Community Gardens

More than Just Food, Community Transformation

Shorlette Ammons, NC A&T State University, Center for Environmental Farming Systems
Donna Phillips, Wayne County Public Library, Goldsboro NC
Mission: To develop and promote agricultural systems that protect the environment, enhance rural and urban communities, and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond.
What is a “Community” Garden

“Any piece of land gardened by a group of people”
Community Gardens in the US... a Quick & Dirty History

1890’s
Some of the first community gardens appeared in Detroit

1918
During WWI gardens supplemented domestic food supply the government began incorporating Ag ed

1930’s – Great Depression, provided assistance for unemployed

1940’s
We begin to see the rise of “Victory Gardens”

1970’s

Source: University of Missouri Extension
Community Garden “Traditional” Purposes

- Educational space
- Build gardening skills
- Beautification/Nature
- Youth engagement/volunteerism
- Feed people

“Traditional” Purposes
Community Gardens thru a TRANSFORMATIVE LENS

PREPARE  INTERDEPENDENT  EDUCATE
CHANGING  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  GOVERN
LEAD  COMPLEX  LEARN  THINK
CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS

--THE GLOBAL RURAL NETWORK
Community Resilience [Characteristics]

- Infrastructure - access to healthcare (including “alternative forms”, education (formal and informal), social network
- Strong cultural connections
- Sense of social justice – the “right” to access
- Self-determination
- "Social personality" (I would call that legacy :)
Shifting our Frame...

Traditional

Educational space

Build gardening skills

“Traditional” Purposes

Beautification/Nature

Youth engagement/volunteerism

Feed people

Transformative

New uses for public space

Build community dialogue around cultural identity

“Transformative” Purposes

Increase decision-making power

Economic development

Build new narrative beyond “food deserts”
Lessons Learned

• Small wins come when we have a small group committed to getting a specific thing done

• Base-building gatherings, convenings and opportunities to connect are effective strategies in combating isolation, building long-term engagement and providing formal and informal educational opportunities

• Culturally and generationally appropriate media and messaging driven strategies are effective means of engagement AND empowerment

• Regular paid opportunities are needed to maintain engagement of young people who are working poor and live in communities who are most affected by these conditions
Spotlight: Wayne County Public Library
Contact Information

Shorlette Ammons
Community Food Systems Outreach Coordinator
NC A&T State University, Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS)
www.cefs.ncsu.edu
201 Stevens Mill Road
Goldsboro, NC 27530
919-288-0192
sammonss@ncat.edu

Donna Phillips
Director, Wayne County Public Library
1001 East Ash Street
Goldsboro, NC 27530
www.wcpl.org
donna.phillips@waynegov.com