Check the Gardens Out!

**Warrior Demonstration Garden:**
Located between the Undergraduate Library and Warrior Grille

**St. Andrew’s Allotment Garden:**
Located between Manoogian Hall and Parking Structure #2 off John C Lodge Service Drive

**Parking Structure 5 Experimental Garden:** Top of Parking Structure #5 (Under construction)

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**Campus Garden Season Kicks Off**

Gardener Community Growing

On April 24, 35 participants kicked off the WSU gardening season at St. Andrew’s Allotment Garden by cleaning and prepping the beds, creating garden plans, planting seeds and cold crop transplants. All participants were members of student, staff, and faculty groups who will maintain their allotted beds over the summer and into Fall. The kickoff was led by SEED Wayne Student Leader Will Ahee.

Some group members started off at the garden as volunteers last year. A handful volunteered at the Wayne State Wednesday Farmers Market and opted to increase their engagement with SEED Wayne by maintaining a garden this year.

Groups personalized their beds with creative names such as Bookworms, Bad Seeds, Snake Fruit, the Garden Gang, and the Garden of Babble.

The Warrior Demonstration Garden has also begun with the help of volunteers, and will feature an even larger variety of herbs, vegetables and fruits this year. The management of this garden has evolved in that St. Andrew’s Garden allotees will maintain this garden. This move offers more opportunities for sharing skills and resources and building a community at the gardens, both important objectives of the campus garden projects.

Veteran SEED Wayne members, that is, gardeners and others who have participated actively since the program’s inception in 2008, have formed a garden advisory committee to inform decisions, plan and implement activities such as workshops and potlucks, and serve as a two-way bridge to other participants.

The first workshop for this season occurred at the St. Andrew’s Garden and covered basic gardening skills and techniques with a special supplement discussing companion planting offered by WSU student and anthropology major, Chelsey Wilt.

Future workshops are planned on the following topics: harvesting, pruning/trellising, vermiculture, growing for nutrition, canning, and seed saving. These workshops will feature garden participants as trainers, with support provided by SEED Wayne as needed. In addition, weekly work hours also provide opportunities for sharing tips and techniques among gardeners, who are knowledgeable about different cultural growing practices.

Participants also assembled two more raised beds on the roof of Parking Structure #5, bringing the total there to three. This activity was led by SEED Wayne Student Leader and engineering senior Roland Bogdani.

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The beds’ polycarbonate roofs capture rainwater in food-grade barrels that are connected to a drip-irrigation system to keep soil moist and cool in the extreme heat of the concrete rooftop. These beds will help assess what plants, if any, survive the extreme heat of the concrete structure during mid-summer. They will also be used to test surviving plants’ exposure to atmospheric and soil-borne pollution, including the possible uptake by plants of chemicals from treated lumber. Lumber from home construction stores is typically treated with chromated copper arsenate; many gardeners use such wood to build raised beds. Tests will monitor the rates of possible uptake of these chemicals by plants. The rooftop garden will also allow the testing of atmospheric pollution relative to the St. Andrew’s Garden and Warrior Demonstration Garden which share some similarities with it (e.g., proximity to parked cars and highways), but also have important distinctions from it.

SEED Wayne’s objectives for the campus gardens are to engage students and others to grow food and gain urban agriculture skills and knowledge, increase access to fresh and locally grown food on campus and in the community, enhance knowledge through research on topics related to urban agriculture, and build a community of gardeners and food justice advocates on campus. We are grateful to WSU’s Facilities Management and Planning staff for their support. Over the last two seasons, they loaned us tools, turned water on and off as needed, and collaborated to solve problems that came up.

The gardens are off to a great start with members participating actively during weekly work hours, building a community, and advancing food systems knowledge on campus. We are proud of the diversity of crops in our gardens and prouder still of the diversity of our gardeners. Below: St. Andrew’s allotees planning their beds, and bottom, the season’s activities while also taking lunch.
Know Your Food! WSU Farmers Markets Begin in June

Two Wayne State University Farmers Markets are planned this year: one weekly and the other monthly. The Wayne State Wednesday Farmers Market is offered every Wednesday, June 9—October 27, 11 AM to 4 PM, in front of Prentis Hall and across from the Detroit Public Library.

Additionally, based on a successful pilot last year, a monthly farmers market will occur at the WSU School of Medicine on the third Thursday of each month, June to October, 11 AM to 4 PM. This market is located in front of Scott Hall, next to Detroit Receiving Hospital, off St. Antoine St.

Both markets will offer a combination of fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, honey, and other fresh and prepared foods. Area favorites Avalon Bakery and Russell Street Deli will sell at both markets, so that shoppers can buy a snack or lunch even as they shop for dinner. This year, the farmers markets will host Detroit-based growers such as the Grown in Detroit Cooperative, the D-Town Farm, Brother Nature Farm, and Greentoe Gardens. Free 15 minute parking will be available to shoppers near each market.

Both markets will accept cash, the Michigan Bridge Card (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or food stamps), and Project FRESH and Senior Project FRESH. Additionally, the Wednesday market will accept the WSU One Card. We are also collaborating with the Fair Food Network to offer Double Up Food Bucks which will double Bridge Card benefits used at the markets; stop by the SEED Wayne tent for updates on this program.

Detroit FRESH expands to the Westside

Having covered Eastside neighborhoods, SEED Wayne Leaders Mebby Pearson and Christa Powell have now taken their corner store assessment and recruitment efforts to Westside stores. Powell regularly checks in on participating stores while Pearson recruits new ones and also follows up with stores that indicated interest in participating at a later date. Both are involved in assembling lists of community organizations in the neighborhoods of participating stores so as to inform neighbors about the program and involve them in its efforts.

Twenty stores now participate in Detroit FRESH. Peaches and Greens, a mobile market (and food store) run by the Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation, and the F.O.O.D. (Field of Our Dreams) Group, a volunteer-run mobile market based at Earthworks Urban Farm, are now distributing fresh fruits and vegetables to smaller stores that cannot sustain the minimum volumes asked by the wholesale distributor to qualify for free delivery.

Detroit FRESH is also preparing to unveil soon posters, flyers, and brochures prepared by graphic artist Nina Bianchi. These informational and marketing tools will help reach out to customers of participating stores, store neighbors, and community leaders and members more systematically.

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

June-July

June 9: First WSU Wednesday Farmers Market, 11 AM - 4 PM, Prentis Hall, 5201 Cass.
June 17: First SOM Farmers Market, 11 AM - 4 PM, Scott Hall (Monthly).
June 19: See page 2 for “What’s for Dinner?” lecture.

June 21, 22, 23, 24: See page 2 for information on “Hungry for Change” Lectures. Each lecture followed by a showing of documentary film, Food, Inc. All lectures are at Redford Library (DPL), 21200 Grand River, Detroit, MI 48219. For more information, contact: Jackie Dunn-Bell at jdunn-bell@mosesmi.org or 313-962-5290.

August

August 4: Detroit Agriculture Network Annual Tour of Urban Farms and Gardens, for more info browse: www.detroitagriculture.org
August 21: See page 2 for “What’s for Dinner?” lecture.
SEED Wayne extends a warm welcome to Susan Schmidt, a key partner since our inception, as she takes the helm of AVI Foodsystems, Inc. at Wayne State University. AVI is the university’s food service contractor and a SEED Wayne partner.

As Director of Food Service and Catering at The Henry Ford, Schmidt was among the first—if not the first—to systematically include local farm products into an area institution’s cafeterias. “Farm to Cafeteria” is now a full-blown movement, with a national conference on the topic held in Detroit last month! At The Henry Ford, Schmidt worked with Executive Chef Nick Seccia to create local menus that are authentic to the historic era showcased by the museum, and brought them to life with the connection to local farms and processors. She shares her experiences widely and collaborates actively to build farm-to-cafeteria linkages in the region and the state. She also serves in a variety of roles with organizations such as the Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP), Great Lakes Bioneers Detroit, The Greening of Detroit, and the Michigan Culinary Tourism Alliance.

A friend and ally to SEED Wayne, Schmidt offered her insights to urban planning student Nina Butler for the latter’s course project on local sourcing at Wayne State University, which in turn informed SEED Wayne’s program development in 2008. That year, SEED Wayne introduced Schmidt and Seccia to Karl Skokos, the outgoing director of AVI’s operations at the university, and Executive Chef Giulio Fattore.

“Although it is very difficult to leave an amazing place like The Henry Ford, I am excited to work for a company that shares my passion for figuring out how to align local, healthy food with food business models, and to be able to do this work in Detroit at Wayne State,” says Schmidt.

Susan Schmidt’s hire embodies the commitment to sustainability by AVI Foodsystems, Inc. voiced by Vice President John Coker, at SEED Wayne’s 2nd Annual Harvest Dinner in Fall 2009. We look forward to our collaboration with AVI in future months and years. Welcome, Susan! ☑️