



WestWind Church Community Garden

~ *Plant Hope, Grow Faith* ~

MISSION: “Plant Hope. Grow Faith.”

Gardening and giving back... providing a positive environment for inexperienced and experienced gardeners to work the soil to grow fresh produce for their families and to donate 50% of crops to people in the community in need. The garden provides the opportunity to learn, share, give back, make friends, and enrich our lives with healthy food and communing with nature. The garden promotes organic methods and nearby compost bins help encourage and educate on green, sustainable gardening.

GENERAL FACTS

Approximately 20 members of the community, including a Boy Scout troop and Indian Guides, in addition to five members of WestWind, the sponsor, initiated gardens in 2011. It is composed of raised beds – twelve 4’x16’ (subdivided to 4’x8’) and eight 4’x4’ beds. Yearly plot charges are as follows: 4’x 4’ \$20.00, 4’x 8’ \$25, 4’ x 12’ \$30, 4’x 16’ \$35 per year (Feb. 1st to Jan. 31st). Included is the bed and water. Mulch, compost and soil amendments will be provided as available. A rebate of \$10.00 will be given at the end of the growing season once your plot is cleaned up, or you may apply it toward your fee for the following year.

HISTORY

The WestWind Church Community Garden has completed its first year. The garden dealt with poor soil quality, initially, followed by several months of a hot, extremely dry Texas summer. However, we had good irrigation thanks to the efforts and know-how of church member, Jim Buresh. The garden has really been a learning experience for many of the gardeners, some of whom have never grown anything. Several gardeners even planted winter crops so the Keller Community Storehouse has received some fresh produce every month since June 2011. The garden was built primarily with donations from church members and local vendors. The garden is a non-profit organization coordinated by WestWind Church. We continue to seek sponsors and community support with monetary and material donations, and labor to maintain and expand the garden.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2011, the garden’s first year, despite a slow start due to poor soil quality and extreme heat, a wide variety of produce was harvested including many kinds of squash, peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, cantaloupes, watermelons, okra, eggplant, snow peas, cucumbers, radishes, beans and pumpkins. Total pounds donated to Keller Community Storehouse from June 2011 through January 2012: 570 lbs.

We hosted two children’s field trips to the garden. 100 Kindergarteners from Shady Grove Elementary walked over to visit near the end of the school year to explore what was growing and to bring items for the compost bin. The Primrose Daycare brought vans full of children in July and they observed and identified all of the vegetables growing and learned about composting. Gardens encourage kids to make more nutritious food choices when they take part in planting, caring for and/or harvesting produce. We encourage families and individuals to have their own raised bed or container garden at home, including a compost bin, to eat healthier and to save money. Many consumers are concerned about rising food prices and chemicals in foods. An organic garden is a terrific teaching tool for addressing these issues at home.

GOALS

The garden team plans to expand the garden this February by building more raised beds, including some that are waist-high for easier accessibility by physically challenged gardeners. An herb garden, orchard, and shaded pavilion/shed with rainwater collection barrels is planned for the future. Saturday, February 18, 2012 will be the first workday of the year. Sign a contract to work available garden plots as well.

We will continue to harvest and weigh produce on a weekly basis, as available, and take donations to the Keller Community Storehouse. Garden team meetings or workdays are planned approximately every month to learn and share ideas and to accomplish garden goals. We also wish to provide a service to the community with educational opportunities and as a field trip destination for children. We encourage students from schools, churches and organizations to earn service hours on garden workdays while learning the benefits of organic gardening. Community gardening promotes good health and strong communities. The WestWind Church Community Garden nurtures community spirit and enriches lives with the common goals of growing nutritious food and sharing with the needy in our community. The garden exemplifies the joy of planting a seed and watching it grow.