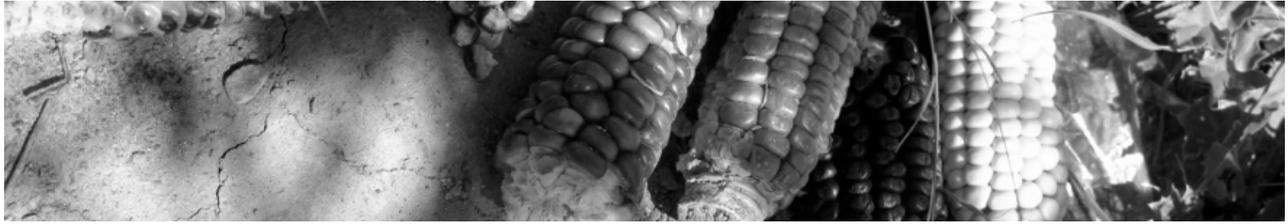


growing a healthier community since 1998



The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado 2009 Year End Report

In 2009, The Garden Project served more people through direct and indirect garden programs than in any other year. Over 1300 youth and adults were served at 5 community and school garden sites, 1 backyard garden, 8 community events, training and workshops and one farm tour. The populations served ranged from preschoolers to seniors. Youth of all ages participated in programming from Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary, Needham Elementary, Durango High School, La Plata Youth Services, Del Alma, and FLC Upward Bound. Adult participants included clients and staff from Manna, the Commons Building, FLC Environmental Center, Durango Senior Center, Master Gardener volunteers and parents of participating youth. The community events and workshops provide information and resources to youth and adults from the greater 4 Corners Area. In total over 1300 people were served, nearly 3 times as many as in 2008. Our volunteer force from Upward Bound, La Plata Youth Services, Fort Lewis College Environmental Center and CSU Master Gardeners along with many others contributed over 1000 HOURS of volunteer time to make this year and all the programs possible!

Garden Program Sites:

- Manna Soup Kitchen
- Commons Garden
- Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary
- Needham Elementary
- Durango Senior Center
- New Garden Projects and Sites are in the planning phase for 2010

Main Contributions and Programs:

- Community and School Garden Support Services
- School Garden Resource Guide and Curriculum
- Community Workshops and Training
- Backyard Garden Give Away
- Garden Cooperative

Working Coalition and Local Foods Efforts

- SW Colorado Farm to School
- Healthy Lifestyle La Plata Local Foods Group
- Growing Partners of SW Colorado

Community Events and Workshops:

- Community Garden Training
- Green Living Expo

- Nature's Oasis New Home Party
- Homegrown Festival
- Fort Lewis College Barnyard Days
- Durango High School Health Expo
- Sustainable San Juan School Garden Presentation
- County Wide School Garden Coordinator Meeting
- Sustainability Alliance of SW Colorado Local Foods Discussion

Other New Services

- Tool Library
- Garden Project Website launched February 2009
- Educational Resources, Lesson Plans and Guidelines Available via website

Volunteer Work Force and Other Populations Served

- Manna Soup Kitchen and Clients
- La Plata County School Students
- Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary Community
- Master Gardener Volunteers
- La Plata Youth Services
- Upward Bound – FLC Program
- FLC Environmental Center
- and 3 FLC Interns: Megan Jenks, Carolyn Bhelm, and Mark Elder

Garden Projects

YOUTH GARDENS

- FORT LEWIS MESA ELEMENTARY:** (2006- CURRENT) The Garden Project served as a classroom garden organizer for the school. The Garden Project worked directly with each grade level Pre-K through 5 with hands on activities and curriculum integration. The Garden Project led students to identify a classroom theme garden for 10 distinct raised beds reflecting the class's character and/or curriculum. Each bed was designed, built and planted in 2008.
- NEEDHAM ELEMENTARY:** (2008-CURRENT) The Garden Project helped Needham Elementary implement its new vegetable garden in the fall of 2009. The garden contains 8 raised bed gardens and is open for classroom projects and curriculum integration. The school led a summer garden club weekly to maintain the garden. Neighbors, students, and volunteers were able to share in the summer harvest. Roots crops especially carrots were the highlight for the newly established garden. In 2010, The Garden Project will complete its work by building a handmade, student made raised bed structure for each of the 8 raised beds.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- MANNA SOUP KITCHEN:** (2005, 2007- CURRENT) Food grown from the Manna Soup Kitchen provided high quality locally grown food for daily lunches. Great volunteer work forces from Master Gardener volunteers, Upward Bound, and La Plata Youth Services helped Manna have its most successful harvest.
- DURANGO SENIOR CENTER:** (2008- CURRENT) In addition to the 2 wheelchair accessible raised beds. The Durango Senior Center now has a newly established perennial and sensory garden. The Garden Project volunteers and staff along with CSU Master Gardeners helped build, install, and plant the new bed.
- COMMONS GARDEN:** (2009-CURRENT) The Commons Garden, in its second year, added more raised bed gardens a mulched pathway, fruit trees, and outdoor patio to its garden.
- NEW GARDEN PLANNING and VISIONING:** The Garden Project has been working with local non profit organizations and invested community members about planning and visioning for new community growing

spaces. In addition to looking for land for more family and individual growing spaces, we are striving to provide a community integration program that incorporates both intergenerational programs and multi-cultural programs.

OTHER FOOD RELATED PROJECTS

- COMMUNITY GARDEN TRAINING (APRIL 2009) Nearly 40 people attended a 1/2 day training on community garden tips, SW Colorado growing guidelines, along with steps to creating and maintaining a community and school garden.

- BACKYARD GARDEN (MAY 2009) The Great Garden Give Away enticed 90 community members and families to apply for a backyard garden. Out of the fabulous entries, 12 year old Alexis Manore's honest and heartfelt application won the honors. The Manores received a full day labor force, 2 flats of vegetable and herb starts, seeds, a couple tools, the necessary soil and amendments, and a six week backyard garden course. Although the Manores were new to gardening, their first year was very fruitful. We hope the recent training and success of year one will bring many more homegrown meals to their family.

