

Cooperative gardens join community's members

Emphasis on local produce

BY MATTHEW MCGIBNEY
STAFF WRITER

A blue board identifies the garden behind Kenan Residence Hall as the Carolina Garden Co-Op.

Six long dirt mounds display mostly plain vegetation, with the exception of a patch of bright sunflowers. The rows anchor handwritten markers with the names of vegetables.

At the foot of one row lies a dark blue Nalgene bottle, abandoned in the shade.

Gardens such as the Carolina Garden Co-Op, Carrboro Community Garden Coalition and the Northside Community Garden provide local food, a sense of community and opportunities for physical activity for gardeners.

"Besides producing food, they act as a local gathering place, and as a place for people to get to know each other," said Greta Lee, project manager for the Northside garden at 400 Caldwell St. "There's also education, as people learn from each other about how to grow and cook vegetables."

The Chapel Hill Town Council passed a resolution Monday to encourage the Active Living by Design Committee's pursuit of more community gardens.

The Active Living Committee promotes a more active lifestyle.

John Richardson, town sustainability officer, said the resolution's goal is to expand gardening opportunities in Chapel Hill.

"The idea would be that as more community gardens crop up, no pun intended, more pockets in Chapel Hill would receive the benefits," he said.

As the United States moves away from its agricultural past, fewer people garden, Richardson said.

Food also is often imported from great distances, which can constitute a threat to food security.

"Local food makes us much more self-reliant," said Mike Lanier, an agent with the N. C. Cooperative Extension. "Being dependent on food from far away is probably



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The student-run garden near Kenan Residence Hall is one of several community gardens the Chapel Hill Town Council plans to recognize.

worse than being dependent on foreign oil, and I think we've realized now how bad that is."

On average, food travels more than 1,500 miles from where it is grown to Chapel Hill, Lanier said.

He referenced a trucker strike in England that cut off English cities' food supply.

"It's all about food security, better quality and better-tasting food," he said.

As space and time become more limited, it becomes more difficult for a single household to

maintain a garden.

Community gardens remove some of these obstacles, allowing communities to pool resources and land.

"Usually people don't have a lot of their own space, so gardens act as a place where people can have plots and work together and garden," Lanier said.

"It's more helpful to work with other people than alone."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Garden aims to bridge gap

Homeless would plant, sell produce

BY VICTORIA STILWELL
STAFF WRITER

UNC students are trying to put a face on the town's homeless community.

Campus Y's Hunger and Homelessness Outreach Program aims to start a bio-intensive community garden that would engage students and the homeless in planting their own produce and selling it in the Pit or dining facilities.

"(It's an) all-inclusive program that is not only going to provide the participants with some food and some income, but will also give them some momentum in their life," said sophomore David Baron, the garden coordinator.

The inspiration for the garden came from two different sources for Baron and junior Maggie West, co-chairwoman for HOPE.

West took an alternative spring break trip to a community garden in Durham that has a similar layout as the proposed HOPE garden, while Baron worked in Tanzania for the Global Service

Corps in the sustainable agriculture program.

Homeless specialist Stan Holt of the Triangle United Way said the HOPE garden has potential.

"The more that homeless folks can interact with nonhomeless folks, the better we're able to break down the myths associated with homelessness," Holt said. "Projects like that bring a community together and begin to break those barriers down."

Holt is a member of the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness Executive Team whose goal is to end chronic homelessness, which is defined by consistent periods of time and sometimes accompanied with disability or substance abuse.

John Rogers, an associate pastor of University Presbyterian Church on Franklin Street and member of the executive team, said he thinks the garden would be "incredibly beneficial" to the homeless community.

"Often they feel like they're not treated like a human being.

I think this'll bridge the gap," he said.

The location of the garden has not yet been determined, but there are several potential sites, Baron said.

"Really we'll take anything we can get our hands on," Baron said. "Once we have land, we can get it rolling."

Until then, Baron and West, along with HOPE Co-Chairwoman Megan Strickland, can be found on Franklin Street getting input from the people they are trying to help.

"There's been generally positive feedback from the homeless community," Strickland said.

HOPE will also attend Project Homeless Connect on Thursday to inform people about their project.

"It's a multifaceted effort, combining the local and organic food movement, sustainability, hunger, poverty," Baron said. "I think putting them together makes each one more effective in being solved."

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National and World News

FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Bush team runs the Palin machine

WASHINGTON, D.C. (LAT- WP) — Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin now has at least half a dozen new advisers, and virtually every one shares a common credential: years of service to President Bush.

This reflects a larger reality about Republican John McCain's presidential campaign: Far from being a group of outsiders to the Republican Party power structure, it is now run largely by skilled operatives who learned their crafts in Bush campaigns and various jobs across the Bush government.

Polls reflect tight race for Virginia

WASHINGTON, D.C. (LAT- WP) — Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and Republican opponent John McCain are locked in a competitive race for Virginia's 13 electoral votes, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll.

Virginia could tip the election, and the tight race — voters divide 49 percent for Obama, 46 percent for McCain — foretells a fierce battle. If Obama prevails, he would be the first Democrat since 1964 to win the state, and only the second since 1952.

Democrats, Republicans split over details of economic-stimulus package

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MCT) — Congressional Democrats are pushing for a \$50 billion economic-stimulus plan as a way not only to jolt the economy but also to help themselves politically in November's elections.

The plan would include spending for infrastructure, an extension of unemployment benefits, energy assistance to low-income families and aid to cover Medicaid health care costs.

Most Republicans sharply disagree. They note that negotiators from Congress and the Bush administration already are eyeing

a financial rescue package that's estimated to cost \$700 billion.

With this fiscal year's federal budget deficit likely to top \$400 billion and next year's likely to top that, "sooner or later there will have to be a reckoning," said Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., the top Republican on the Senate Banking Committee.

Independent economists also are unenthusiastic about a new stimulus. They say a \$50 billion plan would add only about half of 1 percent to the GDP, roughly the same as the February stimulus added.

U.S. officials split on Russian policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. (LAT- WP) — The Bush administration is deeply divided on retaliation on Russia for sending troops into Georgia and some fear the conflict is undermining strategic national security collaborations.

Some senior administration officials want to continue a communications blackout with Russia and halt bilateral security initiatives. Officials at the State and Justice departments and Pentagon want a continuance of national security alliances. They believe the ties are too important to jeopardize over the conflict in Georgia.

Market trouble triggers oil spike

LOS ANGELES (LAT- WP) — The price of oil rocketed Monday, posting its largest ever one-day gain as the dollar's value sank and traders went on a buying spree to close out losing positions on expiring October oil contracts.

At one point, light sweet crude for October delivery traded more than \$25 higher than its Friday close; it ended the day at \$120.92 a barrel. The jump reflected the frenzy in financial markets as investors digested the ramifications of the Federal Reserve's still-developing \$700 billion bailout of companies hobbled by soured mortgage investments.



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