

# Community Gardens aid charities

Community members can garden in certain locations; some produce is donated to FOOD for Lane County

**Tom Adams**  
Freelance Reporter

In a place where not everyone can have access to gardening space, the city of Eugene offers a unique experience for gardening fans. The city's Parks and Open Space Division has created the Community Gardens, and at its five locations, people can grow everything from produce to flowers. In these fertile places, sunflowers and marigolds may jostle for space with kale and lettuce.

The gardens are located in Whiteaker, at the end of Polk Street; Mathews, at 15th Avenue and Hayes Street; Amazon, at 28th Avenue and High Street; River House, at 301 N. Adams; and Alton Baker Garden, at the east end of Alton Baker Park.

Volunteers in Parks Coordinator Chris Girard said the city initiated the garden program in 1978. Girard said the goal of the gardens is more than just good earth stewardship.

"Our goal is to provide a place for friendship in a special environment," Girard said. "We want to provide a quality gardening experience where participants can enjoy the beauty of the gardens in bloom. Many people use the gardens to engage in creative projects such as sketching, writing and photography."

The gardens have been so successful in the community that since



The Amazon Community Garden is one of several locations where community members are allowed public access to plant flowers and produce, some of which is donated to FOOD for Lane County.  
Adam Amato  
Emerald

registration for this year's growing season began on March 17, 95 percent of the 215 available spaces have been allotted.

As a result of this high demand for gardening space, Girard said the Parks and Open Space Division has begun planning for two more community garden sites, which would add an additional 50 plots.

Each garden encourages organic growing methods, and only natural pest control techniques are allowed. Chemical pesticides and herbicides are not prohibited.

According to the gardens' Web site, composting is essential in maintaining healthy and fertile soil. Plot renters also have the chance to learn about various methods of composting through free workshops, which cover everything from the way composting works to what materials work

best. Classes are led by certified Lane County Extension Service compost specialists and are held at River House Compost Education Garden.

Alice Aiken and Bunny Lawson are both gardeners at Amazon Garden. They said they started gardening a single plot in 1997 and generated 1,288 pounds of produce in their first year. They have now created a food contribution program, and in 2002 donated 2,423 pounds of produce to FOOD for Lane County. Some of that produce was donated surplus from other members of Amazon Garden, but the bulk of it came from their single plot, now set aside specifically to grow produce for local charities.

"It's a very rewarding experience, and I think it makes a difference in the attitude of the other gardeners because the plot is a visual reminder of the opportunity for other Amazon

gardeners to donate surplus from their own plots," Lawson said.

Lawson and Aiken's crops include zucchini, squash, potatoes, carrots and onions. Lawson said she uses natural control techniques such as ladybugs, beer and molasses to combat harmful pests such as aphids and slugs.

Aiken said she also finds the experience rewarding.

"Sometimes I feel like maybe I should just donate money, but this is far more meaningful," Aiken said. "I share produce with friends and family from my own plot. It's part of the gardening experience."

Community members interested in renting a plot can call 682-4800 or contact Chris Girard at 682-4845.

Tom Adams is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

## Election

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The Emerald was unable to reach Tincher for comment at press time.

An Athletic Department staff member sent an e-mail on a University listserv endorsing Executive candidates Christa Shively and Greg Bae, and state funds — including University equipment and staff salaries — may not be used to endorse candidates or lobby for partisan causes. But Hall said she talked with the Athletic Depart-

ment staff member who sent the e-mail and asked her to send a retraction, which she immediately did. Hall said this incident raised serious concerns among members of the campus community involved in elections.

"There was something seriously wrong with it because the ASUO buys athletic tickets," she said.

Executive candidates Maddy Melton and Eddy Morales said they are not going to file a grievance against their opponents.

"We understand the people in-

volved are not closely involved in the elections process," Melton said. "But it's unfortunate that we didn't have equal access to the listserv."

Andries, Gilmore and Jenkins, law students running for different positions in the election, filed a grievance with the ASUO Constitution Court against the Elections Board, requesting relief from the general election dates. The three candidates alleged the election takes place during the law school's Dead Week, violating a rule in the ASUO Constitution. The court's offi-

cial opinion, however, was that the law school doesn't technically schedule a Dead Week, and it dismissed the grievance.

"It was impossible for us to rule any other way," Justice Michael Harris said. "There was no constitutional problem."

Despite the controversies, Hall said she thought it unlikely that more grievances would be filed, as the election ends today.

Contact the senior news reporter at [jenniferbear@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jenniferbear@dailyemerald.com).

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