Info on ASUM Community Garden & Garden City Harvest

**Garden City Harvest’s Mission & Vision:**

We plant seeds and grow together to create a healthy Missoula.

We envision a connected community where everyone values and has access to healthy, local food.

We work to accomplish this through for main programs:

* Community Gardens, where we create space for gardeners to grow their own food.
* Farm to School, where we bring students to our farms through tours and bring the farm to them through school gardens and in class lessons.
* Neighborhood Farms, where we grow food for others, from the Missoula Food Bank and Poverello Center to our CSA members, at our four Missoula based urban farms.
* Youth Development, where we employ youth at our four farms, teaching job and life skills to those often considered at risk.

**What is a Community Garden?**

In the case of the ASUM Garden, it is 70 plots, sized 15’ x 15’, each plot is rented by an individual or family, and they grow food in that plot. Each of our 10 community gardens provides gardeners with a garden plot, tools, water, manure, straw, compost, and educational resources to help them grow their own food. With a little bit of patience and a lot of persistence, gardening means self-sufficiency, pride, and the taste of a homegrown tomato.

ASUM Community Garden is located off South Higgins and Pattee Canyon, behind the Lewis and Clark Apartments.

[Community Garden Map](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1ZH15GLvz0Y0Qlql7m5lhFFx6Fkw&ll=46.86170983533328%2C-114.02492680000002&z=12)

**Funding:**

It costs Garden City Harvest $250/plot to maintain and fund our community gardens each year, so in the case of the ASUM Garden costs $17,500 per year.

We charge gardeners a sliding scale of $40 - $70/plot per season, and each year we fundraise to make up the remaining 70 – 75% difference. We are so appreciative that ASUM helps fund a piece of the garden each year.

**Deeper Dive into the Garden:**

2019: 30% of gardeners were affiliated with the university.

Prior to the COVID19 pandemic in 2018 and 2017, the NSSHLA student group volunteered at the ASUM Garden. Other student groups are always welcome!

With all our community gardens, it is essential to have a diverse mix of people to create a thriving community. We have gardeners who have been growing there since the garden has been in existence (longer than Garden City Harvest’s 25 years – community members started this garden before we were an organization). We also have students that come for a year, learn from neighbors, bring their own gardening experience, and everyone in between.

**Other Community Garden Benefits Include:**

* Great way for students to get to know Missoula community members. Gardeners get to know each other as peers, whether they are students, professors, or other citizens. Our leadership committees (kind of mini-board for the garden) organized potlucks and other events throughout a normal season to ensure community connections.
* Composting on site reduces the amount of food and plant waste going into the landfill.
* Locally grown, organic food – important way to impact climate change, great skill to learn if you want to reduce your carbon footprint

When living on a tight budget, many students are, a community garden allows them to eat healthfully when they otherwise could not. Our 2020 year-end survey showed that gardeners saved between $10 - $35 per week by gardening.

* Community gardens do build community -- a physical place to come together and share knowledge and food
* The highest rated reasons for gardening: ate more fresh veggies, improved mental health, became more self-sufficient and more connected to food and environment.

**Gardeners are Saying:**

“This was my first year having a community garden (and living on my own post college, actually), so my favorite memory would have to be my first harvest. Getting to take home a handful of tomatoes I’d grown on my own, and use them in a meal was one of the most satisfying, “adulting” moments I’ve had since living here.”

“At the end of the season I came to the garden to find a manila envelope filled with a variety of homegrown snap dragon seeds inside a ziploc bag with a sweet note from one of my gardening neighbors, thanking me for being a good garden plot neighbor. I am not a social butterfly while at the garden, but the connections I do make are dear and special, and this sweet gift touched my heart.”

“I don't have one standout moment but it's all the little moments combined, interacting with the garden community (at a distance)-neighbors offering to help water, sharing starts and plants, getting advice. As a person who lives alone, it felt really nice to be able to interact with my garden neighbors during this time of increased isolation and social distancing.”

**Educational Resources**

* Blog and tutorial videos
* Workshops – open to everyone! (potential for student discount)

**Final Note:**

* We’d be happy to take anyone who is interested on a tour of the garden, if that is something that interests you all. We would of course need to wear masks and stay socially distant.