



Local News

A North Dakota Department of Agriculture Initiative - Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring

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Green and Growing

A school garden success story

Circle of Nations Wahpeton Indian School plants garden for school lunch program

Photos and story submitted by Lise Erdrich

A \$1,000 grant was received from the North Dakota Department of Agriculture to initiate a sustainable local food system at Circle of Nations School (CNS). Produce from the kitchen garden will be used by Janet Danks, foodservice supervisor, this school year.

The local food pantry, CNS wellness program, and Chahinkapa Zoo will benefit as well. Ungulates love overgrown zucchini! Especially the goats.

Teachers conducted activities such as growing bedding plants from seed during the last six weeks of school. The idea was to show kids how food begins with seeds. Surprisingly, most of these plants — even corn and sunflowers — transplanted well and are thriving in the month of July.

Science teacher Jim Drayton, sixth-grade teacher Lori Heiserich, and dormitory counselor Sharon Maulding facilitated groups of students planting seeds in the classrooms and the Pemmican Hall dining facility. This area has a large, south facing window ideal for this purpose.

An additional grant was received from the National Gardening Association with a Home Depot gift card. Ione Koep, CNS payroll manager, drew plans for raised bed gardens and estimated the cost of materials. CNS facilities management staff built four raised beds including a sandbox for root vegetables. Then, Wahpeton Parks and Recreation donated garden-ready railroad ties to make two more raised beds.



Students from the Circle of Nations School in Wahpeton planted their victory garden in raised beds.

Richland County Vo-Tech donated flats of marigolds for natural pest control and also petunias to attract pollinators. Landmark Landscaping in Breckenridge, Minn., donated an awesome bounty of seeds

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Localmotion

Grant County residents 'gather at the garden'

The Grant County community gardens in Carson, Elgin and New Leipzig have hosted several events this summer for both youth and adults.

Tom Kalb, North Dakota State University Extension Horticulture Specialist, made a stop in Carson on July 14 to visit with residents about issues gardeners are facing this summer. Many puzzling questions were answered as Kalb shared his knowledge and years of experience with those in attendance, followed by a rousing game of "Gardening Jeopardy."

The City Slickers 4-H Club provided refreshments for the evening's festivities.

The first harvest from the three community gardens for distribution to a local food pantry was also completed June 23. Food pantry recipients were able to select from fresh garden produce harvested from all three community gardens!

Seeking three 'local' star communities

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture will be actively working towards community surveys from now until the end of the year.

From communities around the state, we are looking to find those three that can become the local foods models. The three communities will be working closely with the department to develop local foods systems programs including farm to cafeteria, developing CSAs, more producers, farmers markets, school gardens, community gardens, and plant a row for the hungry programs.

If you are interested in becoming one of these three communities please contact Sue Balcom at 701-328-4763, or e-mail suebalcom@nd.gov.

Dakota Medical Foundation provides for YMCA memorial playscape

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties has received a grant in the amount of \$1,000 from Dakota Medical Foundation for the Donna Strand Memorial Playscape.

The playscape, a natural playground at the YMCA's Schlossman Branch at 4243 19th Ave S, is being built in honor of Donna Strand, who served YMCA Child Care Services for more than 17 years. It is designed to promote healthy, active play for our youth through more natural experiences. Funds from this grant will go specifically towards the implementation of a garden in the playscape space.

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties is a not-for-profit community service organization dedicated to enhancing the spirit, mind and body of all persons through quality leadership, programs and facilities. Founded in 1886, the organization now serves over 40,000 people per year, of which more than 18,000 are youth. Our YMCA is also the largest child care provider in the Dakotas, serving over 1,200 children per day ranging in age from 6 weeks – 13 years. At the YMCA, no one is turned away due to inability to pay the cost of participation.

- Rory Beil

Is your community planning a local foods meeting or event?

Send your information to

suebalcom@nd.gov

or visit our networking site at

<http://goinglocalnd.ning.com/>

Add your information by clicking on
"add events."

Garden was seeded with North Dakota Department of Agriculture 'Green and Growing School Garden' program grant

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which helped the students become interested in what they could grow. Emery Greenhouse donated end-of-season plants.

Creator sent down timely rain.

Native American scientific companion planting was accomplished in the railroad tie beds: corn and bean hills alternating with rows of squash and watermelons and a row of sunflowers on the north edge. Community volunteers assisted with planting. Site inspection on July 15, shows these plants thriving in the Indian School Victory Garden: corn, pole beans, wax beans, scarlet runner beans, summer squash, winter squash, tomatoes, peppers, pumpkins, morning glories, onions, sunflowers, muskmelons, cucumbers, bush beans, peas, radishes, carrots, Red River red potatoes, beets, Swiss chard, marigolds, bachelor button, cantaloupe, coreopsis, and watermelon.

Herbs have been planted including basil, parsley, dill, cilantro, chives, thyme, mint, and sage.

Classroom model for Circle of Nations School

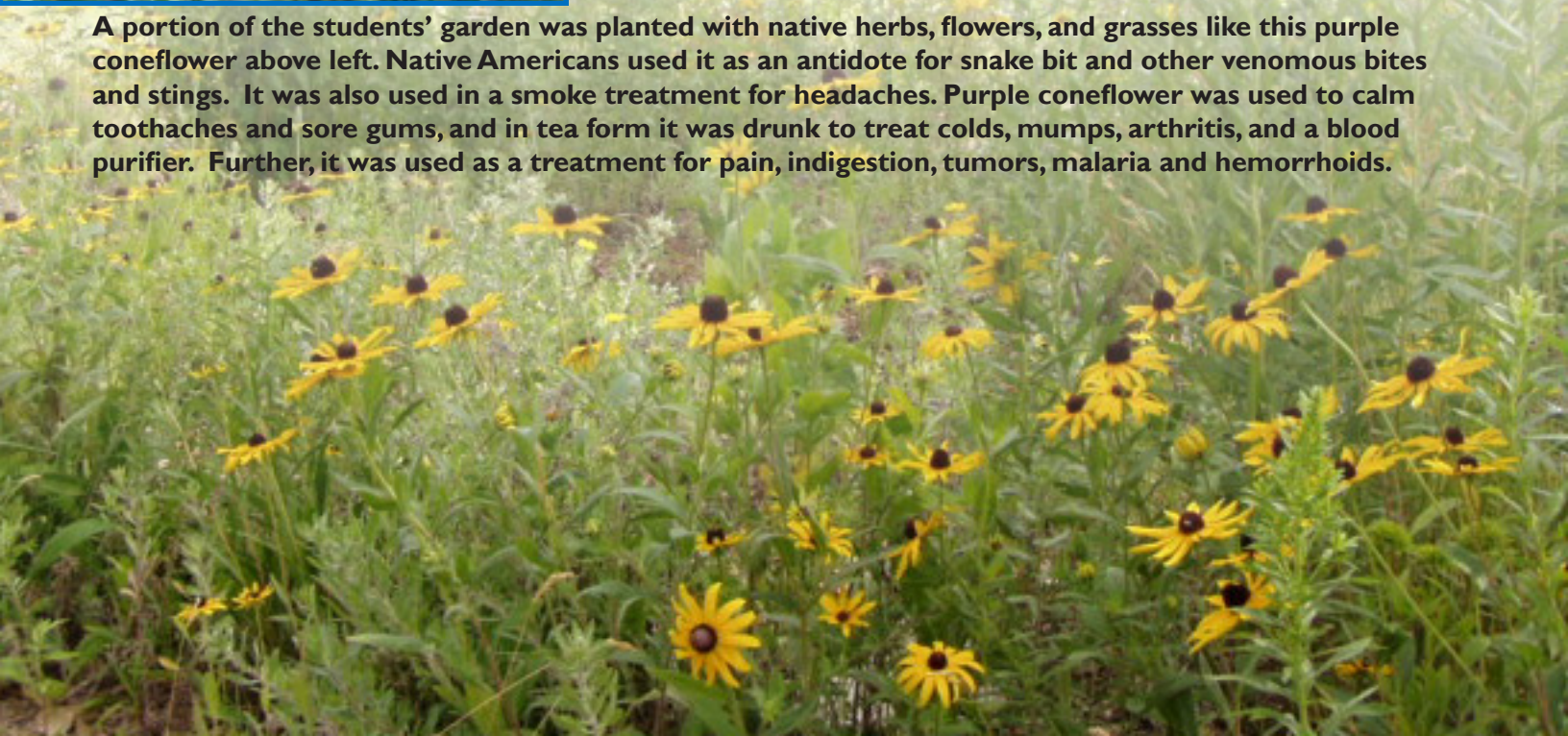
This web site has activities for growing in the classroom. It provides a hands-on activity for students from elementary through high school years that easily provides experience with the scientific method and extensions to topics in other subjects.

By extending it to include planting a victory garden, it can also bring community interaction and provide a source for community outreach - Tammy Andrew

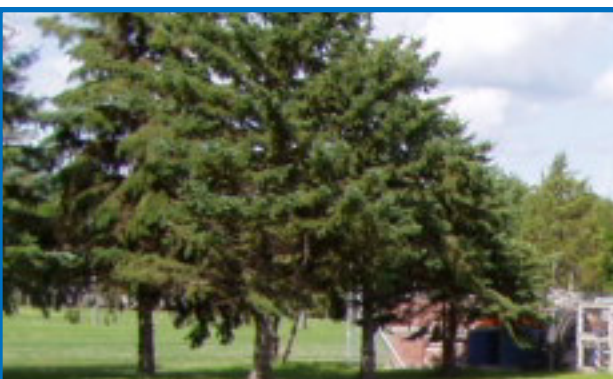
http://classroomactivities.suite101.com/article.cfm/school_victory_garden_plots#ixzz0KrxldgUz&D



A portion of the students' garden was planted with native herbs, flowers, and grasses like this purple coneflower above left. Native Americans used it as an antidote for snake bit and other venomous bites and stings. It was also used in a smoke treatment for headaches. Purple coneflower was used to calm toothaches and sore gums, and in tea form it was drunk to treat colds, mumps, arthritis, and a blood purifier. Further, it was used as a treatment for pain, indigestion, tumors, malaria and hemorrhoids.



**Circle of
Nations
Wahpeton
Indian School
gardens**



Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture growing closer to small producer visions

Mark Pomarleau and Stephanie Dahlstrom from the Dakota College at Bottineau Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture.



Training for vegetable producers is on the way

Story and photos by Sue B. Balcom

Nothing grows fast enough for gardeners. Planning, journaling, nurturing, and hope cannot produce fruit quickly enough for people who grow; and so it goes with the Dakota College at Bottineau Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture. It's ECH for short.

Holly Mawby was hired in January of 2008 to run the program, seven years after a seed was planted to grow the college's horticulture program.

According to Mawby, a focus group was created in 2003 to look at what was then called MSU-Bottineau could do to help the surrounding area using the college's resources. The group's task was to grow

North Dakota from within using people from the horticulture department. That meant creating a new curriculum for a school that has been around since North Dakota became a state in 1889. (Along the same timeline, it took seven years from its inception until the first class began at the North Dakota's School of Forestry in Bottineau in 1906.)

Anne Kirschenmann, of A.K. A Coach and Company of Medina, was hired to do a feasibility study and concluded there was a need in the state for niche and smaller producers that could grow cut flowers and organic crops.

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ECH director also a small producer

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Mawby said the focus on organics was too narrow and convinced the group that local foods and vegetable production are specialty crops too.

When they are offered, the classes will not be research oriented. Being a producer herself, she said, "Why do research when all I want to do is dig in the dirt?"

The campus will be a hands-on experience fitted with high tunnels, a wash and pack facility, a working garden and good agricultural practice demonstrations. "If someone says, 'how can I grow something in a high tunnel?' they can see it being done," Mawby said.

Producer assistance will be two-tiered. Tier one will be geared towards producers making \$60,000 or less. These are the producers attending farmers markets, selling Community Supported Agriculture shares and making direct sales to consumers and retail outlets.

Tier two will be the larger producers selling wholesale to distributors.

Courses will be both credit and non-credit with a one-year degree, a two-year degree and a certificate of completion according to Mark Pomarleau, horticulturist with the ECH. Outside the classroom help will be as simple as one-on-one advice.

To get things growing, the school planted a couple of large garden plots and sold 22 CSA shares to feed about 60 people. Dakota College's "4-Season Community Gardens" was modeled after the University of Idaho Soil Stewards program in Moscow, Idaho.

Pomarleau said the growing season and the weather is similar to North Dakota. This project will be developed into a future CSA training class.

Producers will be able to visit the college at any time and can access training tools from "The Brain." Mawby said this clearinghouse for vegetable production information web site should be up and running by November. The Brain (<http://www.thebrain.com/>) will contain cross referenced articles, books and other useful information for producers from one central Web location.

This library of useful information, as well as the other programs at the ECH, will continue to grow and produce future farmers of North Dakota.

More photos of gardendwellers FARM can be found on page 7



Barry and Holly Mawby, owners of gardendwellers FARM in Churches Ferry, near Devils Lake. Holly was hired in January of 2008 to head up the ECH at Dakota College at Bottineau.

gardendwellers FARM



CONTACT INFORMATION

PO Box 145 or 214 7th ST N
Churchs Ferry, ND 58325-0145

Phone: 701-351-2520

Email: generalinformation@gardendwellersfarm.com

*Top: one of the many gardens at gardendwellers FARM.
Right: A zinnia for cut flower sales. Below: another garden
and restrooms for the many tours that come through
Churches Ferry just to visit the herb farm.*



FIND CHURCHES FERRY

GPS coordinates: lat=48.2724597807,
lon=99.198408652

Turn north off of US HWY 2 at mile market 250, cross
the railroad tracks and turn right (East) into town, then left
(North) on Summit or Orvis Avenues.



Fargo's newest farmers market now open

The newest farmers market in Fargo, the Plain Food Farmers Market, is held weekly from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursdays through Oct. 1 at the museum, 704 1st Ave. N., Fargo.

The first weekend 13 vendors sold their wares.

These photos were taken by Rudy Radke.



Local light

Local redefined...

We have to look at local a bit differently in this state. It's not a bad thing, we are just blessed with special circumstances.

In my travels between Fargo and Churchs Ferry this month, I opted for a trip off the beaten path.

Rather than taking the straight shot from Fargo to Grand Forks and then Highway 2 to Churchs Ferry on my way to Bottineau, I cut kitty-wampus through the back country.

What a joy to see the sun setting across golden fields of wheat. From a distance, fields of flax appeared to be puddles of water surrounded by rolling hills. Bales of rich grass, thick from this year's generous rain cast growing shadows as day light changed to civil twilight.

Reminiscent of farm days past, I saw a few hay stacks lined up like fresh-baked loaves of bread cooling on a table. Some red barns, some abandoned sheds...North Dakota has a beauty unappreciated by most.

It's also a bit spread out.

In addition to noticing the landscape's wonder, it wasn't too difficult to note the distance from one farm to the next; from one community to the next; from one school to the next. I'm preaching to the choir when I say we have to overcome some distance when we talk about local foods.

If some families were to draw a 50-mile radius around their dinner table, they would be hard pressed to reach a grocery store.

We need to be aware that while the Internet can connect us socially, provide education at our fingertips, and keep us "posted" on national events, to distribute food, we need to get from point A to point B in a realistic manner.

I don't know the answers, we are now just beginning to find out what challenges lie ahead as we work towards growing more of the food we eat.

Some of the things we will be working on from our office will be the issues of distribution. There's a meeting set for Thursday, Aug. 27, to begin creating a distribution task force.

I will be contacting as many of you as possible to begin the work of surveying communities. It would be great to have 11 or more reports done by the end

of December. I'll need your help.

We are also planning a Local Foods Summit II Thursday and Friday, Feb. 18 and 19.

Put this event on your calendar. We have not yet decided where this will be held, or what will be offered as we are in the planning stages, but you won't want to miss Ken Meter from Crossroads Resources. He will be the plenary speaker and we are asking him to use data from several North Dakota counties in his work.

You can read about Meter's work at: <http://www.crcworks.org/rural.html>.

His resume is impressive and he has been involved in most of the local foods systems work in the Midwest.

Another goal for me is to become a recognized farm to cafeteria state. In our next grant, we have asked for help establishing three schools and working closely with them to develop producer contracts, methods of preserving harvest for mid-winter use and education curriculum for the students. Lofty goals, but we can do it.

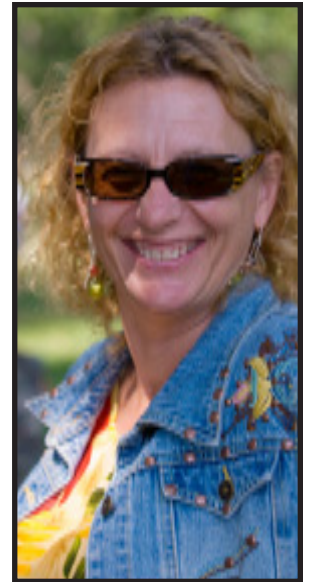
But first, it's nearing the end of summer, and we have lots of work to do harvesting the fruits of our labor.

My community garden in Mandan is flourishing. Unlike my home garden beds, the deer have left this patch untouched.

My two inches of straw mulch has made watering and weeding a snap... I'm thinking about writing "The Lazy Girl's Gardening Guide."

If you check out my blog, www.kitchensnitch.blogspot.com I have posted some recipes for Kale, something even my husband enjoys.

And remember - "There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling," quoted by Mirabel Osler.



*A personal column
By Sue B. Balcom*