

# County, city plot urban farm acreage

## Gardeners cultivate low-cost groceries

By MIKE HOPKINS  
Of the Emerald

More than 325,000 square feet of publicly owned agricultural land within Eugene's city limits is waiting to be used by urban farmers willing to invest time, sweat and a little money.

Richard Wilen, Eugene Community Gardens Coordinator, thinks the least a person will gain from an investment is food of higher quality than most commercially grown products.

"We believe urban residents should have the best quality food available to them and that it be grown locally," Wilen says.

The "we" to whom Wilen refers are members of a "coalescing food movement," which would prefer to substitute the growing influence of agri-business with at least partial reliance on community garden plots.

Considering the rising cost of food, Eugene shoppers stand to save more than the few dollars required to reserve one of the Eugene Parks and Recreation Department's 168 community garden plots. The plots will be put on the rent market next April.

If there aren't enough city plots to go around, Lane County's Parks and Open Lands Department has another 250 garden plots for rent. These plots, at \$10 per year for a 20-foot by 45-foot space, are bigger and cheaper than city plots, which measure 20 feet by 30 feet and cost \$14 per year. Low-income seniors can get a free plot through Lane Senior Services.

Located at Alton Baker Park, just east of the parking lot and south of Day Island Road, the county's plots lie closest to the University.

Eugene's community garden

plots are at three locations:

- on North Polk Street near the Willamette River's southern bank — about 8 plots;
- at 15th Avenue and Hayes Street — about 32 plots now, but Wilen says another 16 will be available by April;
- at Cal Young Road and Coburg Road, behind the Sts. Thomas and Matthew Episcopal Church — about 40 plots, 20 of which already are rented.

Wilen says the city is planning to add another half-acre of garden space in south Eugene at either the Wayne Morse Ranch or Amazon Park. Eventually, both locations will feature garden sites, he says.

Two Eugene community schools also rent garden plots to the public.

Patterson Community School offers 72 spaces, each 18 by 18 feet, for \$7.50 per season. Patterson's Ellen Hubbe says one person may rent more than one plot at the school's 14th Avenue and Chambers Street site.

About 20 small plots are available to people living within the boundaries of the Lincoln Community School. The school is located at 12th Avenue and Jefferson Street.

The city, the county and community schools manage their community gardens in similar fashion.

All plots are rented on a first-come, first-served basis. The managing departments provide free water and rototill all plots as soon as weather permits, usually in April. Garden renters themselves are responsible for turning their plots into productive gardens and for cleaning up leftover cornstalks, tomato vines, wires and other debris when the growing season ends.

Unfortunately, only a few renters of county plots actually comply with the clean-up requirement, according to Evald Nielsen, the landscape engineer who manages the gardens. Consequently, it costs Nielsen's department twice as much to get the plots ready for the next season.

Although individual gardeners must do their own planning and stoop labor, they aren't left to fend for themselves completely. Advice is available through the Lane Extension Service and the city's volunteer staff.

Nevertheless, Duane Hatch of Lane Extension Service warns of the drawbacks gardening poses for the beginner.

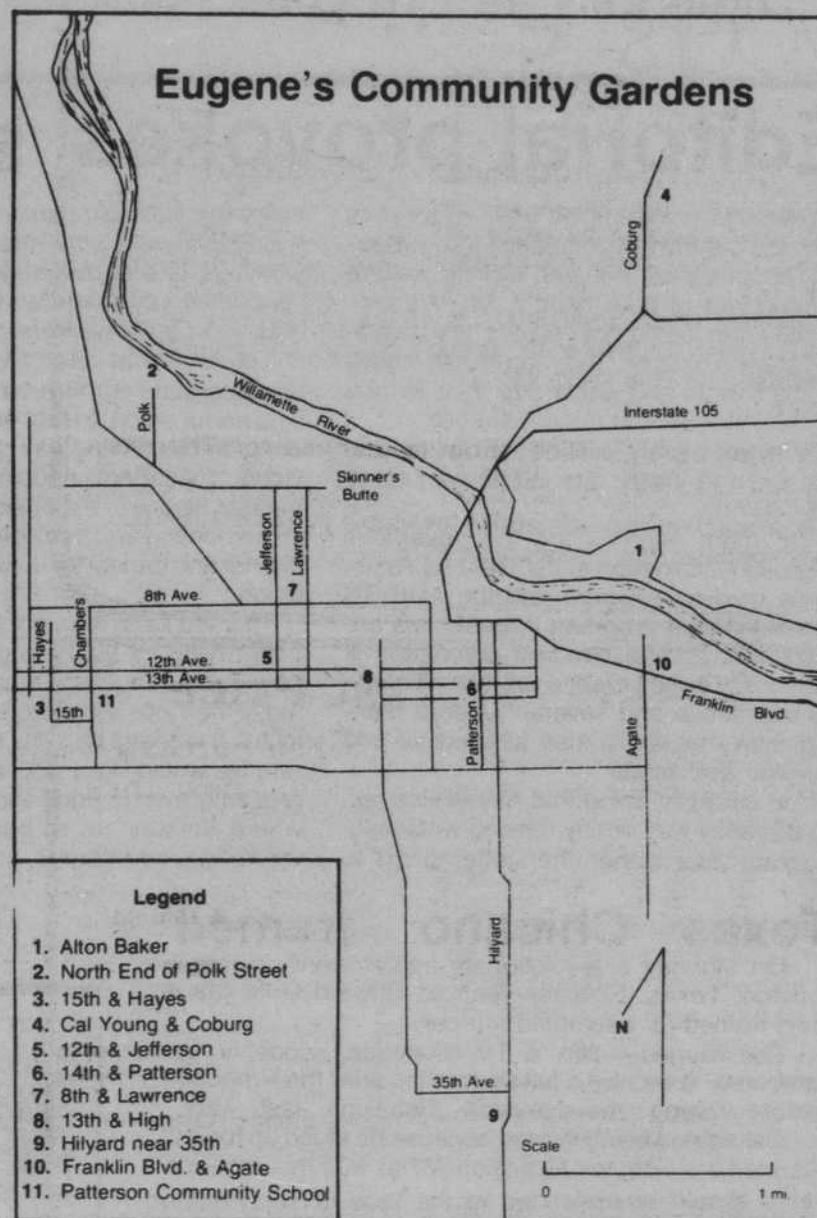
Between hauling tools, fertilizer and seed and making the daily drive to one's plot to turn the water on and off, city farmers could end up with some expensive vegetables, he cautions.

Hatch says the county rented fewer plots last year than in previous years, and he attributes the phenomenon to novice gardeners' disillusionment with the realities of tending a plot daily.

But Wilen is convinced that interest in gardening is increasing. In an attempt to measure the degree and direction of that interest, Wilen says, the city is conducting a survey of its residents, inquiring about the use of private gardens as well as the community gardens.

The questionnaire can be found in the 1979 Winter Recreation Schedule, which the Parks and Recreation Department recently mailed to city residents.

The recreation schedule also contains a list of workshops for both beginning and experienced gardeners. The workshops, to be held during January and February, will be followed with more of the same, Wilen says.



## IFC rejects unspecified goal budget

The Incidental Fees Committee decided Tuesday night to reject all goal budgets not having specific dollar amounts listed after each program's projected goals. The only exception was the EMU's budget request.

IFC member Scott Bassett stated in the motion that there must be a cost breakdown after each goal in order for the total goal budget to be accepted by the IFC. Although the practice of putting specific dollar amounts behind each submitted goal had been recommended before to many of the groups asking IFC for funds, there had been little enforcement of this by IFC members.

The decision was sparked by presentation of the Jewish Student Union goal budget. The JSU's request listed ten goals that covered their budgeted programs in a spiderweb that confused which goals belonged to which programs.

Calling many of the goals redundant, IFC member Dusty Rhodes said the goals did not reflect the budget of the JSU. "They are meaningless as they are general," he said. Rhodes pointed out that each goal had the budget programs below them and failed to conform.

The IFC subsequently accepted the JSU's budget as their ideological goals and decided that a revised goal budget should be submitted later, before their final budget hearing later in the year.

The IFC also heard the goal


budgets of OSPIRG, the Center for Gerontology, the Oregon Daily Emerald, and Women in Communication.

The four program's goals were accepted by the IFC after presen-

tations by their representatives. The IFC hearings are scheduled to continue both tonight and tomorrow at 3:30 in the EMU. They will resume on Monday and run through Thursday.

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