Spotlight: Home Food Production

Located just outside of the Forsyth County Extension offices, the Learning for Life Garden (http://fcmg.sharepoint.com/Pages/default.aspx) serves as an educational space for the community. It was started in 2010 by Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (MGEVs) and has been funded by their annual spring plant sales. MGEVs have been instrumental in installing the garden and maintaining the space as an education and demonstration garden. Visitors can come to the garden year-round and are always able to see something different going on in the garden.

Extension agents use this garden as a place to offer public classes that include hands-on learning. Several methods for growing vegetables can be observed in the fourteen large raised beds, along with various drip irrigation systems and examples of vertical gardening. The garden also demonstrates companion planting, square-foot gardening, crop rotation, and low hoop houses. Produce from the garden is donated to a local boys’ shelter and local food banks. By visiting the garden, attending classes, and learning from the signage at each raised bed, visitors gain many ideas and techniques to put to use in their own vegetable gardens.

Because of MGEVs’ hard work, the Learning for Life Garden has held true to its name and has become a valuable focal point for the community. It blossomed from a humble tumble of straw bales to the large garden it is today. Visitors leave the garden with new ideas and new excitement for growing their own food at home.

MGEVs have been able to hone their vegetable garden skills through this project and have also been instrumental in creating an area that draws in visitors to not only learn more about gardening, and also learn about how Cooperative Extension and MGEVs are a resource to educate the community in horticulture.