

Quotes about the Community Teaching Garden from 2008 participants

I think the most beneficial aspect was that, first and foremost, sustainable gardening is do-able for anyone! It doesn't require that you spend 5 hours a day in the garden and the benefits to everyone (and the environment) are amazing. With community involvement and a basic level of commitment, you can grow enough vegetables to feed a large family and still have plenty left over. I know that for us, this class has changed our lives—we look at the produce that we purchase and consume in a whole different way. The quality of the vegetables grown in the garden was outstanding! As students, on very limited budgets, we cannot often afford to buy all of our produce organic. This was the first time that we truly realized how much better the veggies look and taste when you grow them yourself. In addition, during the tomato scare (where people were getting sick from contaminated produce) earlier in the year, it was nice to know we didn't have to worry about our produce!

-- *Ana Kuny and Logan Slock, Burlington/Richmond*

All of the work (fun) we did on the garden(s) was a great experience, working with the soil, cultivating the plants, harvesting the produce. Also, the social aspect was great. But for me, the best part of all was all the great food we got to eat! We ended up eating so much food from our garden that we actually saw a significant decrease in our food bill, AND we were able to do quite a bit of canning and freezing as well.

-- *Thomas Saielli and Karen McNeill, Burlington*

It was an absolutely wonderful experience that I would highly recommend to others. Initially, the time commitment of a class 20 weeks long 2 nights per week seemed somewhat daunting, but I never felt like it was a chore. I always looked forward to attending class.

-- *Gina Mackinnon, Burlington*

I learned an incredible amount and now have a newfound love of gardening. I really enjoyed gardening in a communal setting and having the chance to get to know the other members as well. I plan to return in the spring at the New Discovery Garden!

-- *Maddie Liebman, Burlington*

The amount of food that can be produced from such a small piece of land was incredible. The quality, although not picture perfect at times, was far tastier than conventional produce purchased from a supermarket.

-- *Laura Dale, Burlington*

I found the teaching aspect to be most beneficial. Not only was I curious for my own knowledge, but I needed the skills to teach others as well for my internship. I liked being able to ask direct questions and know that I was getting a good answer!

-- *Amy Clay, UVM student*

It was great to walk through all of the steps and stages of the season and know that there are no stupid questions. I feel much more prepared to go at it alone (well, alone-ish) next season!

-- *Maureen Rees, Burlington*

I think the program was successful in both teaching gardening skills and growing a sense of community. The potlucks were very important in building community as well as the volunteer events. I liked the "hands on" approach to gardening and how we each had our own bed where we could practice our new skills.

-- *Jen Tumilowicz, Essex*

We really enjoyed the community aspect of the garden—preparing the plots together, the potluck suppers and the graduation dinner. The lessons and the links were helpful too. We really enjoyed making our own tomato sauce using the recipe you sent!

-- *Marcy and Donny Morgan, South Burlington*

I loved the food we grew in our garden, and the community beds. We learned how to grow excellent produce that we frequently shared with friends and family. We constantly got high praise on the appearance of our garden, and the quality of our produce. I would have to say that this reflects very highly upon the quality of teaching we received, and I refused to take all the credit. I found that it pushed me to work hard so we could keep growing excellent food. It was very rewarding to have other people enjoy our food as much as we did.

-- *John Peckham, Williston*

I feel that the Community Teaching Garden was a perfect mix of organic gardening and community building skills. We all worked together and learned together, and I think this created a bond within the group. It was an incredible experience to harvest vegetables such as the sweet potatoes (of which there were plenty), as well as watching all the beans grow. Before this garden, I had never had Swiss chard, and now it just keeps growing and I have been cooking with it since June!

-- *Lindsay Pokorak, Williston*