



MUSKINGUM SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

URBAN GREENS PROGRAM UPDATE

URBAN GREENS

Mission Statement: Growing Food, Growing Community, Growing with Purpose. Together we are working to develop and support urban agriculture projects in Muskingum County.



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2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

“Growing Food, Growing Community, Growing with Purpose”

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- With the help of seasonal garden coordinators, a youth gardener sponsored by The Eagles, and more than 200 volunteers (with over 1200 volunteer hours), the Urban Greens program was able to donate ~13,184 lbs. of produce to the community, most of which went to food pantries in need throughout the county! Other untracked produce was harvested directly from our sites by community members themselves to use as needed.
- We partnered with the Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department (ZMCHD) to bring shade to Brighton Grows and Marshall Greens by installing gazebos funded by a community development grant through the health department.
- We partnered with the health department, the Literacy Council, MCLS (Muskingum County Library System), and Foodworks Alliance to create the first annual Community Garden Scavenger Hunt, combining literacy and food awareness throughout our county.
- We partnered with ZMHA (Zanesville Metropolitan Housing Authority) and CSU (Central State University) to hold our second annual Brighton Grows Garden Fun Fest and dedicated our new Youth Garden at that site. Our partnership with Central State University continues to grow beyond the free Beginner Farmer Series, including workshops and other educational opportunities at Brighton Grows and Marshall Greens.
- We partnered with Muskingum County Library System (MCLS) to bring four Garden-to-Table food demonstrations to the community throughout the season.
- We successfully implemented the 2024 Garden Olympics to encourage more participation in the gardens and held our first annual Harvest Party at Marshall Greens in October to celebrate all our volunteers throughout the season!
- We recognized CAIRN Recovery Resources (First Place in the 2024 Garden Olympics) for collectively volunteering over 400 hours in multiple gardens. These men worked hard to help grow food for their community while also creating connection, planting a seed that will hopefully continue to grow well beyond their time at CAIRN.
- We would also like to recognize those who consistently volunteered throughout the season, some accumulating over a hundred hours. These folks have given so much to their community through the Urban Greens program and with very little recognition. Diane Altman, Marvin Gill, Arlene Weaver, Elizabeth Reeb, Jim Stafford, Adam Keirns, Maggie Mickey, and Aaron George were our Volunteers of the Month from May through September, but many of them worked well beyond those months. We truly appreciate each of you and your heart for this community.

GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

Marshall Greens Garden

- Installed shipping containers for storage, allowing CSU to rent a space to store their equipment as well and giving us access to more tools and educational opportunities at the garden
- West M FFA (Second Place in the 2024 Garden Olympics) sorted seeds donated by TSC and Rural King, started approximately 2,000 tomato plants and 600 pepper plants for the gardens, and helped plant tomatoes, peppers, and flowers at the garden
- Worked directly with the Hunger Network and other local pantries to get food to pantry pick-up days or arrange for pick-up at the garden
- Hosted many volunteer groups throughout the season, including West M Seniors and West 40 4-Hers (Third Place in the 2024 Garden Olympics)
- Hosted Eastside Youth, James Singer Youth Garden Club, and homeschool groups for education in the garden, including soil education and beekeeping
- Hosted Zanesville High School Conservation Science and Sustainable Agriculture students for conservation education in the garden
- Awarded a 2024 Friends of NACD Grant for \$2500 to install two beehives at Marshall Greens to be used for education
- Partnered with Nature's Image Bee Farm to install and successfully keep bees throughout the season
- Partnered with CSU-E to hold our first annual Small Farm Equipment Demo Days, allowing participants to explore and try out small BCS tractors and farm equipment
- Small Grains research plot and Field Day, hosting Jay Brandt to speak on small scale production of artisan grains
- Installed a gazebo funded by a grant through the health department
- Held the first annual Harvest Party to recognize the 2024 Garden Olympics award winners and all who volunteered throughout the season
- Awarded a \$8,223.89 grant from the J.W. & M.H. Straker Foundation for an Outdoor Classroom and Kitchen project to be implemented by the end of April 2025

Maple-Harding Garden

- CAIRN Recovery volunteers helped to put up some much-needed trellising for grape vines and other garden fruits and vegetables
- Girl Scout troops received garden education and reserved beds to use throughout the season
- Hosted a Garden Tour following a Garden-to-Table demonstration at the Zanesville Farmers Market
- Connected with community member Aaron George, who helped to maintain the garden and engaged other nearby residents to participate in and use the garden
- Nearly all raised beds were utilized by community members to grow their own food!

Brighton Grows Garden

- Partnered with CSU to offer a Fencing Demonstration Series to the community/put up a new fence around the main garden
- Continued our partnership with Central State University to offer the Spring, Summer, and Fall Beginning Farmer Series
 - The Beginning Farmer class visited Whatever's Clever Farm, Rose Hill Farm, and Foodworks Alliance and continued to use the demo site at Brighton Grows for hands-on learning
- Installed a gazebo funded by a grant through the health department
- Partnered with CSU and ZMHA to hold our second annual Brighton Grows Garden Fun Fest to engage the community to learn more about how they can use the site/ribbon cutting ceremony for our new Youth Garden
- Established a Youth Garden Club in collaboration with staff at the James Singer Center, who participated in garden education at our new Youth Garden throughout the season and helped to design and maintain the site
- Hosted Careytown students for garden education and activities, including learning about bee keeping
- Garden Coordinator, Carrie Turner, offered a corn shocking workshop in the fall for participants to make and take-home fall decorations
- The Garden Club harvested dried okra in late fall to create holiday decorations

Restoration Park Garden

- Growing Garlic Workshop: participants harvested garlic from the square foot gardening demonstration bed early summer and demonstrated how to use it in cooking at the Garden-to-Table event
- Cairn Recovery Resources started seeds, planted and maintained four raised beds, and helped maintain the common spaces of the garden
- Stella Rosser demonstrated the use of an Olla Pot watering system and an in-bed composting solution using clay pots in her reserved garden beds
- Project Blueprint 740 planted a raised bed for the community (while also learning about growing food)
- Planting Cover Crop: in the fall, bed holders were instructed on and provided cover crops to seed in their raised beds, preparing them for the next growing season
- Growing Garlic Workshop: participants were guided in planting garlic in their raised beds and provided with information to do so at home
- Working with a nearby resident to better engage those utilizing the raised beds in community events

Zanesville Community High School Garden

- Installed a storage shed and purchased supplies for the garden with the help of NRCS and the People's Garden Grant
- Donated produce grown at this site to the Muskingum County Center for Seniors and Zanesville City Schools Summer Lunch Program
- Heather Near's Sustainable Agriculture and Conservation Science classes harvested and helped with garden clean-up at the end of the season
- Heather Near's ZHS science classes seeded cover crop after learning about soil conservation
- Heather Near's ZHS SA and CS classes are working to develop a plan for the best use of the garden (after seeing and discussing growing practices used at Marshall Greens) and will be taking over the site for the 2025 growing season

High Hill Presbyterian Church Garden

- Kristina Davis and her family continue to grow food at this site for members of the High Hill Presbyterian Church and the surrounding community
- This garden hosted an end-of-season Garden Party where the community gathered to celebrate the bounty of the season

OHIO FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION GRANT PROJECT

- Organized and held a Summer Ag Camp for Philo and Maysville students to learn about the potential of their new school agriculture programs with the help of New Lexington FFA teachers and students
- Assisted Philo Junior High School, Maysville High School, Foxfire Community School, and New Lexington Schools with the installation of a high-tunnel greenhouse on each of their school campuses
- Organized a high tunnel training opportunity for the teachers with Matt Kleinhenz, OSU Extension, Wooster
- Provided soil education to Philo Junior High Ag classes



MANY THANKS ON BEHALF OF MSWCD AND URBAN GREENS TO THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATIONS (IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY MENTIONED) WHO EACH PLAYED AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE URBAN GREENS PROGRAM THIS SEASON!

- Jim Marshall, the man behind Marshall Greens, for providing utilities and upkeep at Marshall Greens and laying two stone pads to have shipping containers installed for storage
- Randy Hutchison for mowing at Marshall Greens
- Cairn Recovery Resources for volunteering bi-weekly in the gardens throughout the entire season
- Dean Holtzclaw for loading up produce to take to the Hunger Network produce pick-up days on multiple occasions
- Mark Sterling for leading the project to install two shipping containers at Marshall Greens and for constant support in the gardens, technical and otherwise
- Mark Weiser for technical assistance at Marshall Greens
- Adam Keirns helped with many projects in the gardens throughout the entire season, including the installation of the shade structure at Marshall Greens and putting up a new fence around the main garden at Brighton Grows
- Diane Altman for being an ever-present volunteer at Marshall Greens
- Marvin Gill donated hundreds of volunteer hours weed-whacking and maintaining the gardens
- Jim Stafford and Elizabeth Reeb for volunteering weekly in the gardens
- Marcie Gibbon and Joyce Dilley, volunteering multiple times throughout the season
- Joyce Dilley for leading a tomato pruning workshop with the garden coordinators
- West M FFA for their continued partnership; for starting thousands of plants for the growing season and even helping to plant hundreds of those plants at the beginning of the season
- Home Depot helped us purchase weed-whackers on short notice and donated batteries
- Bimbo participated in the 2025 Garden Olympics, volunteering at Marshall Greens
- Rea and Associates also participated in the 2025 Garden Olympics and volunteered at Marshall Greens
- Muskingum Valley Health Centers, another 2025 Garden Olympics team, volunteered several times in the gardens
- Michelle Shroyer, ZMCHD, for volunteering and supporting Urban Greens initiatives in multiple ways
- Price Farms Organics donated 10 cubic yards of compost
- Rural King and Tractor Supply Co. once again donated all their end-of-season seeds
- Dollar General donated bags of soil for the raised bed gardens as well as grass seed
- Tiny Tap donated funds toward the Youth Garden (used to build a music station)
- Little Tijuana donated funds towards the Youth Garden and Urban Greens t-shirts
- South Zanesville Food Pantry donated funds to purchase bean seeds
- Meadow Vale Garden Club donated funds
- The Eagles sponsored a Youth Gardener
- J.W. & M.H. Straker Foundation sponsored the first annual Harvest Party at Marshall Greens
- Boy Scout Troop #174 donated funds
- Muskingum County Farm Bureau donated funds for signs for the high tunnels at OFBF Grant Project schools
- Eastside Community Ministries donated and delivered a pallet of Seed Starting Mix
- Ray Crock delivered and Guernsey-Muskingum Electric donated pallets for the Outdoor Kitchen project at Marshall Greens
- Christ's Table provided pallets for a composting station at Brighton Grows Garden
- Chris and Alex Cavanaugh built compost bins out of pallets for Brighton Grows Garden
- Chris Lutz, garden clean-up at Marshall Greens
- Buck Brackman, Zanesville Tree Commission, led Cairn volunteers in a tree planting at Brighton Grows
- Dick Gidlow for the connection and Roberts Greenhouse, Thornville for donating plants
- Michelle Annett Cardiel and family from Fat Cat Garden for donating plants
- Rhonda Talbott and her family for their continuous support in the Veterans Garden
- Rosecrans Key Club for their help getting our new Youth Garden ready
- Community Youth Foundation (CYF) Members and ZMCHD for participation in our first Global Youth Service Day Event

Thank you to Opal Wharton, Reily Bell, Carrie Turner, Carrie Held-Batog, Amber Allen, Mariya Kemp, and Dylan McKnabb, our team of garden coordinators who worked tirelessly throughout the season to maintain our five gardens in the area. We could not have accomplished all of this without each of you.

Grant funds have allowed us to support the following local businesses; we thank each of you for your part in this impactful program:

- Home Depot, where we purchase almost everything we need!
- Yoder's Produce, where we purchase the rest of everything we need!
- Nature's Image Farm, bees and beekeeping supplies
- Green Shades Garden Center, fruit trees
- Zane Feed and Supply, supplies/cover crop seeds
- Tractor Supply Co., Zanesville, supplies
- The Stoneward Co., mulch
- Moore Home Services, installed gazebos
- GM Trucking, hauling stone
- Tim Miller, hauling stone
- Paul's Farm Market, plants
- Zemba, topsoil
- Xpressive Graphics, Youth Garden signs
- Carlwick Mobile Storage, Jody Baker, shipping containers



2025 PLANS AND GOALS

- Partnering with Central State University Extension to offer:
 - BCS (walk behind tractor) Demo Days Series at Marshall Greens
 - Beekeeping Series at Marshall Greens
 - Enjoying the Harvest (food preservation) Series with Foodworks Alliance
- Support and Promote CSU Beginning Farmer Series: Spring, Summer, Fall at James Singer Center and Brighton Grows
- Beginning Gardener Education Series at the Outdoor Classroom & Kitchen at Marshall Greens
- Garden Education Series for residents of the ZMHA high rise next to Maple-Harding Garden
- Brighton Grows Event Series once a month to promote the use of community gardens
- Work with CSU on tree plantings/education in the gardens for the Urban Forestry Grant Project
- Work with Muskingum University Sociology students to start seeds and learn more about food insecurity in their community through volunteer work with Urban Greens and the College Drive Food Pantry
- 2025 Garden Olympics: a friendly season-long competition among corporate groups, nonprofits, community and church groups, homeschool groups, 4-H groups, and school organizations to promote volunteering in our gardens! *Follow our social media pages for more information
- Use Voly.org to ease organization and collection of data for volunteers and better promote volunteer opportunities through Muskingum Friends in Action website
- Build the Youth Garden Club beyond the James Singer Center and engage youth in growing and food education at the Brighton Grows and Marshall Greens Gardens/largest pumpkin contest
- Rain Barrel Workshop and Auction/installation of rain barrels at Brighton Grows and Marshall Greens pending grant funding (Auction will generate funds to support annual workshops offered to the community at a fraction of the cost of materials)
- Tomato pruning workshop and competition at Marshall Greens
- Planting with seniors in the repurposed lick tubs at the Muskingum County Center for Seniors
- Continue to work with Muskingum County Library System and SNAP Ed to address food literacy by offering on-site food demos at the gardens and bringing samples and recipes to the pantries
- Continue to work with the MC Hunger Network and other local pantries to provide access to healthy foods and garden education in impoverished areas
- Work with Alexis Masterson, OSU-E, to offer more food education to the community
- Work with schools to organize field trips to Marshall Greens
- Organize field trips for OFBF Grant Project schools to visit local farms
- End of Season Harvest Party at Marshall Greens to acknowledge and celebrate all volunteers!
- Possible Harvesting and Processing Small Grains Workshop
- Possible Essay or Poetry Contest

It's clear this project takes an entire community; we are so very grateful for all the volunteers (including many of whom are not individually mentioned), organizations and agencies who've helped us maximize the impact of Urban Greens in Muskingum County



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