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Visit GICD online at www.gardendallas.org and download your copy of **Ever Growing**

Program Highlights in 2007

1. More Gardens GICD has been searching out community gardens in the North Texas area. We have located **23**, so far, scattered across 9 cities. GICD works regionally to promote community gardening and has made the most progress inside the city of Dallas. There are now **10 successful Dallas community gardens**, and several more that are struggling to get started (see New Garden Notes on page 3). Five Dallas community gardens are fully associated within GICD’s network, and these work together to help provide training and support to bring about sustainable community greening projects across the region.

2. Community Gardening Education This past year GICD staff and volunteer gardeners from our 5 member community gardens made a major investment in education. Together we hosted garden tours, workshops, trainings, and volunteer workdays. Among these trainings were garden maintenance, canning classes, seed saving, mixing organic fertilizers, composting, and how to start a community garden. From January through July 2007, we held 33



Fireside Recreation Center Summer Youth at Our Saviour

organized training events that provided the public with 338 hours of community gardening skill learning opportunities. Our trainings were attended by 540 adults and 134 children.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

PLANT SALE 2008

SATURDAY APRIL 19
& SUNDAY APRIL 20

EAST DALLAS
COMMUNITY
GARDEN

1416 N. FITZHUGH
DALLAS

3. More Youth and Children’s Projects This past year 16 different youth or children’s groups have participated at one of our gardens in group projects, and we had three individual children’s projects. For a list of these youth and children’s projects please go to page 7.

4. More Donation Gardening Two of our member gardens, Hope and Our Saviour continue growing vegetables to donate to local food pantries. Already this year, January through November, these donations have totaled 6,175 pounds. GICD adopted this idea from Coppell Community Gardens, and it has become an example for other local community gardens, including the 2 year old UTD Student Community Garden, the Dallas Educational Community Garden at the Cooperative Extension Center, the Community Harvest garden in Plano, and two newly forming gardens at Saint Thomas Episcopal Church and Cornerstone Baptist Church.

GARDENERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Gardeners in Community Development

www.gardendallas.org

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grower@flash.net

For information about newsletter contents, or permission to reprint, contact our acting editor, Don Lambert, at 972-231-3565.



5. Passing on the Gift Award We feel extremely honored to have received the **Passing on the Gift Award** for the second year in a row from **Heifer International**. This well deserved award recognizes GICD's pioneering work in Dallas Urban Agriculture. From among Heifer projects in Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Chihuahua, and Arizona, GICD was chosen for making the best use of Heifer's support and grant monies by giving back to the community through educational training and produce donations to food pantries. The award was presented by USA County Program Director, Steve Muntz, and Southwest Program Manager, Dr. Rigoberto Delgado.

6. Waterworks 2007 Thanks to **Organic Gardening Magazine** and **Aveeno Skin Care Products**, Our Saviour Community Garden now has a 2000 gallon rainwater catchment system, which includes a pavilion for outdoor meetings and workshops, and landscaping to beautify the gardens. The pavilion was built by **Tim Bonner and Associates, Inc.**, and the water cistern portion was installed by **Greg Whitfield of The Rainwell**. Since the dedication in July this facility has been a gathering place for the community, and has been wonderful as a teaching space, and place to work and rest.

7. East Dallas Gardens Revitalization

The Cambodian market garden group at the East Dallas and Live Oak Community Gardens continues, from a start 20 year ago, to grow and sell their fresh produce. However the number of growers is diminishing each year, and is now down to about 10 families. GICD is currently redirecting the use of gardening space. Starting last year we began refitting some plots for the **New Refugee Garden Project**, adding several new families from Southeast Asian and African war torn regions. This year an after school group, the **Green Community Garden Team**, from **Cesar Chavez Learning Center**, comes on Fridays to learn about gardening. They also work in a large planting, now in lettuce and various greens, that is being grown for donation to a local food pantry. A local Boy Scout troop is also interested in joining this garden.

8. News & Media About GICD It has been a good year for GICD in terms of media coverage. **Organic Gardening Magazine** had a short description on Our Saviour Community Garden in the April 2007 edition announcing winners of the **2007 Waterworks** projects. A follow up article in November featured photos of the water catchment dedication and an article on Dallas's many community gardens, ecofriendly nurseries, and public gardens. In June, **D Magazine** ran beautiful photos and gardener's stories from our East Dallas Community Garden. Hope Community Garden was on the **Dallas Water Utilities Waterwise Tour** and appeared in a flyer sent out as a Water Utilities insert. And throughout this year our community garden events have gotten consistent announcements in the **Dallas Morning News**, especially in the Home/Garden section, and NeighborsGo editions for White Rock and the Central (Metro) areas.

9. Community Support is Growing Each year more and more people in the Dallas area are getting involved in GICD.

10. Ever Growing e-Newsletter Our new **e-newsletter** has been launched to keep the public better informed about current events and the dynamic growth of Dallas area community gardening. To download your copy, look for the **Ever Growing** link on our website at www.gardendallas.org.

New Plants/Old Favorites

By Carolyn Bush

Now here's a Jeopardy question that might have stumped even Ken Jennings:

Answer: A subtropical vine that has beautiful white fringed, lacy flowers that have a sweet perfume, leaves that when crushed smell like "hot buttered popcorn", and edible fruit that can grow up to 3 feet or more long and looks like a creature.

Question: What is Snake Gourd?

Snake Gourd (genus *Trichosanthes*, which is Greek for "hair flower") is an edible gourd grown throughout India, Australia and Insular and Mainland Southeast Asia. It is also grown in Dallas by the Laotian and Cambodian gardeners of the East Dallas Community and Market Garden, who find our hot humid climate very reminiscent of their homeland. This vegetable produces long and curved fruits that appear like snakes hanging from supports or laying on the ground.

Of course most popular vegetables come in a diversity of shapes, as in there are



long skinny radishes and small round ones, and accordingly the variety of snake gourd grown at the East Dallas garden has fruit that is usually very short, about 4"-6." The local Southeast Asian refugee community probably brought seed from Thailand or Cambodia, and to them the short variety is normal. In Indian groceries and some Asian stores, like Hong Kong Super Market, a more rustic variety is seen that is several feet long.

All true snake gourds, *Trichosanthes anguina*, get soft when ripe and usually disintegrate on the vine. They are eaten

when very immature, while the fruit is tender and the seeds are still soft. The fruit turns bright orange when ripe and has seeds surrounded by a bright red pulp. The mature fruit often breaks open spilling the contents, which look like big clots of



blood (hence the name "*anguina*"). The red pulp is sweet to the taste and considered a delicacy by Southeast Asian children.

Snake gourd seeds can be planted in full sun or partial shade in late spring after the soil is warm. The seeds have a hard coat and need to be soaked overnight. Though the vines can sprawl on the ground, they do best when given something to climb on. It is a beautiful and fragrant plant to grow on a trellis adjacent to a patio. Pick the fruit just before it turns from moist to dry feeling. Snake gourd can be used like summer squash and is also good in soups and stir-fry.

As an extra attribute to note, Don Lambert, our garden expert, has observed that growing snake gourd and also bitter melon close to or mixed with cucumbers seems to help protect the cucumber vines. The spotted and stripped cucumber beetles, which carry cucumber diseases, seem to avoid these hardy gourds and the cucumber vines that are near them.

Snake gourd seed can be obtained from several sources:

1. Several varieties of snake gourd, including the long variety, can be

purchased from Evergreen Y.H. Enterprises www.evergreenseeds.com.
2. A limited number of snake gourd seed and plants, as well as many bedding, herb and vegetable plants, can be purchased at GICD's annual plant sale. The 2008 sale will be held April 19 and 20 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the **East Dallas Community Garden**, 1416 N. Fitzhugh, between Ross and Bryan.

And if you are interested in an authentic Southeast Asian recipe for snake gourd, see Tiah's Garden Recipe on GICD's website, www.gardendallas.org.

NEW GARDEN NOTES:

Several new community garden projects have utilized GICD in-garden trainings, workshops, and/or other assistance:

UTD Community Garden at the Waterview Student Apartments is in its second year. GICD aided students at the plan and build stages, and continues to provide support with solving gardening problems. UTD students frequently volunteer during GICD garden workdays.

The St. Thomas Episcopal Church Community Garden on Inwood Rd. has broken ground and will be setting up plots in the spring. See story on pg. 4.

Balch Springs community garden at **Eden's Organic Garden Center** (also location of a new Farmers Market) is breaking ground. Along with members of the St. Thomas garden, they attended our recent "How to Start a Community Garden" workshop.

Cornerstone Baptist Church on S. Ervay is in the process of organizing a community garden. GICD staff recently evaluated their garden site.

Students at **Austin College in Sherman** are planning a campus community garden. They attended GICD's "Starting" workshop and are currently working on a proposal to submit to campus administrators.

Greenhill School is making good progress on building a garden with GICD technical support and training.

The **Community Harvest** garden is in its first year at the Community Unitarian Universalist Church in Plano.

For the Doubter

THOUGHTS AND DEEDS

By Harry Anderson

Thanksgiving is always a time to reflect on the Pilgrims and Squanto. I'm sure you remember the story we all learned in grammar school. Squanto was a member of the Patuxet tribe in what is now Maine. In 1608, he was kidnapped and taken to England as a slave/servant. When he was freed and returned to America a decade later, he found that his entire tribe had been wiped out by diseases the English had brought with them. He had every reason to hate his captors, but he didn't. Instead, he helped save the Pilgrims of Massachusetts Bay – who by the spring of 1621 were sick and starving – by teaching them how to plant and fertilize native crops like corn. If there had been no Squanto, there likely would have been no first Thanksgiving.

I thought about that story the other day as I was reflecting on all the good things that have happened since we began the Saint Thomas Community Garden earlier this year. And I reflected on angels – like Squanto – and miracles – like the first Thanksgiving. In college, long before I professed my Christian faith, I took a philosophy course from a rumpled professor who looked like Einstein. A devoted agnostic, he nonetheless offered these definitions that have stuck with me for more than 40 years: Angels are God's thoughts, he said, and miracles are deeds inspired by God's thoughts.

Now I suppose any number of learned theologians might quibble or disagree with those definitions. But as I have watched our community garden take shape over the past six months, I've seen too much evidence to doubt my old professor. Consider this:

Our garden committee knew we needed a shed to store tools and hoses before we could even get started. But we had no money to buy one. One night, Lynn Armstrong, a friend from Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, mentioned she had a shed on her rental property. **Thought:** "If you

want, you can have it," she said. **Deed:** Harold Spiegel had his crew move it to Saint Thomas.

We looked at the enormous size of our proposed garden and asked ourselves, how will we ever get this weed patch ready to grow vegetables for the hungry? Our parishioner Harold Spiegel owns Preservation Tree Service, the best-respected tree company in Dallas. **Thought:** "My crews have some down time and we can help," he said. **Deed:** Harold and his crews tilled our soil, trimmed our trees, and gave us mulch and compost – all at no expense.

There was no water in the garden space, and we had been warned that it might cost \$5,000 or more to install a water meter and run a pipe to the garden. Our Senior Warden Kathy Carson has worked with the city water department in her real estate profession, and Harold Spiegel's crews know how to install landscape watering systems. **Thought:** "Let me see what I can do," Kathy said. "I think we can handle it once we have a meter," Harold said. **Deed:** The city installed a water meter without charge and Harold's crews ran the pipe to the garden at no cost.

I created a sign to promote the garden but I had only some flimsy stakes to put it up near Inwood Road. It looked pathetic. Saint Thomas's neighbor to



the north, George Hendricks, noticed the forlorn sign. **Thought:** "I want to make that look better," Mr. Hendricks told Stephen Waller in a phone call. **Deed:** At his own expense, Mr. Hendricks bought plastic piping and tie-backs. He straightened up our sign

and made it look great.

We had no tools or hoses to use in the garden. John and Kris Braddock are new members of our parish who moved here from New York last year. They used to have a country house



Cover crop, shed, mulched path, and water

with a big garden north of Manhattan. **Thought:** "We have lots of garden tools, hoses and garden furniture just sitting in storage," John and Kris said. "Do you want them?" **Deed:** Our shed is now filled with the Braddocks' tools and hoses, and their beautiful Adirondack-style garden furniture is arrayed under our spreading oak tree.

As we contemplated how much work it would be to keep tilling the soil by hand to make sure it would be ready to plant next spring, we thought: "Wouldn't it be great if we had a power roto-tiller to use in the Saint Thomas Garden? But we can't afford one." Our parishioners Bruce Davis and Wayne Palmer have a beautiful home and garden in Oak Cliff. **Thought:** Bruce emailed Stephen Waller to say that he and Wayne had a Toro power roto-tiller they weren't using much. Would we want to use it in our community garden? **Deed:** I had the pleasure of using Bruce and Wayne's power roto-tiller to break up the soil before we planted the seven varieties of winter vegetables you now see growing in our community garden.

Thanks to all the angels who brought God's thoughts to our community garden. And Thanks Be To God for the miracles those thoughts have created. Happy Thanksgiving!

GICD SUPPORTERS FALL 2006—FALL 2007

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Thanks to our Volunteer Teams!!

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GICD Board of Directors

Gardener Teams from East Dallas Gardens, Hope, and Our Saviour

Plant Sales Team

Our Saviour Church Team

Dallas/Fort Worth Heifer Volunteers

Cathedral Gardens Weekly Harvesters

Starbucks—Make Your Mark Team

Dallas County Master Gardener Volunteers

Boy Scout Troop 783 from Pleasant Grove

Boy Scout Troop 245 from East Dallas

Growing and Giving Science Club

Dallas Fireside Park and Recreation Center Summer Youth

Green Community Garden Team, Cesar Chavez Learning Center

UTD Student Volunteers

Community Gardens: A Permanent Public Benefit

By Rebecca Smith

The American Community Gardening Association's board members, staff, and volunteers worked tirelessly to bring 300 gardening professionals and volunteers, community leaders and educators together from all over the world in Boston, MA, for the ACGA 28th Annual Conference, *Beantown Digs Community Gardens*, August 8-12, 2007. Dig Boston we did! The conference and the location were inspiring! I hope to have opportunities to further explore Boston in the future.

This was my second ACGA annual

Community gardening is said to be 50% gardening and 100% politics.

conference. Like the conference in Los Angeles last year, it was uplifting to have a great network of community gardeners coming together to eagerly share experience, knowledge and ideas. With gardening friends everywhere there is no need to reinvent the wheel! We are strengthened by having so many friends that are willing to provide assistance when needed.

Community gardening is said to be 50% gardening and 100% politics. ACGA's choice of 40 workshops under the categories of Education and Children/Youth, Learning from Others, Garden Design, Health and Youth, Horticulture, International, and Public

Policy and Food Security, covered it all! We also got to see and hear firsthand from the Boston community during numerous tours to community farms and gardens, public open spaces, youth projects, and farmers markets.

We harvested knowledge from the vast experience of contributors, dug into politics and community issues, gleaned ideas from gardeners, educators and volunteers we spoke with, and savored the gardens we toured. Thereby we learned of ways which cultivate support, grow food security, and increase public horticultural literacy so as to make possible community gardens that are viable, beautiful and functional.

Signs on Boston community gardens declare for all to see that they have the strong support of the City of Boston. Many have the words **"Given by the City of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment Authority in [year] for Permanent Public Benefit."** Most are in permanent land trusts to organizations like The South End/Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust, or the Boston Natural Areas Network. These gardens are beautiful and vibrant places, which citizens lovingly care for.



Community Gardens are a Permanent Public Benefit

I want to be able to post such signs on community gardens in our city. Signs telling everyone that community gardening is a benefit to the community and that these projects succeed when a city works together with citizens to build community from the roots up. A community garden is a powerful means for people to join together to sustain and revitalize neighborhoods, house by house, and one vacant lot at a time. It is no wonder that Bostonians welcomed us to see their successes, and were so proud of their community gardens, their neighborhoods, and their city.

Thank you Boston and ACGA for supporting community greening in urban and rural communities and for another great conference. Thank you GICD and Heifer International for your support, mentoring and sponsorship. Together we are growing people, plotting against hunger, and passing on the gifts!



New Orleans Here We Come!

The American Community Gardening Association is proud to announce that our 2008 Annual Conference is scheduled for October in New Orleans, LA.

Roll up your sleeves and prepare to dig a little dirt for New Orleans: this year's conference will be a working conference. Conference participants and nationwide volunteers will help our New Orleans partners rebuild their community gardens.

It is ACGA's intention to continue to offer workshops and other educational experiences, along with our traditional get-together events and our signature silent auction in conjunction with our work to rebuild New Orleans gardens.

Hope to see you there!

Go to www.communitygarden.org for further information

GICD Youth and Children's Projects in 2007

Our Saviour Community Garden:

Group Projects

- Growing and Giving Homeschool group**—weekly gardening and instruction, volunteer, plant sale booth, worm class
- First United Methodist Church, Sachse**—harvesting
- Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas**—birdhouse building, volunteer workday
- Small Change organization**—two preschool groups, “harvest” + garden experiences program
- Fireside Recreation Center**—Winter & Spring School break camps and Summer Camp program with lessons, harvest, workdays
- BSA Troop 783, Umphress Park United Methodist Church**—garden care

Individual Youth Projects

- Margaret Tamez, Campfire Girls**—garden project
- Michael Smith, TAG**—worm project
- Our Saviour Sunday School Children**—various individual projects

Projects for Families With Children

- GICD family workshops**—canning classes, honey harvests, workdays

Hope Community Garden:

- Children's Plot**—garden youth project, Susan & Brandon Pollard
- Garden Visits, J. L Long Elementary**—garden visits, Philomena Jones

Greenhill School, Addison:

- Greenhill School Community Garden**—a project being built by parents and children

East Dallas Community and Market Garden:

- Green Team Community Gardeners, Cesar Chavez Learning Center**—4 & 5 grade after school program with teacher Kim Speed
- BSA Troop 245, East Dallas Police Store Front**—cleanups, plant sale volunteers, plans to tend a garden plot and help with pantry harvests

FINDING ENOUGH MONEY

GICD sustains our many projects with the help of volunteers and pays for one full-time and one-half staff positions. Fortunately, we currently have enough funds for “agricultural supplies” for projects planned within our Heifer International grant. But, like most grants, many program expenses are not covered. Income from our annual plant sale is

critical, as are the donations sent by our supporters.

We are currently concerned by a shortfall in this year's income. With increasing costs for gas, supplies, tools and equipment, and the ever increasing need for community gardens, our program is challenged.

To help community gardening continue

as a way to grow better communities, we need to raise more money. Please, if you shop at Tom Thumb or Kroger, link your purchases to our cause. Some workplaces match employee donations, so be sure to check on that. Remember that we are a 501(c)(3) organization so your donations are tax exempt. And, if you would like to apply your skills and time to helping GICD raise funds, please contact us.

Become a Community Gardening Supporter

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|--------|-------|
| Mission Benefactor | \$1000 or more | _____ | Garden Sponsor | \$ 250 | _____ |
| Program Patron | \$ 500 | _____ | Project Friend | \$ 100 | _____ |
| | | | Other \$ | _____ | |

Please check with your Human Resources department to learn whether your employer will match your donation to

Make checks payable to: **GICD**

Please mail your contribution to: **GICD, 901 Greenbriar Lane, Richardson, TX 75080**

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PLANT SALE

2008

SATURDAY
APRIL 19
&
SUNDAY
APRIL 20

GARDENERS
IN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Annual Community Garden Fundraiser
Growing People of Dallas

EAST DALLAS COMMUNITY GARDEN
1416 N. FITZHUGH AVENUE

Gardeners in Community Development
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Dallas Area Community Gardening



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Fall 2007

Gardeners in Community Development
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Growing People News

