

# In Season

The Urban Harvest Newsletter

## Locavores Buy Local – Eat Fresh



*Locavores crowd Urban Harvest's Bayou City Farmers Market every Saturday morning — rain or shine — from 8:00 am until noon. See page 8.*

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## New Data Base to Ease Online Transactions

We are pleased to announce that through the dedicated efforts and generous contributions of Urban Harvest Board Member Bob Hermes and Darrell Bennett and his firm CRMatic along with “above and beyond the call” staff support by Membership Coordinator Norma DeLaFuenta, we have installed a new database and internet purchasing system using Microsoft Dynamics CRM. By managing class registrations, memberships and donations, the new system will decrease staff and volunteer time required to maintain these services as well as the

paperwork that goes along with maintenance, not to mention the forest full of trees. Integrated with our web site and a new eCommerce system, it allows online registration and payment for classes, membership and donations. Class materials can be e-mailed in advance and there will be no more waiting on hold to register. Membership reminders and packages will be automatically sent so that your membership benefits and information go uninterrupted. In addition, it provides greater security in handling credit card transactions. ■



Urban Harvest

*Working with Gardens and Orchards to Build Healthy Communities*

# The Director's Dirt

On March 27th, Urban Harvest's new Volunteers Task Force hosted a volunteer appreciation party for our beloved Fruit Tree Sale volunteers. Approximately 60 fruit tree sale volunteers turned out for an evening of good food, fine wine, great company and a celebration in honor of their hard work and dedication.



Volunteers Task Force co-chair Suzy Shapiro was the primary organizer and master of ceremonies for this event. She also secured the donation of some incredibly delicious entrees from several local eateries. Her tireless efforts have inspired many others to get involved as volunteers. Way to go Suzy!

Restaurants donating food included Hungry's Café, Last Concert Café, Ruggles Green, The Grove and Ziggy's Healthy Grill. Grum Bar & Grill donated 20 gift certificates that were given away as door prizes and Messina Hoff Winery contributed a private tour of their winery for volunteers.

Scott Howard also made a generous donation to help cover other costs. Joshua's Native Plants provided Flowers for decoration, and Love Street Light Circus donated sound equipment.

The party was held in the ballroom at One America's Plaza, where the Urban Harvest office is located, thanks to the generous donation of the use of the room by building owner Alan Atkinson.

The following people helped organize and host the event, making it a big success: volunteer task force co-chair James Manley, Debbie Leflar, Mary Sommers Pyne, Monica Villareal, Scott Howard, Gary Edmondson, Becky Blanton, Julia Trainer, Herb Shapiro, Greg Leroy, Irv Robbins, Laurel Smith, Jean Fefer, Mary Frances Morris and Garland Kerr.

Fruit Tree Sale co-chairs Bob Randall and Ray Sher were joined by Treesearch Farms owner Heidi Sheesley and Urban Harvest board president Mary Frances Morris as they thanked all the volunteers for their incredible dedication and hard work. And of course, I got a chance to thank Bob and Ray for co-chairing the sale, Gary for serving as staff liaison and the whole team. Thanks again everyone!

The Volunteers Task Force is just getting started. We are now hosting monthly mixers that will provide those wanting to find out more about Urban Harvest a great way to meet new people while finding out more about volunteer opportunities. Each mixer will feature a different Urban Harvest program. And they will all feature great local finger foods, fine wine and great company.

I have a feeling these mixers are going to attract quite a few folks who already know about Urban Harvest, but would love to have another excuse to hang out with some like-minded folks and have some fun. Everyone is welcome! Check the home page of our website, [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org), to find out when the next mixer is scheduled and please help us spread the word to your friends who might want to volunteer with us. ■

*Yours in community gardening,*  
**Mark Bowen, Executive Director**



Urban Harvest

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# Kids Day at Bayou City Farmers Market

by Julia Trainer

On March 28th, Bayou City Farmers Market hosted Kid's Market Day, which was a huge success. Urban Harvest volunteers report that interest in their activities has skyrocketed. Along with a composting activity, planting root cuttings, egg dying and stamps made out of vegetables, volunteers found that most of the kids wanted to plant seeds.



We had sunflowers, beans, sweet peas and watermelons seeds, but the vast majority of the kiddos wanted watermelons growing at their home. Their ages ranged from toddlers in Mama's arms to 10 years old or so. Volunteers reported that watching the kids shivering while planting the seeds was an inspiring sight. The parents were very supportive and interested as well. Moms and Dads were, of course, educated in the process as well.



They all got a pot with their newly planted seeds and "mini-greenhouse", plus the knowledge to do it again on their own. An instruction flier about seeds was provided, and the topic was "What a Seed needs to become a Plant." Volunteers gave a 4 inch pot of Coreopsis to those who wanted it. At one point, kids were standing in line waiting for a place at the table.



The Urban Harvest School & Youth Program had students from their gardening program at the market selling produce from their gardens. They made an impressive \$77 in vegetable sales, and walked away with an immense sense of pride. Proceeds of the sales will supplement the gardening program at their elementary schools.

We were proud to host many of our community partners. Recipe for



Success had a lot of interest in the cooking demonstration that students from McGregor Elementary did, and their mentor Jim Manning reported a wealth of excitement and renewed interest in simple, healthy ways to eat. The Houston Fire Department could hardly keep kids out of their truck, and the Nature Discovery Center was teeming with children at their booth.



Mother's for Clean Air had an incredible amount of interest in their Earth Day 5K, which proves that Houstonians are concerned about air quality. My Table Magazine, Houston's authority on food, reported that they enjoyed interacting with food lovers. The traveling insect zoo was a popular attraction, and we would like to thank Nancy Greig and her co-workers at the Houston Museum of Natural Science for participating. ■



# We've Been to a Garden Party

by Cece Fowler

With over 350 in attendance, this year's Garden Party on Wednesday evening, March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Houstonian Hotel was our most successful event ever. Katy and Michael Casey outdid themselves and helped Urban Harvest raise over \$140,000 in support of our programs.

Garden Party honoree, Wendy Kelsey, whose vision fourteen years ago helped launch an effort that has blossomed into 120 gardens across the city, charmed the room with highlights from her years of service. Because of Wendy's leadership, urban gardens educate children and adults, provide mental and physical therapy, yield nutritious vegetables and are a source of community building and pride.

A stellar live auction and raffle, was hugely popular and an important part of the financial success. Guests were treated to a delicious meal of fresh Gulf snapper and 100% locally grown organic produce, generously provided by the wonderful farmers and vendors from our Bayou City Farmers Market.

The Urban Harvest Board of Directors, Garden Party Committee and staff wish to thank the countless volunteers, auction donors and supporters for their tremendous generosity. ■



## Thank You Garden Party Supporters

### Golden Gardener

Wendy & Mavis Kelsey  
Pi Studios

### Fabulous Farmer

Blackburn & Carter, PC/Garland Kerr  
& Jim Blackburn  
Ann & Arthur Jones  
Louisa Sarofim  
Village Botanica & Georgia's Texas  
Grassfed Beef & Natural Meats

### Happy Horticulturist

Allegiance Bank  
Cindi & Bob Blakely/Dianne & Eliot  
Tucker  
Raymona & Bill Bomar  
Katy & Michael Casey  
Jean & Morton Fefer  
Julie & Edward Griffin  
Harris County Hospital Dist. Found.  
Terry Hershey  
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Sherry & Jim Kempner  
Nancy Powell Moore/Sarah & Ben Powell  
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Jane Blaffer Owen  
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Rio Grande Organics  
Winifred & Carleton Riser  
San Jacinto Capital Corporation  
Josephine Muller Shanks/Carol &  
Dan Price  
Evelyn & Kevin Shanley  
Terri Thomas/Cathleen Davis/Beverly  
Robinson  
Vinson & Elkins  
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### Golden Gardener Individual

Laurence & Bill Anderson  
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Gay A. Roane  
Wilhelmina E. (Beth) Robertson  
Leslie Elkins Sasser & Shannon Sasser  
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Marion & Jim Wilcox  
Judith Williams-Lohmar

### Deserving Our Special Thanks

Apollo Scooters  
Bayou City Farmers' Market Farmers  
Georgia & Rick Bost  
The Casey Family  
Central Market/HEB  
Chef Jeff Everts, Jeff Axline, Lisa Hopkins/  
The Houstonian Hotel  
Suzy Fischer/Fischer Schalles Landscape  
Architecture  
Kristi & Kurt Hopfe  
Sal Maida/Maida's Black Jack Boot Co.  
Gary Mercer/City Kitchen Catering  
Harry Roth/Houston Bicycle Company  
Marlene Shepherd/Agency Design

### Helpers Extraordinaire

Debbie Goble  
Debbie Leflar  
Katy Bomar  
V.J. Dispenza

# Field to Fridge

## Programs: Market

### Upcoming Events

by Julia Trainer

Urban Harvest has partnered with the Texas Department of Agriculture to celebrate our local cuisine at the Fourth Annual Tomato Fest, June 6<sup>th</sup> at the Bayou City Farmers Market. Our vendors are planning to have a variety of tomatoes that include Sweet Million, Sweet Chelsea, Juliette, Carmelo, Champion, Yellow Pear, Sungold, Green Zebra, Brandy Wine and many more. Our very own tomato doctor, Bob Randall, will be on hand to analyze problems that you may have with your tomato plants, and a panel of judges will be taste testing to find the best tomato at the market.

Some of Houston's best chefs will participate in a Tomato Cook-Off. Chefs play an integral part of both our vendor's and our customer's lives. They pay fair prices to farmers who are often offered extremely low prices for their produce. They act as role models to the average consumer by explaining through their dishes new ways to eat. In the words of Julia Child, "You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces — just good food from fresh ingredients."

The market, located behind 3000 Richmond at Eastside (between Kirby and Buffalo Speedway), is open from 8:00am until noon. The first cook-off will be at 8:30am and the second one will start at 10:15am. Chefs will have \$30 to shop for ingredients, all of which will come from the market. Customers can interact with the chefs and afterwards, pick up recipes for their favorite dishes. Make sure to stop by and taste culinary delights from celebrity chefs and treat yourself to the best tasting tomatoes in town! ■



### Summer Relish Tomato Soup

Serves 6

#### Ingredients

**4 pounds coarsely chopped fresh ripe tomatoes**  
**¼ cup balsamic vinegar**  
**salt and white pepper to taste**  
**Summer Relish (see below)**

**Purée tomatoes using a food mill. Discard skins and seeds.**

**Add the vinegar to the purée. Season the mixture with salt and pepper.**

**Cover and refrigerate until cold. Serve in chilled bowls and garnish with 1 or 2 tablespoons of Summer Relish.**

### Summer Relish

#### Ingredients

**¼ cup plain yogurt**  
**1 tablespoon minced fresh basil**  
**2 teaspoons minced fresh mint**  
**¼ cup diced red onion**  
**2 tablespoons diced yellow bell pepper**  
**2 tablespoons seeded and diced cucumber**  
**¼ cup diced firm ripe avocado**  
**salt and black pepper to taste**

**Combine ingredients in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.**

# Growing Communities

## Programs: Community Gardens

### Horticultural Therapy – A Helping Hand for Those in Need

by Kay Harnden

Little did I know when I got my certificate in Horticultural Therapy that I would eventually find myself teaching organic gardening to a group of young men in Houston's Sunnyside neighborhood. My original pursuit was design of therapeutic gardens, a passive realm of horticultural therapy.

That all changed as I was introduced to various populations who clearly benefited from exposure to the natural world through gardening activities, especially at-risk youth. I strongly believe that children can be redirected, inspired and encouraged to succeed if you catch them at an early age.

The boys that I work with through Urban Harvest's School & Youth Program at Pro Vision Charter School are at-risk of being left behind for two reasons. Most come from lower socio-economic environments, and almost without exception, are attending the school because of behavioral problems which have caused them to be removed from other public schools. For many it's their last chance.

ProVision is an all male charter school for boys in the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Their mission states the following: "The key objectives of the program are designed to provide male students with the socio-educational support needed to break patterns of failure and despair as well as redirect them into a pattern of long-term success."

These objectives can be achieved through a horticultural therapy program designed to provide guidance and nurture decision-making ability



and creativity. We encourage teamwork and pride of ownership, educate about the balance of nature and how one person can make an impact. Self-esteem is boosted through accomplishments, and students learn how to handle failure and plan for success.

Bringing a horticultural therapy program to ProVision was the brainchild of its founder, Roynell Young, (Coach Roy). Coach Roy's long-range plan is to open the garden to the community to provide a gathering place for families and neighbors, and to encourage generational interaction. He also wanted to provide a place for the students where they could safely enjoy the outdoors in an educational environment, away from the school. He contacted Urban Harvest about a program specifically targeted to work with the students at ProVision.

We broke ground on the garden six months ago and have installed four beds. We are working on a raised bed that can be utilized by disabled or elderly persons who can't bend or stoop to garden, and planting a row for the hungry, to be donated to others in need. We are also working on plans to build a labyrinth that will serve as a tool for self-reflection and problem-solving for the students.

Last week, I asked the boys to write comments about the gardening program. Most echoed the sentiments of E'zavier Lamb. "Community gardening class is the best thing ever. At first I didn't like to get my hands dirty, but now I enjoy it and that's why I love community gardening."

Ms. Shabazz, who teaches science at ProVision, thought that the garden would provide opportunities for learning in an unconventional setting and believes many of the kids respond totally to the hands-on experience outside of the classroom.

Mrs. Tate, the school's Chief Operating Officer, noticed remarkable changes in the students who are participating in the program. "To see the fruit and vegetables reminds me of the young men as they enter the ProVision school. A seed is a small thing, but once it grows you never know how powerful and nourishing it can be."

I see great potential in the students. These are good, smart kids that have had some severe obstacles to overcome and who deal daily with life conditions that you could not imagine. I am proud of them, and I only hope that I've made half the impact on them that they have made on me. ■

# Locavores Buy Local – Eat Fresh

by Julia Trainer

The word “locavore” was coined in 2005 by four women in San Francisco who proposed that local residents try to eat only food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius. The word ‘locavore’ became the Oxford Dictionary’s word of the year, and it “shows how food-lovers can enjoy what they eat while still appreciating the impact they have on the environment,” said Ben Zimmer, editor for American dictionaries at Oxford University Press. “It’s significant in that it brings together eating and ecology in a new way.”

## The Movement

The movement encourages consumers to buy from farmers markets or even to grow their own food. Locavores have discovered that fresh, local products are more nutritious and taste better. Leaders encourage people to change where they shop, by starting at farmers markets, CSAs, or Community Supported Agriculture, co-ops, farm stands and supermarkets that carry local products are other options of where to shop for locally grown food. Critics say that locally grown food tends to be more expensive. However, a thrifty shopper can find competitively priced food, and proponents say that by eating locally, you support your local economy and help build your community. In buying locally, your carbon footprint is reduced. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture did a study and approximated that the “food miles” a vegetable travels is 1500 miles from the farm to your neighborhood grocery store. That is seventeen times more oil and gas than a local diet. Proponents of the movement encourage distributors to buy local because it enhances the economic stability of the area.

## The Produce

Locally grown produce is usually harvested within twenty four hours of being sold at a farmers market, and are at the height of nutritional value. Producers at farmers market tend to raise unusual varieties that won’t be in supermarkets because of their short shelf life. Since the same





produce generally isn't offered year round, locavores advise to preserve (freeze, dry or can) your favorite food to enjoy later. At a farmers market, customers can look the produce in the eye, and find out exactly what you are buying. Customers are encouraged to ask questions like, "What pesticides were used?" "Is the corn used in the chicken feed genetically modified?" Producers are proud people, and love to share their techniques with their customers. Many times, those producers welcome visits to their farms, and allow people to see the details of their operation.

### The Challenge

There are several families that have taken on the challenge of only buying food produced within 100 mile radius of their home. Barbara Kingsolver chronicled her families experience in a recent book, and the Bevan family of New York City blogged about their experience. The Bevans even went so far as to shut off their electricity, take the stairs, and bike to work as extreme measures to their year long quest to erasing their carbon footprint on the environment. One of the most difficult transformations for the Bevans was life without a refrigerator.

The Arroyos family of Sugarland, Texas, have also taken on the year long diet and describe it on their website [www.100mileharvest.com](http://www.100mileharvest.com). Eight months ago, they started the diet. They shop at the Bayou City Farmers Market every Saturday, and have visited many of our vendor's farms. They recently bought a "cow share," and plan on processing it when the cow gets old.

They still travel, and have found it surprisingly easy to stick to their diet in wherever they go. For example, at Thanksgiving, they traveled to New York, shopped at the Union Square Farmers Market, and ate at several farm to table restaurants. They blog about the current food system, and want to challenge their involvement in that system. In the family's words, "we have come to understand more about local food production and sustainability, our power as "enlightened" consumers and the role we share in challenging an industrial food system that is threatening human health, damaging the environment and undermining global food security." ■



# Summer Classes

## Programs: Education

Classes are held at 2311 Canal Street (unless otherwise noted); visit our website for directions. Please register at least three business days before the class by calling 713/880-5540. We accept walk-ins unless the class is full.

### **SELLING AT A FARMERS MARKET**

Selling at local farmers markets is one of the easiest ways to get a big return for your labor. This class provides basic information on the techniques of market gardening. Pre-registration by the preceding Thursday is required.

Instructors: Jim Bundscho, Gita Van Woerden & Ray Sher

Tuesday, May 26, 4:00–6:00pm (Bundscho)  
Monday, June 22, 4:00–6:00pm (Van Woerden)  
Monday, July 27, 4:00–6:00pm (Sher)  
Monday, August 24, 4:00–6:00pm (Bundscho)  
\$20 members, \$30 non-members



### **HOME FRUIT & VEGETABLE GARDENING**

This class is for anyone who wants to build a vegetable or fruit garden at their home. Each step of the process, from choosing a site for your vegetables and fruits to building

garden beds, will be discussed. Choosing soil, an irrigation system, building materials and tools are all part of this class.

Instructor: Gary Edmondson

Thursday, May 28, 6:30–9:30pm  
Thursday, July 23, 6:30–9:30pm  
\$20 members, \$30 non-members

### **PLANNING THE FALL VEGETABLE GARDEN**

Experienced gardeners know that a great fall garden starts with preparation now. Learn what varieties to plant and when, soil prep, seed germination and transplanting.

Instructors: Bob Randall, Diana Liga, Ray Sher and Gary Edmondson

Saturday, July 25, 9:30am–12:00pm (Randall & Liga)  
Thursday, July 30, 6:30–9:00pm (Liga & Sher)  
Saturday, August 8, 9:30am–12:00pm (Edmondson)  
\$20 members, \$30 non-members

### **HOW TO START A GARDEN SERIES**

Over 100 gardens are growing throughout our area at schools, places of worship, parks and on vacant lots. In this series, learn how to start a community or school garden.

*Class 1: Getting Started* — Explore goals for your garden, begin organizing volunteers and looking for funding.

*Class 2: Design* — Learn the criteria needed to choose a site, design the garden and develop a budget.

*Class 3: Implementation* — Review and modify the design and budget. Learn layout and construction procedures.

Bring a few volunteers with you to the first class to see if they would like to learn more. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit is available.

Instructors: Gary Edmondson and Becky Blanton

*Class 1: Getting Started*  
Wednesday, July 8, 4:15–6:45 pm (Blanton)  
Monday, May 4, 2:00–4:30 pm  
Free Class

*Class 2: Design*  
Wednesday, July 15, 4:15–6:45 pm  
\$20 members, \$30 non-members

*Class 3: Implementation*  
Wednesday, July 29, 4:15–6:45 pm  
\$20 members, \$30 non-members

If you would like this series to be taught at your site or you are interested in attending a class during the months of June or August, call Gary Edmondson (713/880-5540).

# My Table Talks

by Mark Bowen

## An Interview with Teresa Byrne-Dodge, editor and publisher of My Table magazine and The Ultimate Food Lovers Guide to Houston

**Q.** Teresa, please tell our readers a little bit about your background and why you write about food.

**A.** No one is more surprised than I to have ended up with a 25-year career in food writing. In graduate school, my area of emphasis was critical writing — I expected to be an arts critic. A couple years later at The Houston Post (where I worked as a feature writer and an arts writer), there was an opening for a restaurant critic for the Sunday magazine, and I raised my hand. I've learned so much since then. You could say I've had 25 years of on-the-job training. I'm still learning, especially about wine.

**Q.** We are thrilled to hear My Table Magazine is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary, and are grateful for the major role My Table has played in promoting locally grown food. Where did the inspiration come from?

**A.** After reviewing restaurants for The Houston Post for four years, I put in another four years with Houston Metropolitan magazine. At the same time, I wrote many freelance articles, mostly on food and restaurants. Then I became the local Houston editor for the Zagat Restaurant Survey. Along the way I became aware of a little restaurant newsletter written and published by Seymour Britchky in New York City. I loved his strong writing style. I thought his was the ideal job: to write and publish a tart little newsletter. That's how My Table began in 1994, as a 12-page photocopied newsletter. It had no advertising, no color cover, no newsstand sales. The first issue had just 64 subscribers, and my mom helped me stuff and address the envelopes. Today the magazine is read by about 22,000 Houstonians.

**Q.** I am very attached to my well-worn copy of The Ultimate Food Lover's Guide to Houston. I

know how I use it, but what is it that you are trying to accomplish ultimately with the book?

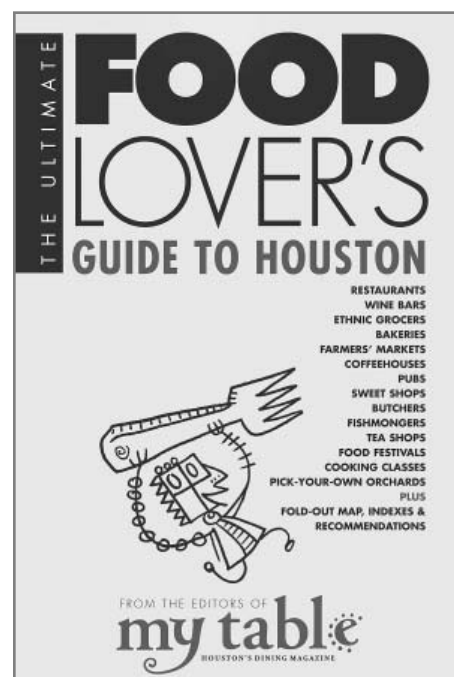
**A.** We wanted this book to be much more than a restaurant guide. Houston doesn't need any more restaurant guides, with all their symbols and ratings and letter grades. What we wanted was to gather up everything edible and drinkable in Houston, from farmers' markets to wine bars to butchers to teahouses to ethnic grocers, and present this as an enormous bouquet. Yes, of course, restaurants are a big part of that, but we chose to use a holistic approach to food and drink in our city. We had a complaint from a reader who said we didn't give any information about the cost and quality of the restaurants in our book. That's not true. What we don't give you are four little numbers at the top of the review. We want you to read the reviews. We timed them, and the average review requires just 20 seconds to read. Once you have read it, you will have a feel for the ambiance, the cost, the service and what we think of the place. We do our job with words instead of numbers. For that reason, you might say we are the "anti-Zagat."

**Q.** What do you think about slow food and locavore movements?

**A.** Houston is always slow to jump on national trends, but there's no denying the slow food and local food movements have finally taken root here. I think it's marvelous! Chefs like Randy Evans, Bryan Caswell, Chris Shepherd and Monica Pope have done much to bring this about. It's not always easy to go local — there are limited supplies, weather issues — but I'm hopeful that this trendlet will continue to grow. I'd like to see more local cheese and butter producers, more organic and heirloom meat producers, more of everything in order

to spread around the risk and returns. Some crops require a large investment of time. I'm thinking of Texas olive oil, for example. Olive trees are now in the ground in South Texas, but it will be a couple years before Texas olive oil begins to be widely available. The best thing we all can do is to spend a little extra money to support those people who have the courage to invest their time — and it's no 9-to-5 job — and savings in this work.

**Q.** How can our readers subscribe to My Table, and where can they find The Ultimate Food Lovers Guide to Houston?



**A.** My Table is for sale at newsstands around town, including better supermarkets, Bering's, House of Coffee Beans, Issues, bookstores and many other places. People can subscribe on our website at [www.my-table.com](http://www.my-table.com). The guidebook is also available at foodie shops, gift shops, bookstores, etc., plus on our website and on Amazon.com. ■

# Sharpen Your Shovels

## Programs: Schools & Youth

### Growing a Sustainable Future

by Carol Burton

In the garden at one of our elementary school partnerships, the first and second graders harvest carrots and ask for more as a delicious snack straight from the garden. The experienced gardeners show off their gardening knowledge by plucking lettuce leaves and eating the leaves right on the spot, then demonstrate and guide the new comers in picking their own.

Boundaries between students are broken down. A special education student labeled “emotionally disturbed” and whose education plan requires an aide to shadow him, blends right in with the other students.

Students observe the insectaria, transfixed on lady bugs among the billowing dill gone to flower and seed. There lies a symphony of endless life cycles where we observe aphids, juvenile lady bugs, tiny wasps and flies all gathered for the song of predator and prey.



They count lady bugs and catch and release them for good luck. In the garden, multiple disciplines are cultivated.

A third grader, discovers the mulberries in the butterfly garden and asks if they are edible. The gardener’s take a break to forage for berries around the mulberry tree. At first tentatively, then with exuberance, they creatively problem solve and work together. The older students bring the higher branches down for the younger students to pick the ripe berries.

At the end of class, students share in the lettuce harvest. There is a clamor for more as the last radishes of the season are divided among them, but the students know when they come back for the next class, the garden will keep on giving if it is well-tended.

These garden scenarios are typical of all our partnership gardens. Our School and Youth program impacts youth by bringing a direct connection with nature in real life projects. Tending the school garden provides many opportunities to cultivate healthier eating habits and nurture the future stewards of the environment.

It is critical for youth to experience the dynamics of our interdependence with nature in order to develop an environmental conscience. An environmental conscience is the basis for promoting the health of the individual and the health our future.

Urban Harvest provides after and during school gardening classes at 20 area schools and one community center. We tailor our gardening programs to meet the needs of our school partners where we deliver nearly 90 hours of environmental education per week.

Urban Harvest is privileged to have passionate and dedicated volunteers, community partners and supporters that enable us to build vibrant green educational communities. ■

### 2008-09 Partnerships

Browning Elementary  
Davila Elementary  
Durham Elementary  
Durkee Elementary  
Families Under Urban and Social Attack, Inc.  
Garcia Elementary  
Garden Oaks Elementary  
Harvard Elementary  
Janowski Elementary  
Patterson Elementary  
Peck Elementary  
Pleasantville Elementary  
Port Houston Elementary  
Pro-Vision, Inc.  
Yates High School  
DeChuames Elementary  
Park Place Elementary  
Rucker Elementary  
Wharton Elementary  
Whittier Elementary



# Green Advice

## Programs: Education

### Increasing Vegetable Production

by Ray Sher

We all select the vegetables we grow in our gardens/farms for many different reasons. The home gardener may grow as many different vegetables as possible in order to have a diverse menu. The community gardener who is growing for a food pantry or soup kitchen grows the vegetables that the clients of the soup kitchen/pantry want to eat. A market gardener may grow vegetables that sell well at a market. However, every gardener wants to have as much production as possible on the garden/farm space they have available.

For the most production, consider several factors. Any vegetable that can be harvested repeatedly over an extended period of time will likely be the most productive. These include kale, collards, Swiss chard, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, okra, tomatoes, basil, yard long beans and endive.



Vegetables that are planted once, and harvested once, may be the least productive. These include beets, bok choy, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, leek, kohlrabi, Brussels sprouts, parsnip and rutabaga.

Then there are the vegetables that can be harvested a few times before they stop producing. These vegetables are more productive than those that are harvested once, but less productive than those that can be harvested over an extended period of time. These include green beans, broccoli, sugar peas and mustards.

In planting any vegetable, we might want to select those varieties that produce the quickest. For instance, Mokum carrot is ready in 54 days, while Cosmic Purple is ready in 70 days; Early Wonder beet is ready in 45 days, while Chioggia takes 55 days. Planting the quicker-to-harvest varieties allows for quicker turnaround in planting something else.

Then we might consider production per square foot. Some vegetables, even if they can be harvested over a long period of time, will produce more than other vegetables in the same amount of space. This may be a little hard to determine, for consideration needs to be given to weight versus volume.

Certain varieties of tomatoes will produce a great deal more than others. For instance, Sweet Million and Sweet Chelsea produce many more pounds of tomatoes than most of the non-red varieties of cherry tomatoes; and Suvo Long cucumber produces more poundage than many of the other cucumber varieties.

Increasing production calls for a little planning. Consider the time it takes to harvest, the length of harvest and the amount per planting space, and reap a more productive harvest. ■



# Summer Planting Guide

	<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>
<b>Average Temperatures</b>	<b>Hi 91 – Lo 72</b>	<b>Hi 94 – Lo 74</b>	<b>Hi 94 – Lo 73</b>
arugula, roquet (seed)	1-30	1-31	1-31
artichoke, globe (seed, in pots in AC)			1-31
Asian spinach (eng tsai, rau muong)	*1-14, 15-30	1-31	
basil (seed/plants)	*1-30	1-31	1-31
beans, asparagus; long beans (seed)	1-30	1-14	
beans, green snap, bush (seed)			7-14, *15-31
beans, green snap, pole (seed)		*1-14, 15-21	
beans, lima/butterpeas (seed)	*1-21		
beans, soy/endame(seed)			7-14, *15-31
berseem clover (seed) (nitrogen hay)			15-31
bitter melon (seed)	1-30		
boc choy, summer var. (seed, row cover)			1-31
broccoli (seed)			*1-31
Brussels sprouts (seed)			*1-31
burdock (gobo) (seed)			1-31
buckwheat for beneficials, soil (seed)	*1-30	*1-14, 15-31	1-31
cabbage (seed)			*1-31
cape gooseberry/ground cherry (seed)	1-30	1-31	*1-31
chard, Swiss chard (seed)			15-31
Chinese broccoli, gailan (seed)			1-31
Chinese summer heading cabbage (seed)			1-31
collard (seed)			*1-31
cucumber, burpless/suyo (seed/sprout)	*1-30	*1-31	
cucuzi, Italian white squash (sd/sprouts)	*1-30		
eggplant, plants	1-14		
endive & escarole (seed)		1-31	1-31
false roselle (seed)	1-30		
fuzzy gourd/Chinese white squash (seed)	1-30		
garlic chives (sets/plants)	1-30	1-31	1-14, *15-31
ginger root, galangal (plant/root)	1-15		
luffa/Chinese okra (seed)	1-30		
malabar spinach/running spinach (seed)	*1-30		
millet and sorghum (seed)	1-30	*1-31	*1-14
mizuna (seed under row cover)			1-31

# Summer Planting Guide

	June	July	August
Average Temperatures	Hi 91 – Lo 72	Hi 94 – Lo 74	Hi 94 – Lo 73
onion, multiplying (sets)			*1-31
peas, southern (seed)	*1-30	*1-31	1-14
rhubarb (seed in colder areas)			1-31
romanesco/Italian broccoli (seed)			*1-31
rosemary, sage, thyme (plant)	1-30	1-31	1-31
squash; straightneck, zucchini (seed)			*1-15
squash; cocozelle, trombocino (seed)		*15-31	
squash; cushaw, butternut, spaghetti, tatume	*1-30	*1-7	
sweet potato & bonaito (sets)	1-30	1-31	*1-31
sweet potato spinach	1-30	1-31	1-31
tapioca/yuca (rooted cuttings)	1-30		
taro/malanga (tubers)	1-30	1-31	
tendergreens/mustard spinach, (seed)			row cover 1-31
tomatillo (seed)	*1-30	1-31	
Tomato 50-80 day varieties	seeds	plants	plants
--north FM 1960/W Hiway 6		*1-15	
--Montrose,W.Univ.3 <sup>rd</sup> Ward,Galveston	16-30		1-15, *16-31
--elsewhere	*1-15	*16-31	1-15
Tomato 80-100 day varieties	seeds	plants	plants
--north FM 1960/W Hiway 6	*16-30		1-7
--Montrose,W.Univ.3 <sup>rd</sup> Ward,Galveston	1-15, *16-30	16-31	*1-15
--elsewhere		*1-15, 16-31	
vetch cover crop (seed)			*1-31

\* ideal time to plant, ? questionable time to plant

## Simple Summer Pest Control

**AVOID HARSH PRODUCTS** — Many chemical pesticides in the landscape will kill a wide variety of insects, including beneficials. Instead, choose the least-toxic, most selective and least disruptive products. Organic products that are safer for your beneficial insects include:

- citrus oil – fire ants, fleas, scale, chinch bugs
- garlic oil – spider mites, lacebugs
- insecticidal soaps – aphids, thrips
- microbes such as Bt or Bti – worms, mosquito larvae
- neem oil – lacebugs, leaf miners
- liquid pepper – many insects
- soybean oil – whiteflies.

**KNOW YOUR BUGS** — It might seem like a certain insect is guilty of being a pest, but it often turns out that the insect has moved in to take care of the real culprit. The Texas Bug Book by Malcolm Beck and Howard Garrett is a helpful identification guide. Beneficials to be familiar with include:

- ladybug larvae as well as the adults
- lacewings (not to be confused with lacebugs)
- assassin bugs
- big-eyed bugs
- parasitic and predatory flies (hover, syrphid, tachanid)
- parasitic wasps (braconid and trichogramma)
- spined soldier bugs and ground beetles.



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#### **DONATE ONLINE TODAY!**

You can join Urban Harvest, renew your membership or make a donation on our website.  
[www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)

## **Spring Fling Success Despite Rain**

While Houston's weekend weather has been just what the Convention and Visitor's Center ordered, the skies decided to open-up on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, when the Urban Harvest Community Garden Committee and the Upper Kirby District Community Garden hosted the 2009 Spring Fling. Typically held in the hosting garden, this year's celebration took place in the hallways and first floor conference room of the Upper Kirby District Building.

There were brief garden tours between downpours, but most of the excitement for the nearly 70 attendees was inside where bee wrangler Jennifer Scott discussed her demonstration hive, photographer Ken Frederick displayed garden photos, Southwest Fertilizer folks shared information and samples of organic products, Kristin Nortrom gave chair massages and market gardener Ray Sher talked about selling at the Bayou City Farmers Market. Gardeners brought their favorite dish for a pot-luck feast, the centerpieces of which included the Alabama Garden's famous grilled chicken and fixin's and BB's Cajun Cafe Brooks Bessler's Sausage and Grillades Gumbo and Chicken Etouffee. ■

