

Then there are neighborhood community gardens. The Common Ground Garden in the Friendly neighborhood is a great model for neighbors gardening together, with a permit, on public land. Here a group of neighbors have come together, with the city's blessing, to convert vacant city land to a flourishing garden where volunteers are invited to share in the harvest. It succeeds because there was considerable interest in the idea from the start, and it was organized by a dedicated group of people who were willing to put in the time and sweat to make it fly. One of those neighbors is Anne Donahue, who happens to work for the city of Eugene. (She is currently the city's compost and urban agriculture coordinator.)

"The whole goal of the garden," Donahue says, "was to grow food, show folks how to grow their own food in a cooperative growing situation, show neighborhood children where their food comes from and inspire other neighborhoods to do the same in their neighborhoods. We hope to provide a mentorship of sorts for other gardening efforts, both individually and cooperatively."

'You nurture not just plants but people. And I think it makes you a more responsible person.'

— ALICE AIKENS

Donahue, evidently smitten with the concept, adds, "I could tell you so many stories about the neighborhood children that are learning to eat fresh kale and chard, children whose first stop on their neighborhood walk is the cucumber patch and green bean tunnel at the garden, boys that learn to sit calmly while watching a ladybug crawl from one hand to another and back again. Adults change their neighborhood walking patterns to visit the garden regularly to see what we are doing and when we are doing it."

The city puts our money where its mouth is by offering Neighborhood Matching grants for similar projects. "There are many right-of-way areas that might work well for growing spots," Donahue asserts. "Find a likely spot, go down to the permit and information center and ask to speak to a land use staff person. Whether or not a garden can be grown there will need to be determined before looking for a neighborhood matching grant to develop it."

There are still other options for people who would like to grow their own veggies but lack the knowledge, space or sunshine at home. Donahue suggests looking at utility and church property. There are often green grassy areas that need maintenance for the utility, and if gardening is permitted perhaps maintenance can be traded for use of the property. Several churches in town already follow this example, she says.

Lindsey Foltz is volunteer garden manager of a year-old garden project at the corner of 15th and Taylor. It is supported by Eugene Faith Center, which owns the land and helps pay for irrigation. Some volunteers are affiliated with the church, but it is not a requirement. "We welcome new volunteers," Foltz told me. "We volunteers share produce amongst ourselves and also donate to the FOOD for Lane County food pantry on the faith center campus and to the Eugene Mission." More information can be found at www.eugenefaithcenter.org

There may be other opportunities on private land. In my own neighborhood, there's a small garden starting up on the grounds of the privately owned Reach Center, a neighborhood activity center at Harris and 25th. Anyone is welcome to stop by, help cultivate the garden, enjoy the company and take a little produce home (info@reachcentereugene.com).

FFLC Grassroots Garden on Coburg Road could use more volunteers' help to maintain its amazing level of productivity. Director Merry Bradley tells me that in recent years they never logged fewer than 20,000 volunteer hours per year, and often had many more. This past year, for a variety of reasons, numbers have dropped.

Right now, volunteers are needed to distribute some beautiful soil that was recently brought in from the late Courthouse Garden. That garden, the brainchild of federal judge Ann Aiken, became a unique joint gardening venture between the city of Eugene and the University of Oregon, and deserved an award for Most Remarkable Community Garden Setting. It was dismantled this spring after a productive three-year run, and I for one was sorry to see it go. ■

HOW TO GET A GARDEN

To enter the lottery for an available plot in one of the community gardens, return an application with the appropriate payment no later than 5 pm on Monday, March 18. The initial lottery round is drawn from the pool of city of Eugene residents. If plots are still available, there's a second lottery for other applicants.

Visit www.eugene-or.gov/communitygardens for forms and information.

For information about FOOD for Lane County gardens, write gardens@foodforlanecounty.org or call 343-2822

Winter Green Farm

Growing A Healthy World since 1980

Sign up
for your
Weekly CSA
online!

Certified Organic, Biodynamic methods,
Weekly CSA Shares, Farmers' Markets
Organic Pesto at local natural grocers
SNAP benefits accepted for CSA

www.wintergreenfarm.com

541-935-1920 • folks@wintergreenfarm.com

Reduce your Energy Bills with Solar Power

Residential - Commercial - Design - Installation
Solar Hot Water and Solar Electric Solutions



ADVANCED
ENERGY
SYSTEMS

www.AESrenew.com - (541) 683-2345

Oregon's Leading Solar Company

Eugene - Salem - Medford - Portland

Get Ready for Spring at BRING!

Earth Machine
Composters \$65

Plus materials for
raised beds, cold
frames, and more.



BRING • 4446 Franklin Blvd. • Open 7 days.

Locally
Grown

Bloomer's Nursery

Locally
Owned

Giving Your Garden a Helping Hand Since 1970

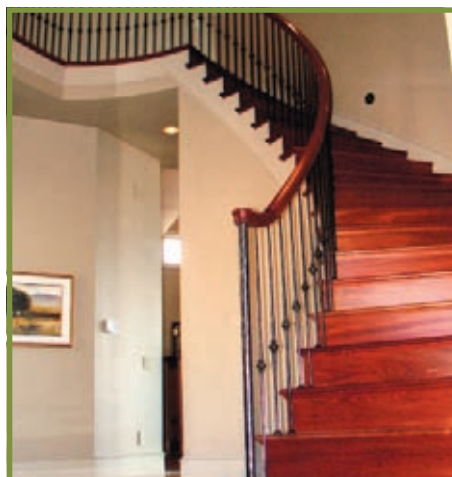
Quality Plants at Great Prices

Visit us at the H&G Show Booth 504&505

Check out Jackie's talks on the "Dig Into Dirt" Stage

Thursday & Friday @ 7pm, Saturday @ 3:30 noon

89719 Armitage Rd. Eugene, OR • 541-687-5919 • Visit us on Facebook



HEIRLOOM CRAFTSMANSHIP IN WOOD

MICHAEL DECKER 541.520.5436 CCB123021