



# Community Gardens of Dane County Community Action Coalition for South Central WI Inc.

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Winter E-Newsletter

February 2011

### Special Points of Interest:

- Become a master composter
- Streamline your garden's registration process
- Learn how to start your plants from seed and increase your yield

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## CAC Grow Together Conference A Huge Success!

On Saturday, February 19, the Gardens Program of Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc. (CAC) hosted their annual Grow Together Conference at Globe University on Madison's east side.

Over one hundred people turned out for the conference. With the help of United Asian Services, Madison's Interpreters Collective and Dinar Shrestha, the conference was translated for Spanish, Hmong, and Nepali participants. The conference brought together community gardeners, food pantry gardeners, community leaders, and individuals interested in fostering connections between youth and gardens.

CAC is very thankful to have had so many great presenters for all of the workshops. Topics covered during the main workshops include Meeting Facilitation, Constructive Conflict, Leadership Development, Youth Gardening Models, Linking Youth Gardening and Social Issues, Benefits of Youth Gardening, Volunteer Recruitment and Management, Food Safety and Post-Harvest Handling, and Successful Food Pantry Gardening. General gardening workshops were offered before and after the main track of workshops and their topics included Soil Fertility, Composting, Planning A Garden Season, and Seed Starting. For those of you who were not able to attend, we will be posting the materials from each workshop as we receive them from presenters on our website. The materials can be found at the bottom of the garden resources page at [http://www.cacscw.org/garden\\_handbook.php](http://www.cacscw.org/garden_handbook.php).



**A gardener plants cabbage seeds during the Seed Starting Workshop lead by Catherine Murray of Fitchburg Fields.**

CAC would like to recognize Globe University, UW Extension, and Madison Community Foundation for their support and thank Just Coffee and Cousins Subs for their contributions to this event.

If you have any ideas or input about CAC's events in the future, including topics for future workshops, please contact Nicole Craig at [nicolec@cacscw.org](mailto:nicolec@cacscw.org) or 246-4730 ext 208.

## Area Events and Announcements

### Urban Ag Volunteer Meeting Tuesday, March 1, 6:30

#### Will St Coop Community Room

No experience required. New and experience gardeners, mentors, activists and all others welcome. Projects discussed will include Darbo Community/ Food Pantry Garden, Off the Block Salsa, and the Darbo-Eken Garden District. If you would like to volunteer, but can't attend, or would like more information on these projects, please email [jwmingle@tds.net](mailto:jwmingle@tds.net). \*If you must drive to the meeting, please do not park in the Coop parking lot.

### Madison FarmWorks Classes Help your vegetable garden produce like a vegetable farm

This class is for the vegetable gardener who wants to delve more deeply into growing organically at home. The class will focus on intermediate and advanced gardening skills such as: garden design and layout to facilitate crop rotation and cover cropping, planting schedules and succession planting for maximum production, and tips on which vegetable varieties are best suited to our local climate. Take your gardening to the next level in 2011!

This class will be offered at the following locations:

#### Wednesday, February 23, 6-8pm

#### Olbrich Botanical Gardens

To register online: <http://www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm>

#### Monday, February 28, 6-8pm

#### UW Mini Courses

To register online: <http://www.union.wisc.edu/minicourses/index.asp>

#### Tuesday, March 15, 6-8pm

#### Willy St. Co-op West

For more information: <http://www.wilystreet.coop/calendar>

### Seed Starting for the Home Gardener

Starting your own seeds isn't as hard as you think! Come visit the new passive solar greenhouse at Troy Gardens and go home ready to start seeds. You will learn how to mix your own soil, build an inexpensive seed starting rack for your home, and learn the basics of starting seeds indoors in a small space. Topics covered include seed starting schedule, soil mix recipes, tray options, seeding and planting techniques, growing conditions, hardening off, and an introduction to our favorite varieties. All participants will take home several plant starts. Additional supplies will be available for purchase after class.

Class takes place in the greenhouse at **Troy Gardens, 502 Troy Drive Saturday, March 12, 10am-noon**

Register through Willy St. Co-op.

For more information: <http://www.wilystreet.coop/calendar>

### Master Composter workshop

Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Dane County UW-Extension office at 1 Fen Oak Court

A master composter workshop will be held to provide a two part training for anyone interested in teaching others about home composting including backyard composting and vermicomposting with earthworms. Pre-registration is required. Visit our website to learn more and to access the registration brochure: <http://dane.uwex.edu/2011/02/10/upcoming-training-for-master-composters/>

### Youth Grow Local Conference

Registration deadline this Friday, February 26th. Visit [www.notlong.com/youthgrowlocal](http://www.notlong.com/youthgrowlocal) for more information and online registration.

### Just Eats: Changing Food for our Community

Saturday March 12, 2011

10:00am to 4:00pm

East Madison Community Center

Cost: \$10 individual or \$20-\$50 organizations—registration required. Scholarships available & TimeBank hours accepted.

“Just Eats” brings people together, supports the sharing of skills and knowledge, highlights the range of work in our community on these topics and helps move good work forward!

The forum model that we use begins with participants identifying their goals and the questions that they want to work through. Our moderators then facilitate sessions around these topics. Lunch, childcare and Spanish interpretation provided.

For more information, or to register online call 608-441-0085 or visit [www.grassrootsleadershipcollege.org](http://www.grassrootsleadershipcollege.org).

### Community Forum: Addressing Food Sustainability in Communities

Tuesday, March 1st 5:30-7pm

1106 Mechanical Engineering

1513 University Ave, Madison

What are the economic and social impacts of local food production, consumption and education? Join us to learn about efforts to create more sustainable food systems at the community level. Forums are **Free and open to the public.**

Panel Discussion:

[Kiera Mulvey](#), Executive Director, Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition  
[Bob Wills](#), President, Cedar Grove Cheese Inc.

[Kate Stalker](#), Special Projects Coordinator, Center for Resilient Cities and Badger Rock Middle School  
[Emily Duma](#), Co-Director, Slow Food UW-Madison

## Spring Registration is Just Around the Corner!

It's time to start planning for your community garden's spring registration. In fact, many of you may have already started preparing for this event, but don't fret if you or your garden is new to organizing this event. I have reached out to some veteran gardens and registrars who were willing to share what they do to prepare for registration. I have created a suggested timeline of tasks that lead up to registration, including some helpful hints along the way. Special thanks to Jill Schneider of Troy Gardens and Katie Place of Gammon Community Garden for sharing their information and experiences!

### January, Early February

- Secure a place for Spring Registration Meeting.
- Contact Hmong, Spanish, and any other needed interpreters to make sure they can attend.
- Contact CAC to see if your garden is eligible for free seeds to offer low-income gardeners at registration.
- If you plan to offer hay or row cover to gardeners, check the pricing from suppliers before setting the price on applications.
- Check last year's volunteer hours, and make sure all gardeners are up to date with hours or fees, if applicable.
- Modify any community gardens documents. Make sure these documents reflect any approved changes in rules and policies.

### 3-4 Weeks Prior to Garden Registration Meeting

- Mail or email plot application to last year's gardeners. This is a good time to include any new rules and deadlines.
- As soon as the application is available, distribute it to area apartment complexes and community centers. If possible, translate it into languages spoken in your neighborhood.
- Send a mailing of postcards to all of last year's gardeners to notify them of the Spring Registration meeting. Also let the gardeners know about any amount of money they may owe for volunteer hours missed last year, if applicable.
- Have Spanish speaking volunteer call Spanish speaking gardeners to notify them of the garden registration meeting, and so on for Hmong, Nepali, Lao, etc.
- Call gardeners with out of date addresses in database to notify of Spring Registration.
- Send out an email or call people on waiting list to

tell them to apply in case there are plots available.

### 3 Weeks Prior to Garden Registration Meeting

- Prepare Spring Registration Meeting Announcements. Send a copy to all interpreters and spring registration Subcommittee Leader (if applicable).
- Send email to Spring Registration Subcommittee or gardeners to solicit volunteers to bring food to spring registration meeting and to help with other tasks such as set up before the meeting.

### 1-2 Weeks Prior

- Send reminder email to returning gardeners with same info as original email. (2 weeks before)
- Gather one of more cash boxes with plenty of change.
- Gather pens, several calculators, two receipt books for payments, and enlarged plot maps from previous year.
- Prepare list of gardeners that need to pay for volunteer hours from last year to use at the meeting.
- Prepare lists of gardeners from last year's gardener database.
- Print off applications to hand out at meeting, and meeting announcements for interpreters, garden coordinator, and registrar.
- Print off invoices for paid interpreters to bring to spring registration.
- Pickup donated seeds from CAC, if eligible.
- Reconfirm with all interpreters the day and time they are requested to be at the event and what will be expected of them.
- Reconfirm date and time with the facility hosting registration.

### Day of Registration Meeting and Beyond

- If possible, bring a laptop to registration and enter gardeners' registration information directly into the spreadsheet for the new season. Updating it in real time as returning gardeners submit their paperwork at registration streamlines things.
- Determine how to notify gardeners not attending registration what the announcements are for the coming year (plot rules, volunteer time, other pertinent information). This could be done through email, newsletters, and announcements during opening day.
- Take down old plot map from web site and message board if applicable. Replace with a plot numbers only version to avoid confusion.



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# Community Action Coalition

CAC is a community action agency, which is a non-profit organization established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, part of President Johnson's "War on Poverty". Our mission is to develop the economic and social capacities of individuals, families, and communities to reduce poverty in Dane, Jefferson, and Waukesha Counties. Since its founding in 1966, CAC has engaged communities in the struggle to eliminate poverty. By creating and operating a wide variety of programs through specialized divisions, we strive to enhance the skills, knowledge and capacity of people experiencing poverty so they may improve their social and economic circumstances.

## Get Involved With Madison Area Community Gardens

### How Can You Help CAC Gardens?

There are many volunteer opportunities available assisting the community gardens in the Madison area. Read more about the [current opportunities](#). For more information, email [jason clay](mailto:jason.clay@cacscw.org) or call (608) 246-4730 ext. 209.

Madison resident who has an interest or role in Madison's community gardens. The committee meets monthly (except in the summer months). All meetings are open to the public, with Hmong and Spanish interpreters available to facilitate participation by all attendees.

### Join the New Garden Fund Panel

Two positions on the New Garden Fund panel are currently vacant. Panel members are responsible for reviewing and choosing New Garden Fund grant recipients. Panel members meet 2-3 times per year as a group, in addition to a few site visits to meet with garden grant applicants on-site, which is done in small groups. New Garden Fund panel members do not need to be community gardeners, but knowledge of community gardens is preferred. Interpretation is available at meetings. For more information, or if interested in being a part of the New Garden Fund panel, please contact Nicole Craig at 246-4730 Ext 208 or [nicolec@cacscw.org](mailto:nicolec@cacscw.org).

The committee was established in 2000 and given the charge of preserving, expanding and enhancing opportunities for community gardening in Madison. The committee works to raise the visibility of community gardening and create better understanding of its many benefits by fostering collaborative partnerships and leveraging limited resources by harnessing support for gardens from within the community and multiple units of city government. The Community Gardens Committee provides an invaluable public forum -- a place where garden advocates and city government work together to build a productive and sustainable system of community gardens in Madison.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 22, 5-6:30

Where: Madison Municipal Building, 215 MLK Jr. Blvd, Room LL-110

### Join the City of Madison Community Gardens Committee

The City of Madison Community Gardens Committee is currently seeking new citizen members to represent community gardeners in Madison. Representatives of certain city committees (Plan, Parks and CDBG), citizen gardeners, and staff (from the Mayor's office and CAC) comprise the committee. Membership is open to any

For more information about the Comm. Gardening Committee, visit their [website](#).

If you are interested in being a member of the committee, please contact Nicole Craig at [nicolec@cacscw.org](mailto:nicolec@cacscw.org) or call her at 246-4730 ext. 208.