WSU Farmers Market to open June 5
New projects in sixth season; market volunteers needed

The Wayne State University Farmers Market unveils its sixth season June 5, and will run through the end of October. Open Wednesdays from 11 to 4 pm, at its usual location in front of Prentis Hall, the market has many of its by now familiar features and adds some new ones as well.

At the market, customers will savor the region’s agricultural bounty with fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, honey, flowers, potted plants, as well as baked goods including breads and desserts, and hot and cold lunches. A couple of new vendors will join us: Busy Bee Orchard will add more fruits while Brooklyn Street Local will add grain salads and paninis to the lunch menu.

As usual, the market will accept cash, Bridge Card benefits, Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB), and WIC and Senior Project FRESH coupons. This year, DUFB will start later than usual, July 1. Bridge Card will be accepted from the start, June 5.

The Healthy Eats Program, SEED Wayne’s community nutrition initiative, will allow us to offer weekly nutrition workshops and food demos, with sample tastings, at the market this year. Wellness Warriors will partner in the effort, which is funded in part by the state of Michigan through the Michigan Nutrition Network.

St. Andrews Garden off and running
32 students, staff, guests work 19 plots

St. Andrew’s Garden burst back to life on sunny April 27 as gardeners took the fall leaves blanketing the beds and readied beds for the season’s plantings. That day and since, gardeners seeded and transplanted a variety of cold and hot crops, participated in several educational workshops, and also got together over two potluck dinners.

The group consists of 20 graduate and undergraduate students, 8 staff members including faculty, two alumni, two guests (a spouse and a community member who joined a student group) and one retired professor. Collectively, they are tending 18 beds that are 4’ by 8’, and one that is 4’ by 4’.

Several members are returning from previous years, thereby contributing to continuity of garden operations and friendly pokes about pet peeves and obsessions of other returning members. We are also excited about our new participants who bring new campus connections and diversity to our mix. We are especially fortunate to have in our community Professor Christine Evans, who not long ago retired from her position at Texas A&M University, and returned to her native Detroit to enrich the food justice soil here. She is helping two students prepare a workshop on soil health for the benefit of the entire group.

We are also grateful for our community partnerships. WSU gardens on campus benefit from membership in Keep Growing Detroit (KGD), in the seeds and transplants we get from them and educational workshops offered by KGD staff. On Monday, April 29, Kido Pielack, KGD’s Adult Urban Education Coordinator offered a comprehensive workshop on gardening, moving from site selection, creating a garden map, choosing items to plant, to preparing and maintaining the garden. Even veteran gardeners benefitted...
in the Prentis breezeway throughout the market day. A bi-weekly Healthy Eats @WSU Farmers Market newsletter will update customers and midtown seniors about the program and provide additional tips on healthy eating and preventing chronic disease. Four chef’s demos will also feature recipes made from market products. Chef Phil Jones of COLORS-Detroit will lead the demos.

Grant proposals are also out to support a 12-15 week student market box that will help students get a box of seasonal vegetables and fruits from the market at an especially affordable rate, while also supporting growers participating in the market. This effort is motivated by several concerns: one, many students were ejected from the state’s SNAP rolls a couple of years ago. SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, previously called Food Stamps, allows households with limited resources obtain food. Students also eat vegetables and fruits at levels much lower than those that are recommended. Finally, growers need to increase sales. Future SEEDLING issues will report on the status of this initiative.

The market is made possible with contributions from many campus partners: Office of Campus Sustainability, WSU Libraries, the Business School, Nutrition and Food Science Department, Marketing, Public Safety, and AVI Foodsystems, Inc. are only some of the partners who offer much-needed support in staging, outreach, education, market and Bridge Card operations, and storage of equipment. Community partners include Eastern Market, Fair Food Network, COLORS Detroit Restaurant, Hannan House, and midtown senior complexes.

Your market needs you! We seek volunteers for:

1. Campus outreach to bring more customers to the market. Letter-size flyers and quarter-page handbills can be sent to you, for posting in your building, department, or organization.
2. Market and special event set up and take down, at different times.
3. Providing event support during the lunch hour, and staffing information tables. We would like volunteers to help administer registrations and evaluations for workshops that start at noon and 12:30 pm. Signing up for a two-hour slot is ideal but we will gladly accept less as well.
4. We also seek friends who love to cook, who will sign up for one or more days to prepare and bring to market vegetarian/vegan refreshments for five to six market volunteers.

If you can volunteer for or at the market, please write market leader Charles Lisee at ctlisee@wayne.edu or leave a voice-mail at 577-2398. To sign up to bring food, please write k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu.

For SEED Wayne’s Kami Pothukuchi, it is now hard to imagine summer on campus without community gardens given our five years of activity in multiple locations. We have come a long way since 2008, and the struggle to establish our first campus garden—Warrior Demonstration Garden—has borne fruit in multiple ways!

from a systematic review such as this.

Starting this season, Warrior Garden is ably maintained by SLUGS—Student Leaders in Urban Gardening and Sustainability—the group from I. D. Reid Honors College. SEED Wayne recently submitted a grant proposal in partnership with SLUGS to support the purchase of tools, replace worn out beds, and to develop a marketing and sustainability plan. As we know, recruiting new leaders to replace graduating seniors is a perennial challenge for student groups, but one that is not insurmountable with some planning and support.

The rooftop garden on Parking Structure 5 is also starting to come back to life as Garden Leader Charles Lisee and volunteers work beds and maintain them. These beds take an especially hard beating year in and year out with the intense summer sun beating down on them and the heat radiating from the structure itself. Already, the irrigation system is showing signs of wear. Nonetheless, the garden serves to illustrate an innovative design for growing on hot, concrete rooftops. Incidentally, the venue recently hosted a workshop on rain barrels led by Daryl Pierson of the Office of Campus Sustainability.

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Above: Kido Pielack (third from right) of Keep Growing Detroit offers the first workshop of the season at St. Andrew’s Garden.

SEED Wayne Partners
SEED Wayne unique among peers’ sustainable food programs

Findings from a study of sustainable food system (SFS) activities at 22 urban public universities—including—WSU, show that two-thirds have led at least one activity of the kind offered by SEED Wayne as of July 2011. However, few campuses have as comprehensive a set of campus and community initiatives, and those that are as interlinked with each other, as does Wayne State’s SEED Wayne.

As is the case with SEED Wayne, Portland State, UW-Milwaukee, Temple, and Florida International are host to multiple SFS activities such as gardens, specific dining hall elements of interest, farmers markets, and related curricula, although no campus has them all even if some come pretty close. Florida International’s agroecology undergraduate major is especially noteworthy in its links to an organic garden and a student-led mini farmers market on campus. Temple also has several activities, but they have few substantive links to each other.

Eleven campuses have a community garden in which students and staff grow food for themselves, for distribution to food assistance programs, or for the public to take. A few campuses such as Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI), UW-Milwaukee, University of Missouri-Kansas City, and WSU have gardens in multiple locations. In several cases, activities came about in only the last couple of years suggesting the growing popularity of food system initiatives in urban areas.

A handful of campuses have a farmers market on or near campus, including with some involvement by the institution. For example, Cleveland State and Temple provide financial support to a market operated on campus by a community-based nonprofit organization. In Portland State’s case, the farmers market organization pays the university for costs associated with maintaining restrooms made available to the public on market Saturdays. Markets near the University of Pittsburgh and the Virginia Commonwealth (VCU) campuses have little institutional involvement but benefit from sales generated by university faculty and staff patrons of the market. The Byrd House Market located near VCU offers subsidized boxes priced at an affordable $10, to students who show ID. This idea will be explored at the WSU Farmers Market this year. Only at Wayne State, however, is the farmers market led by a campus unit, SEED Wayne.

Two campuses had community-supported agriculture (CSA) seasonal subscriptions or something very similar. At University of Toledo, a farmer drops off boxes off at a designated parking lot to subscribers who paid for their season’s boxes in advance. At Pitt, a private vendor, Isidore Farms, takes subscription orders online and delivers boxes aggregated from several area farmers to a handful of locations on campus. In each case, informal networks at the university rather than institutional mandates or structures enable these arrangements.

Unsurprisingly, few universities made significant progress in dining hall sustainability beyond the very low-hanging fruit of capturing efficiencies such as by removing trays; offering meatless Mondays, and water-conservation; and composting kitchen wastes. A handful served fair trade coffee, offered cage-free eggs, or sourced specific products such as dairy or produce from within the state or other geographies designated “local.” Portland State is among the furthest along in thinking about how to institutionalize dining hall sustainability programs both in terms of specifying requirements to be met by dining service contractors, as well as identifying monitoring and compliance protocols. When dining services are self-operated as opposed to contracted out, linkages to other sustainability initiatives are more organic, as is the case at UW-Milwaukee. The unit grew enough potatoes in a campus garden to serve a side dish for 4,000 meals last year.

Students play important leadership roles in the development and implementation of sustainable food system activities, although faculty initiative and the connection they provide to academics and the institution more generally are crucial. Campus sustainability and community engagement offices play important albeit supportive roles in these initiatives in the linkages they facilitate, respectively, to campus operations and community partners.

The study was led by SEED Wayne’s Kami Pothukuchi with research assistance by Sam Molnar. Molnar graduated in 2012 with a major in political science and will pursue graduate studies at University of Michigan’s School of Natural Resources and Environment. The research is currently under review for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Readers are invited to submit news on teaching, research, engagement, or operations of interest to SEED Wayne. Contact k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

June-July-August 2013

6/5: WSU Farmers Market Opens! 11am to 4pm, 5201 Cass Ave (Prentis Hall)
6/7: Race & food justice, Malik Yakini, 6 pm, Gleaners Food Bank, 2131 Beaufait. Info: 870-1500, x104.
6/12: Weekly food/nutrition demos start, WSU Farmers Market, 12 noon and 12:30 pm, Prentis Breezeway.
6/19-22: Agriculture and Human Values annual conference, Kellogg Center, MSU, East Lansing. To obtain one-day community activist rate, write k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu.
6/21, 10:15 am: See above, Panel on urban agriculture and food system activism, with Laura Delind, Malik Yakini, Kami Pothukuchi, Rm 103 AB.

Varying: First Friday Forum, 6 pm, Race2Equity, info: fsampson@miroundtable.org or 870-1500, x104.
A newsletter of SEED Wayne, Sustainable Food Systems Education & Engagement in Detroit & Wayne State University

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SEED Wayne is dedicated to collaboratively building sustainable food systems on campus and in Detroit neighborhoods through activities in teaching, research, engagement, and campus operations.

SEED Wayne works in partnership with community-based organizations to increase access to healthy food, enhance food security, urban agriculture, farm-to-institution, and food system planning and policy development.

SEED Wayne embraces core university functions in teaching, research, engagement and operations.

Student leadership is central to SEED Wayne’s success.

SEED Wayne projects include campus gardens, the WSU Farmers Market, Detroit FRESH: the Healthy Corner Stores Project, Healthy Eats nutrition education project, farm-to-cafeteria, and cafeteria composting

SEED Wayne is housed in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning.

SEED Wayne Thanks Friends for Generous Gifts!

Over these last five years, SEED Wayne has been the fortunate recipient of many gifts from diverse donors, including individuals from campus and the community. Gifts have varied—from the more typical donations of cash, time and expertise, to seeds and transplants, to a 3’x2.5’ brass cornucopia, and more! While it is impossible to list all our many donors here—indeed, a handful are anonymous—we would like to take this opportunity to offer a few illustrations and express our heartfelt gratitude to all!

Last year, a huge sack of seed packets for a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs was dropped off at the WSU Farmers Market as donation to the program. These packets, labeled for the 2011 season, and therefore unsuitable for commercial sale, nonetheless have seeds that are viable for a few years afterwards. We used some in our campus gardens and shared the rest with our community partners and gave away multitudes at special events on campus and in the community. We don’t know the donor, but this sack of seeds has brought much joy—and a lot of food and flowers—to numerous gardeners across the region. Some people are also holding on to the seeds for planting next year!

This spring, Susan Rosenhauer, ardent gardener and good food aficionado, contacted us out of the blue to learn more about the program and see if we could use tomato transplants. Rosenhauer, whose son Greg goes to school here, happened by the Warrior Garden one day and found our website. She donated several dozen seedlings of heirloom tomatoes which have now found homes in gardens on campus and across the city and surrounding areas.

Earlier this year, a friend spent dozens of hours to help us get a large grant proposal out the door in a very short time frame, for all of which we have little capacity in the department.

While these are large, discrete, occasional gifts, no less significant are the everyday contributions of time and effort by volunteers in our gardens, market and other initiatives; of resources and networks that staff and administrators on campus or in community organizations make available in their partnerships with the program; of creative ideas, problem-solving, and initiative offered by our staff; and the support and goodwill of participants of the WSU Farmers Market, Healthy Eats Project, and other activities.

For example, Prentis Hall people are hospitable hosts for the market’s 22 weeks, while Nutrition and Food Science will allow us to prepare for our market food demos at their Food Lab. Facilities staff help by providing infrastructure for water and power for our activities. Community Arts woodshop staff help us build our projects there, while professors from across campus advise our various activities. This year, friends will cook meals for our market volunteers! Our hats are off to all who give to our program. We couldn’t do it without you! Thank you!

Above: Susan Rosenhauer at St. Andrew’s Garden. She donated dozens of tomato transplants to SEED Wayne.