



The University of Georgia

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Department of Horticulture

Dear AASHE STARS Committee:

I am writing to verify that the following description of the UGArden Learning & Demonstration Farm at UGA:

UGArden is 4-acre organic garden that serves as a living laboratory for promoting social, environmental, and nutritional benefits of sustainable gardening. With the first planting in May of 2010, the garden is now home to seasonal vegetable plots, fruit plantings, bee hives, green walls, medicinal herbs, a woodland mushroom demonstration area, composting operation, and more. This unique outdoor learning experience encourages engagement with the natural world, fosters interdisciplinary pursuits at UGA, and offers a meaningful sense of place to a largely transitory student body. UGArden is a student-run farm under the guidance of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Horticulture Department and serves as a home to numerous research projects and academic classes, as well as volunteering opportunities and community partnerships.

UGArden's primary goals are to 1) teach students to grow food using organic practices; 2) share healthy, sustainably grown food with members of the local community who are less fortunate; 3) engage students in the local community through service learning; and 4) provide opportunities for students to learn practical skills and experiment with new ideas.

UGArden engages in a number of community outreach programs, including Campus Kitchen. UGArden donates harvested food to the UGA chapter of this national organization, which goes towards supplementing meals prepared for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program. Meals are currently distributed to over 60 families in the Athens area. Another portion of produce raised is distributed through a mobile market at the Athens Community Council on Aging and sold at half price to those with EBT (SNAP) cards. The UGArden club's weekly produce stand sells fruits, vegetables, herbs, and seasonal items not otherwise distributed to the local community. UGArden is also working with Experience UGA, Athens Area Home School Gardening Experience, Clarke Middle School Satellite Garden, Athens Area Council on Aging Satellite Garden, Athens Land Trust (Community Garden Network), and Athens-Clarke School Gardens to give back to the community.

Complete descriptions of projects and operations at UGArden can be found the UGArden website: <http://ugarden.uga.edu/ugarden3/Welcome.html> .

Sincerely,

David Berle, Associate Professor
University of Georgia Horticulture Department