardening classes were offered in central locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, featuring such topics as basic organic vegetable gardening, cooking with garden produce, seed starting & saving, planting with perennials, growing herbs, composting vegetable and yard wastes, organic home fruit orchard care, freezing, drying, and canning garden produce, and many others. More than 800 residents attended these classes, some of which were held in partnership with the U of M Extension Service, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Community Education, or the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. Classes were offered free of charge to encourage participation by low and middle-income residents. The project newsletter mailing list grew to 1400 subscribers from throughout the metro area. Newsletter features included articles and tips on non-chemical vegetable gardening; information on local gardening resources, such as free composting sites; recipes, and updates on local policies affecting community gardening.

PROJECT RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

Project staff were regularly invited to make presentations at community and neighborhood forums and meetings where the idea of land reclamation was being considered. The information shared at these meetings often resulted in the implementation of new gardening projects. Interest in starting gardens is growing almost exponentially, and requests for the written guidelines created during this project are used widely. The *Urban Gardener* newsletter (as described above) doubled in numbers of subscribers during the course of this project.

July 1, 1995

LCMR Final Workprogram Update Report

I. Project Title: Urban Community Gardening Program — Continuation

Program Manager: Sue Gunderson
Agency Affiliation: Sustainable Resources Center
Address: 1916 Second Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55403
Phone: (612) 872-3283

A. Legal Citation: M.L. 1993 Chpt. 172, Sect. 14, Subd. 10(u)

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$110,000

Balance: \$ 0

Appropriation Language as drafted 7/27/92: Subd. 10 (u) This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the Commissioner of Natural Resources for a contract with the Sustainable Resources Center to provide technical assistance and information to neighborhood based groups, special populations, and municipalities for community gardening, including the rehabilitation of urban open space.

B. LMIC Compatible Data Language: N/A

C. Status of Match Requirement: N/A

II. Narrative: SRC will encourage productive use and rehabilitation of urban open space by promoting community gardening. SRC will provide technical assistance, information, and support to neighborhood based groups, special populations and municipalities. The community gardens established will offer recreational, educational, visual, and tangible (food) benefits to urban gardeners and communities.

III. Statement of Objectives: (1) Rehabilitate urban open space; (2) encourage gardening by special populations and in low-income neighborhoods; (3) maximize community-based urban food production by low-income residents.

IV. Objectives:

A. Title of Objective: Rehabilitate urban open space

A.1. Narrative: Promote conversion of vacant lots and other usable space into long-term or permanent community garden parks by assisting neighborhood and block groups. Provide ongoing technical assistance to existing community gardens to ensure maintenance and maximum productivity. SRC expects to help establish 6 to 10 new gardens each year.

A.2. Procedures: Within the seven county metropolitan area, SRC will assist potential gardeners with the identification of suitable vacant properties for garden development; will provide telephone information and referral to gardeners seeking garden plots; will make presentations and provide informational materials to neighborhood groups, government agencies, and others to promote community gardening and green space preservation; will research and promote permanent gardens through land trusts or other mechanisms; will publish and distribute a newsletter three times annually; and will provide direct technical and organizational assistance to developing and established community gardens.

A. 3. Budget:

a. Amount budgeted: \$70,000

b. Balance: \$ 0

A.4. Timeline: 7/93 1/94 6/94 1/95 6/95

Table with 5 columns representing time periods (7/93, 1/94, 6/94, 1/95, 6/95) and 5 rows representing activities: Telephone referral, Public presentations, Newsletter publication, New site development, and Technical/organizational assistance. 'x' marks indicate activity in specific periods.

A.5. Status: New community garden site assistance was provided to the Riverview United Methodist Church/City of Brooklyn Park, East Metro Women's Place/Redeemer Lutheran Church in White Bear Lake, the City of Rosemount for a public housing garden project, Anna Sevey/City of Champlin, the Neighborhood House Food Shelf (St. Paul), Freedom Place center for homeless people, Selby Area Gardening Enthusiasts, the Frogtown Artists' Cooperative, Frogtown Future Force garden, Frogtown Family garden, the Rondo Area Gardening Enthusiasts, and the Mounds Park Community garden in St. Paul; to residents of the Shingle Creek neighborhood (Minneapolis), to the transitional housing program at Ascension Place, and to new gardens in the Kingfield, Bryant, Longfellow, Seward (2 sites), Bancroft, Central, Windom Park, Phillips (2 sites), Near North (3 sites, including Oak Park Center, N. 4th St. & 6th Ave. garden, and a major gardening project at the Olson Towne Homes subsidized housing), Lyndale, Como, Marshall Terrace, and Whittier neighborhoods in Minneapolis, among others. Technical assistance was provided to the Soo Line Garden (So. Minneapolis) regarding zoning issues and lease negotiation, to the City of Eden Prairie regarding garden budgeting, to the Ramsey County Correctional Facility to help develop a community garden on marginal prison land, and to the City of Edina regarding garden implementation considerations. Telephone referral and a newsletter announcement were provided to the City of Bloomington to assist in referrals to their new garden. A directory and description of 74 metro-area community gardens was provided to the Science Museum of MN for their Green Street exhibit. Provided locations of all west metro gardens and ideas for revenue-producing garden programs to Hennepin County Works Commission. With representatives of the Minneapolis City Council, the MCDA and the

C. 2. Procedures: Attain and redistribute vegetable seeds and fruit trees to at least 25 community garden groups; teach intensive gardening techniques; sponsor cooking classes and food preservation demonstrations at times and locations convenient to target populations.

C. 3. Budget:
 a. Amount budgeted: \$7,500
 b. Balance: \$ 0

C. 4. Timeline:	7/93	1/94	6/94	1/95	6/95
Distribute vegetable seeds and fruit trees		xxxxxxxxxxxx		xxxxxxxxxxxx	
Trainings in intensive gardening methods		xxxxxxxxxxxx		xxxxxxxxxxxx	
Cooking classes			xxxxx		xxxxx
Food preservation demonstrations			xxxxxxxxxx		xxxxxxx

C. 5. Status: Sponsored classes on freezing and drying garden produce, and on canning tomato products, pickles, and pears during summer 1993. Negotiated a donation of untreated seed for northern climates from a Montana seed company; distributed \$8,500 worth of seed in spring '94, and \$5,950 worth of seed in spring '95. The bulk of the seed distribution went to low-income gardeners. Purchased hard-to-find seed for Asian gardeners for redistribution. Sponsored four workshops on intensive organic vegetable gardening, attended by 75; five workshops on basic organic gardening, attended by 90; two workshops on selecting and starting seeds, attended by 43, and provided numerous small group classes on an as-requested basis.

During summer and fall '94, sponsored workshops on freezing and drying produce, canning fruits and vegetables, cooking for nutrition. Held hands-on organic fruit tree care workshops in fall '94 and spring '95 attended by 44. Published garden recipes (including ways to cook, rather than poison, dandelions) in newsletter.

Helped to establish the Franklin Avenue MarketPlace—an organic farmer's market on one of the most impoverished streets in the city. Developed printed recipes for distribution at the Market, featuring simple, nutritious, and very tasty ways to prepare the seasonal vegetables available from week to week. Purchased fruit-bearing trees, vines, and shrubs for Phillips community orchard.

C. 6. Benefits: Small-scale intensive gardening produces significant amounts of food. Low-income families can extend their food budgets by growing their own nutritious vegetables and fruits in the city and by preserving them for year-round use.

V. Evaluation: The project will be evaluated based on the establishment of from 12 to 20 new community gardens, of which at least six shall be in low-income neighborhoods and/or established by special populations such as ethnic minorities, refugees, seniors, children, or people with disabilities. Governmental policy changes which reflect acceptance of long-term urban gardening and green spaces will be tracked. Records of class attendance, seed and tree distribution and success rates will be kept. Model informational materials will be developed for current and future gardener and government use.

VI. Context:

A. Demand by the public to use vacant urban land for green space, food production, and recreation is high. SRC and the MN Horticultural Society have been the only two sources available to provide information, referral and technical assistance to would-be gardeners.

B. The proposed work will provide for a coordinated staff to specialize in assisting urban groups.

C. SRC has been working with urban community gardeners since 1976. Most gardens were located in South Minneapolis. Now gardens are distributed through Minneapolis, St. Paul, and suburban areas. LCMR funding provided important continuity to the program, leading to the establishment of pro-gardening policies in the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

VII. Qualifications:

1. Program Manager

a. **Sue Gunderson** has developed and administered community land programs for six years. Prior to joining SRC, she directed the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program for the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development.

b. Ms. Gunderson is the Associate Director of the Sustainable Resources Center.

2. Cooperators/Other Investigators

a. **Mary Morse** (Project Coordinator) has provided technical assistance to community gardeners since January 1990. She has experience in urban gardening, community organizing, working with local governments, and training. **Community Outreach Coordinator** (to be hired) will identify and organize special population gardeners. This staff person will have community organizing experience, gardening abilities, and familiarity with the demographic makeup of the Twin Cities. **Contract educators** will be fully qualified to teach cooking, gardening, and food preservation classes. Likely cooperators will be MN Extension Service Master Gardeners and Certified Canning Instructors.

b. Ms. Morse is the Urban Lands Program Manager at the Sustainable Resources Center.

VIII. Reporting Requirements:

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than Jan. 1, 1994, July 1, 1994, Jan. 1, 1995 and a final status report by June 30, 1995.