

Features



ANGIE LOVELACE | Photo Editor

Sophomore John Hitchcock weeds his plot of land over the weekend at the Elon Community Garden. Hitchcock serves as the garden's assistant director, teaching his peers lessons including how to grow a "pizza garden."

Garden FAST FACTS

LOCATION: Behind the Vera Richardson Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life
COST: Plots range from \$5 to \$20

GREEN thumbin' to make somethin'

Student gardeners create and maintain the community garden in the shadow of the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life

Sarah Beth Costello
Reporter

In the side yard of the Truitt Center is an oasis of plump strawberries, ripe melons and thick zucchinis grow, seemingly oblivious to the drought affecting North Carolina. Members of the Elon Community Garden tend their plots while friendships grow.

There are no prerequisites for those who want to rent a plot. Gardeners don't need experience or any gardening knowledge.

"[The garden] is open to anyone as long as you consider yourself a member of the community," said junior Breanna Detwiler, director of the Elon Community Garden. About 95 people from Elon are involved with the garden.

"There are about 10 people who you can be pretty sure you'll see on a given week," Detwiler said. "There are other people who are there, but not there every week."

Though gardening is a time-consuming endeavor, many students, faculty, staff and community members are involved in the garden. Biology professor Antonio Izzo recently rented a plot. Izzo saw an advertisement on E-net for the garden and immediately signed up.

When Izzo was a graduate student at the University of California-Berkeley, he was

involved with a community garden.

"The thing I thought was neat about it was it was like an oasis, and I was exposed to a tremendous amount of variety," he said.

As a father, Izzo appreciates the educational aspect of the garden. He said his children are learning that food must be grown; it doesn't just appear. He enjoys working together as a community and forming friendships with the other gardeners.

Students are taking advantage of the community garden as well. Many are involved through organizations like the Sierra Club and Students for Peace and Justice.

Freshman Shana Cooperstein rented a plot for the spring semester. Though she doesn't have gardening experience, she decided to rent a plot because of encouragement from her professors to be "greener." Cooperstein has not begun planting yet because of the rain, but she hopes to plant strawberries and flowers.

"[The garden] is something I'd like to share with my friends," she said. "It will be fun."

Many others have also volunteered their time. The Elon Grounds crew provides seeds and leaves for the soil, and members from the faculty/staff and the Elon College Fellows Living-Learning Community

volunteer their time.

The community garden is a venue for meeting new people and learning new things. Detwiler and sophomore John Hitchcock, the garden's assistant director, hold workshops and work days. Sometimes members of the garden take field trips to a local farmer's market.

"We teach [the other gardeners] how to do something fun," Hitchcock said. Recent lessons include how to create a "pizza garden" by growing basil and tomatoes.

According to Detwiler, the community garden was created to provide food for the Good Shepherd's Kitchen. This organization, run by Allied Churches of Alamance County, provides meals for the homeless and other individuals who can't afford lunch. Last year, the gardeners were able to provide an abundance of food to the Good Shepherd's Kitchen.

Detwiler and Hitchcock have new goals for this year's harvest. They have created the Food for Families program, and said they hope the program will provide healthy, nutritious food to local families in need.

For students interested in becoming involved but lacking a green thumb, Izzo recommends growing zucchini, a vegetable he says anyone can grow regardless of ability.

Student starts stunt driving after driver's safety course

Laura Wainman
Reporter

Justin Berger has turned a life-long love for cars into an exciting, though dangerous, hobby. This freshman loves stunt driving.

Berger says his interest in stunt driving began when he took a Teen Safe Driving course. Once he learned that he could control cars, he began to pursue stunts.

For now, stunt driving is just a hobby for Berger, who hasn't yet driven in any competitions or races, but said he definitely wants to pursue stunt driving opportunities in the future.

"I wouldn't necessarily recommend that anyone else participate in this activity," he said. "But if I could make stunt driving my career, I definitely would."

Berger's most memorable moment of stunt driving did bring him to the brink of injury. He attempted his favorite move, a reverse 180, in an area not big enough for the move. His car's engine stalled, the braking system locked, the power steering was gone and the car stopped right before going over a hill.

"I've never been injured while driving and my knowledge of how to control a car has actually helped me a lot," Berger said. "I had an accident once, but it would have been much worse if I didn't know how to regain

control of the car."

Many may wonder why Berger would want to take part in this dangerous sport, but for Berger, the experience is worth the risks.

"For a while I did it as a stress reliever," Berger said. "My mind would forget about everything else happening in my life, and focus in on the road. Now, I do it for the rush it gives me."

Some other colleges, such as Clemson and N.C. State, have Society of Aeronautical Engineers programs that offer students the chance to participate in formula racing.

Under faculty guidance, the students make their own cars then compete in races against other schools. Elon currently does not have any opportunity like this for its students, but Berger may try to instate a similar program at Elon. He thinks it might be difficult since the engineering program at Elon is fairly small.

According to Berger, there are many misconceptions surrounding his favorite sport. For example, most people assume that a fancy, tricked out car is necessary to being a successful stunt driver.

"As long as you know what you are doing behind the wheel, you really don't even need a souped up car — like in the Bourne movie series," Berger said. "Those cars weren't that special but they had excellent drivers controlling them."



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Freshman Justin Berger enjoys stunt driving so much that he risks injury, including one time when he performed a reverse 180 and nearly sent his car over a hill.



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