

# GrassRoots Garden aids families with produce

The garden produced 30,000 pounds of fresh organic produce for needy families and food boxes last year

**Aimee Rudin**  
Freelance Editor

Rows of cabbages, leeks, carrots and eggplants cover the ground in blocks, creating a quilt of produce and color on the plot of land behind the St. Thomas Episcopal Church on Coburg Road.

Crouched among the vegetables, Merry Bradley, the coordinator of the GrassRoots Garden, deftly brings in the harvest with a sharp set of clippers and a small trowel. Around her, volunteers ranging in age from teenagers to retirees gather produce, stir compost bins and mulch yard debris.

Bradley is the only full-time employee of the garden, a division of FOOD for Lane County, but the volunteer log posted on the front door

**"We're filling in the gaps of the food boxes with broccoli, cauliflower and celery. Things that give taste and substance to soups and casseroles."**

**Merry Bradley**  
Coordinator, GrassRoots Garden

of the potting shed shows entries from 4,000 individuals. Students and members of the University's Urban Farm class, offered through the landscape architecture program, donate their time on an individual and group basis.

The garden produced 30,000 pounds of fresh organic produce last year for low-income families and emergency food boxes, according to garden organizers.

"The things that we're growing at the garden are staples, but they're not provided by FOOD," Bradley said. "We're filling in the gaps of the food boxes with broccoli, cauliflower and celery. Things that give taste and substance to soups and casseroles."

Bradley added that if it weren't for the fresh produce that the garden provides to FOOD for Lane County, many of the food boxes would consist entirely of canned good and government

subsidized starchy foods.

The GrassRoots Garden is one of three gardens operated under the FOOD for Lane County umbrella. Together, the gardens cost about \$135,000 per year to run. But this year the gardens will have to operate on less, Bradley said.

FOOD for Lane County is currently operating at a budget deficit, and according to Bradley the organization is looking to save money wherever possible.

"They're looking to make cuts wherever they can and we're on the chopping block," Bradley said. "We have to find a way to make the garden financially sustainable."

In order for the gardens to continue operating next year, Bradley and the coordinators of the Churchill Community Gardens and the Youth Farm must raise \$100,000 by June 30. So far they have managed to raise about \$25,000 through fundraising, produce sales and donations from public organizations and private citizens.

On Oct. 15, the Lane County Board of Commissioners sponsored the "big green house" at the GrassRoots Garden by handing Bradley a check for \$1,000.

"We're acknowledging the important role that the GrassRoots Garden has for our community," Board Chairman Peter Sorenson said in a statement. "As part of FOOD for Lane County's programs, this largely volunteer effort provides nutritious, healthfully produced food for people in need, year round."

Bradley is hoping that other large businesses, individuals and government bodies follow Lane County's lead.

Bradley said that gardens do more than provide food and it is important for the community to realize the garden gives just as much to the individuals who volunteer as it does to the food bank.

"It's very happy — very happy," she said. "There's a lot of meaningful participation here. People leave here feeling very positive."

The GrassRoots Garden is located at 1465 Coburg Rd. in Eugene. Volunteer hours are from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For more information call FOOD for Lane County at 343-2822.

Contact the freelance editor at [aimeerudin@dailyemerald.com](mailto:aimeerudin@dailyemerald.com).

# Preparing for the holidays

STUDENTS AND FACULTY ARE BUSY making plans for the holiday season. Many are traveling throughout the state or country, while some spend the holidays here in Eugene. The holidays that are celebrated vary from person to person. Some holidays include Thanksgiving, Christmas, Kwanzaa and Hanukkah.

— Lisa Catto



**Anna Libb**  
Senior, theater arts major

"For Thanksgiving I'm going to Seattle to see my sister, and I'm taking two of my international friends with me."



**Theresa Lin**  
Senior, public relations major

"I have family in Maryland, so I plan to go back there during winter break to visit them. I also might visit friends in New York and Baltimore."



**Jonathon Hogate**  
Sophomore, pre-business major

"This Thanksgiving my mom will probably make the turkey, my aunt will make the ham, desserts are split down the middle and each make a batch of potato salad — one has mayonnaise and one has Miracle Whip."



**Jim Crosswhite**  
Associate professor of English

"At Christmas I will sing Handel's Messiah. It's like an explosion of surprising light in the middle of winter darkness. When you sing it — it changes your mood."



**Donella-Elizabeth Alston**  
Office coordinator, ethnic studies

"I have a friend that has a solstice celebration every year. To receive a gift at the celebration, you have to bring one. Everyone is encouraged to recycle something — we're trying not to be too involved with the consumer frenzy this time of year."

## RESPIRE

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Wilshire isn't able to make it home to San Diego because flights are too expensive. She is thankful that one of her friends will be coming to visit, but she knows that it cannot replace being home for the holiday.

Residence halls don't offer food services for Thanksgiving weekend because the majority of students are gone. Those who stay are left to fend for themselves.

John Hollan, assistant director of Residence Life, said most students are able to make the most of their time while staying on campus during Thanksgiving break.

"Many of them get together in groups to

take advantage of the down time to go out to meals and enjoy time socializing in Eugene, which can be challenging during the academic year," he said.

Another alternative to spending the weekend alone that many students find appealing is staying with a friend's family.

Abram Goodstein, a freshman from Alaska, was able to find a friend to take him in.

"I'm really excited to go," he said. "It's really strange not going home; I'm going somewhere where I don't know what it's going to be like, but I think it will be a good experience."

Regardless of whether students go home, the long weekend is an opportunity to get some much needed rest and relaxation before finals.

Kyle Harris is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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