

GROW AN EXTRA ROW

History of Grow an Extra Row

The Grow an Extra Row (GAER) project began in 2004 as late OSU Master Gardener, Gray Thompson's local version of an international project called Plant an Extra Row for the Hungry.

Gray just couldn't stand the idea that so many of his neighbors in Clackamas County were going hungry. He found a garden spot in Oregon City at the Clackamas College Community Gardens and the GAER project was born! CCMGs don't just plan an "extra" row, they plant an "extra" garden.

Gray Thompson and a few other Clackamas Chapter MGs planted and donated mostly tomatoes, beans and squash. Over the ensuing years the group donated several hundred pounds of food to help improve hunger statistics in the County. In 2005, they expanded to 2 garden plots.

April 9, 2007, Gray Thompson had sign-up sheets to recruit other gardeners to volunteer at Extra Row-Feed Hungry garden plots at CCC. Gray was very dedicated to the project and very optimistic.

December 8, 2008 Chapter Minutes: Gray Thompson reported that the "Extra Row" program to help the needy produced many tomatoes, bush beans, summer squash and corn. Produce was donated to Church Food Banks, Meals on Wheels and the Gleaners Warehouse. An approximate value of the 140 pounds of donated tomatoes was \$210. The community garden plots (s) were rented from CCC at a cost of \$40.00.

In 2010 Gray's health slowed him down and he handed off the chairperson baton to Pam Garten.

2010

In 2010, three more plots were added for a total of 3125 square feet. . The committee decided to plan, plant and care for all 5 plots and donate to various agencies in the local area. Although they struggled with severely depleted soil in some areas, and not the greatest of gardening years, the GAER group grew, tended, harvested and donated over 800 lbs. of vegetables to area food banks and kitchens.

2011

In 2011, another plot was added bringing the garden plots total to approximately 3700 square feet. Soil building was on going. Mary Butler co-chaired with Pam

Garten. By this time there was a committee (Rob Folsie, Bob Woods, and Barb Markwell) that oversaw the project.

The GAER committee established routine workdays every Tuesday and Friday from 9:00 am to 1 pm. The gardening season started on April 5th. They designed a brochure to share information about the project with other Master Gardeners and interns and the public. The committee also started a record keeping system to record dates, poundage, activities, etc. They also developed a garden map to keep track of plantings and crop rotation. The group held an Open Garden on July 23rd.

The committee designed and printed t-shirts with the logo “Learn, Teach, Give, Grow an Extra Row, Clackamas Co. Master Gardeners”.



2012

In 2012, GAER donated 1908 # of produce that was donated to local food pantries. During the growing season 21 volunteers worked 692 hours. Committee members were Mary Butler, and Barbara Markwell.

2013

In 2013, GAER donated a total of 2406# to H.O.P.E. at First Presbyterian and First Baptist Church, Tualatin School House Pantry, Oregon City Community Basket and Milwaukie Center Meals on Wheels. During the growing season a total of 20 volunteers, spent a total of 744.8 hours over the 62 days of garden work parties.

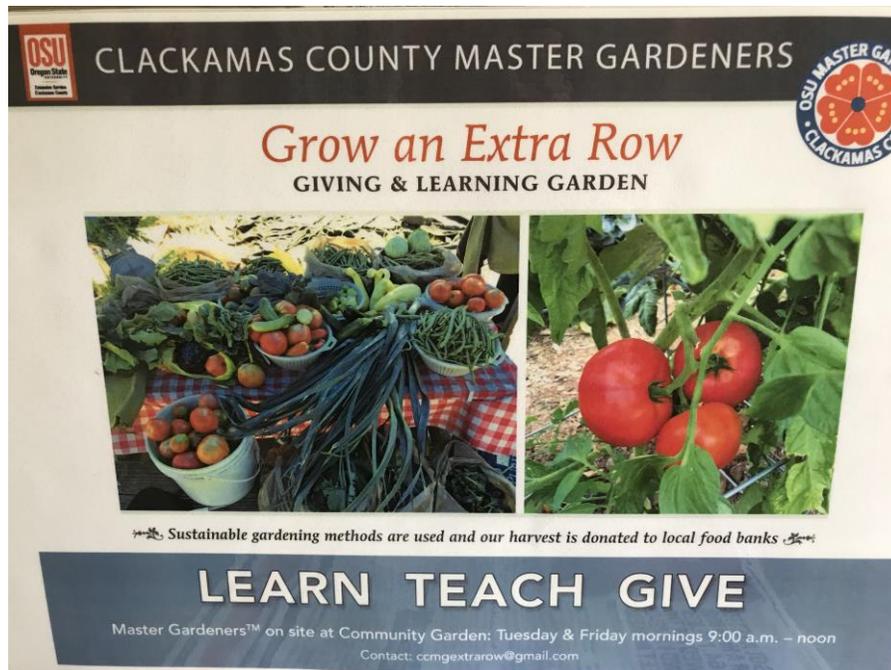
Two more plots were added so there were now 5 plots on the B side of the garden and 2 on the C side. The committee members were Mary Butler, Barbara Markwell, Bari Bilyeu and Nancy Muir.

2014

In 2014 GAER donated 3314 pounds of produce and had 23 volunteers who spent 663.75 hours during the 56 days of growing season. The retail value of the produce was approximately \$6195.

Also in 2014 one more garden plot was added for a total of 8 plots, about 5000 sq. feet. They started a three-year project to upgrade the irrigation system from soaker hoses to drip tape irrigation. The utility area was moved to the newest plot.

The garden became a demo garden in 2014 and changed the name of the project to Grow an Extra Row Giving and Learning Garden (GAER G&LG). The project's Mission statement, "Grow an Extra Row Giving and Learning Garden will grow and give quality food to help people on a limited budget meet their food needs and teach adults how to raise their own healthy food." A sign was made and installed at the garden to inform people about the project and the work schedule at the Garden.



During 2014 some of our larger vegetable donations were 1512# of tomatoes, 193# of green beans, 156# of cucumbers and 215# of summer squash.

The work parties continued to be on Tuesday and Friday mornings with donations going to the H.O.P.E. First Presbyterian food pantry on Tuesday and the H.O.P.E. First Baptist food pantry on Friday with occasional donations to Milwaukie Center and Pioneer Center.

2015

In 2015 Eve Freeman became one of the team leaders joining Bari Bilyeu and Nancy Muir. Donations were 3023# with 24 volunteers working 759 hours during the 59 days of the growing season. Retail value of the donations was \$7429.00. They offered to deliver other gardeners extra produce and 214# of produce was delivered to the food pantries during the season.

In the spring, they co-hosted a “Welcome to the Garden” for the gardeners who rent plots at the Clackamas College Community garden. During the growing season, they arranged for two presentations at the garden on garden related topics. Other community garden gardeners, Master Gardeners and the public were invited to attend. One of our volunteers made a shade cover for our utility area to protect volunteers from sun and rain while weighing produce and/or recording information.

They became a Seed to Supper host and taught a 6-week gardening class in the spring. Seed to Supper is a joint effort of the Oregon Food Bank and Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener Program. It is a comprehensive beginning gardening course that gives novice and adult gardeners the tools and confidence they need to successfully grow a portion of their own food on a limited budget.

2016

In 2016, they donated 3554# of produce that was delivered to H.O.P.E. First Presbyterian and First Baptist food pantries, the Milwaukie Center and Pioneer Center. During the season 29 volunteers worked 840 hours during the 56 days at the garden. They delivered 614# of produce donated by other gardeners. The Welcome to the Garden event was co-sponsored by GAER and the coordinator of the CCC Community Garden. They arranged for three presentations at the garden and invited other community garden gardeners, Master Gardeners and the public to attend. An Open Garden event was held on a Saturday and friends, family and the public were invited to the event. The drip tape irrigation project on all 30 beds in the garden was completed.

2017

In 2017, they donated 3828# of produce that was delivered to H.O.P.E. First Presbyterian and First Baptist food pantries and occasionally to the Milwaukie Center and Pioneer Center. The H.O.P.E. First Presbyterian food pantry serves about

80 families each Tuesday and First Baptist food pantry serves about 50 families each Friday. The produce had an estimated retail value of \$12,367. During the 56 day season 35 volunteers worked 1015 hours. They delivered 699# of donations from other gardeners to the food pantries. They organized the Welcome to the Garden event again and arranged to have 2 presentations at the garden- Growing Tomatoes and Organic Gardening.

One of their volunteers convinced them to not use plastic bags for produce delivery. So, she applied for a Gray Thompson Grant from the Clackamas Country Master Gardeners and received \$150.00 for supplies to make about 120 cloth bags. She recruited some volunteers to help assemble the bags and wash the bags between uses. The cloth bags are better for the environment, sturdier than plastic, and it is easier to weigh the produce.

General Information:

All of the vegetables are grown from seed or transplants. Many of the transplants are grown by volunteers. Each year five varieties of tomatoes are grown + 6 tomatillo plants. Each tomato variety is planted in it's own 25' bed – each of the 12 plants in the bed is caged. Tomatillos are planted in ½ of a bed.

Row cover is used to protect the young plants and for pest control. The garden season is the first of April to mid October, 6 ½ months, and all the beds are winterized in October. The soil is sampled and tested every 2 years and organic fertilizer is applied per the results.

All of the garden is on drip irrigation with timers to control the day and length of watering. The garden beds are on a 4-year crop rotation. In January of each year a Seed Selection Meeting is held to evaluate the previous year's vegetables and varieties and decide what will be planted the next year. Extensive record keeping is done to record all aspects of the garden.

The GAER G&LG project is part of the OSU Extension Service Master Gardener program and is supported and funded by the Clackamas Country Master Gardeners

History prepared by Nancy Muir, July, 2018

History Updates:

2018

In 2018 we donated 3589 pounds of produce with an estimated value of \$13,175.51. Donations went to the First Presbyterian HOPE food pantry and First Baptist HOPE pantry and the Milwaukie Center. During the season 32 volunteers logged 1085.25 hours at the garden. In addition to our donations, we delivered 643 pounds from other gardeners who brought their surplus produce to the garden on either Tuesday or Friday morning. We had 3 mini-training sessions during the season – soil temperature, cucumber beetles and growing onions. Our Open Garden was held on August 4th and we had 27 visitors on a perfect day.

2019

This year we donated 2919 pounds of produce to the First Presbyterian HOPE food pantry and First Baptist HOPE food pantry. During our 56 days of 3 hours work parties we had 44 volunteers who worked 1321.5 hours. Other gardeners donated 813 pounds from their gardens that we delivered along with our produce. There were 3 Professional Development sessions. These were done during the work parties and the topics were “Planting Techniques for Transplants”. “Reaping the Bounty-When and How to Harvest” and “Sharpest Tools in the Shed”. We had an Open Garden on August 3rd and 27 people visited the garden on a warm sunny day.

History Updates 2-13-2020, Nancy Muir