

# New Edible Campus satellite gardens sprout up around UNC

HARRIS WHELESS | PUBLISHED 04/20/16 9:58PM



The Edible Campus project features edible and pollinator-friendly plants in nine different satellite gardens around campus. About 700 plants have been installed so far.

Photo by Zhenwei Zhang / The Daily Tar Heel

The Edible Campus project has established nine different gardens around campus to engage people with the landscape while providing food to students, staff and anyone walking by.

Emily Auerbach, a Chancellor’s Fellow who runs the project, said the nine gardens are called satellite gardens. They’re only the first component of Edible Campus’ two-part project.

“So far we have nine of the satellite sites up and going and we’ve accomplished four planting days with a total of 136 participants,” she said. “Our best estimate is that we’ve gotten about 700 of these high-functioning plants installed over the

course of the last year.”

She said they’ve worked with UNC Grounds Services to identify sites around campus where existing landscaping can be replaced or new landscape can be created that features edible or medicinal plants.

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Auerbach said the second component will be a central demonstration garden called the Davis Library Edible Garden. She said Edible Campus will partner with local organizations to bring teens of color to the garden to learn about sustainable agriculture.

“We want plants that are easy for people to interact with that have lower entries, so people can harvest a snack on their way to class,” she said.

“But (we’re) also focusing on plants that are minimal maintenance, that don’t require pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizer and require very little irrigation, and that ties into the environmental ethics that we have at the program.”

Alice Ammerman is co-chairperson of the steering committee for Food for All, the University’s campus-wide theme. She said

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the idea is not to feed the campus but to create more awareness of what can be done with growing food.

“It’s not so much an effort to produce a lot of food, it’s not like it’s a farm,” she said. “It’s more sampling and tasting.”

Tony Mayer, who works on the project, said construction for the central garden by Davis will start next winter. He said until then, there are satellite gardens in front of Lenoir Dining Hall, Fetzer Hall, SASB, Stacy and Aycock Residence Halls and Davis Library itself.

He said the satellite gardens around the Pit are the ones most focused on food. Other areas have food plants along with pollinator plants, which help the diversity and health of the ecosystem.

“The Davis garden will be the central showpiece of Edible Campus. It will have agricultural production, educational displays, better signage and places for people to hold workshops,” he said.

Mayer said the program is mainly about showing people where food comes from and engaging them with the landscape. He said the gardens aren’t just a backdrop — people can smell, taste and interact with them.

“Students can volunteer to work on the gardens, and that’s one of the great ways for them to get out of the classroom, away from the computer screen, get some air and some sun, and have some skills that aren’t just academic,” he said.

[university@dailytarheel.com](mailto:university@dailytarheel.com)

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