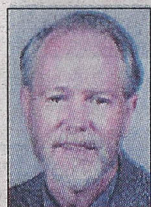


In neighborhood gardens, community flourishes, too

DANIEL CLARK

TOWARD A MORE
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY



Spring seems to be on us, and our Rees & Sumach Community Garden is

gearing up for its second year after a very successful first season.

We have 30 individual plots, each 10-by-20 feet, together with several common areas where we plant and harvest together.

The garden has a tool shed where we keep shared tools, equipment and seeds, and several signs including a map of our herb beds and a new neighborhood history sign. We're located at the corner of Rees and Sumach streets across from DeSales Catholic High School and Shady Lawn Antiques.

This season, we plan to add an artful entrance gate and some landscaping outside our fence. We have a few individual plots still open, which are available on a first-come first-served basis for a \$40 annual fee, with the possibility of a partial scholarship if needed.

Our website, [\[esandsumach.org\]\(http://esandsumach.org\), has an application form, garden rules, photos and other information, plus links to other community gardens and garden information, including a new link to an interesting children's garden in Ithaca, N.Y.: \[www.ithacachildrengarden.org/garden.html\]\(http://www.ithacachildrengarden.org/garden.html\).](http://www.re-</p>
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Besides our Rees and Sumach garden sponsored by the North Main Area Neighborhood Association, Walla Walla has several other common gardens, including:

■ **Edith-Carrie Neighborhood Garden.** With the help of Commitment to Community, the garden grew from conversations with neighbors about the high cost of groceries. The idea of creating vegetable gardens percolated in the fall of 2008. After a snowy winter to mull over the possibility of a garden, 12 families from the neighborhood along with the outreach organizer created the community garden in the spring of 2009. Families have donated extra produce to the food pantries in town or to other residents. Blue Mountain Action Council owns the property where the community garden is located — Carrie Street and 11th Avenue. Neigh-

bors share a rototiller, hand tools, rakes and sprinklers. While neighbors prepared the site for the garden, Canoe Ridge Winery volunteered to install a sturdy fence around the perimeter of the property, which, to date, has managed to keep the rabbits out. The Edith & Carrie Neighborhood website is www.c2cwalla-walla.org/edithcarrie.php. ■ **Whitman College Organic Garden.** Whitman's organic garden was created in 1997 by several students, and is dedicated to spiritual renewal, meaningful labor, community vitality and sharing healthy practices of cultivating the land. A student government-sponsored club maintains the garden and organizes events to open the space up to everyone. Located at the corner of Penrose and Pacific streets, the garden's website is www.whitman.edu/organic_garden.

■ **Walla Walla Public School Gardens.** The school district has an official policy encouraging schools "to establish an instructional garden (tilled ground, raised bed, container, nearby park, community garden, farm or lot) of sufficient size

to provide students with experiences in planting, harvesting, preparing, serving and tasting foods."

At least five schools in Walla Walla, including Lincoln High School, Garrison Middle School, and Prospect Point, Sharpstein and Green Park elementary schools, have gardens.

■ **Christ Lutheran Church Garden.** Prompted by the desire to be better stewards of the land entrusted to their care, to foster a sense of community, and to contribute to the area's sustainability by growing food locally, the Christ Lutheran Church congregation at 1420 S. Second Ave. established a small community garden in 2009. Currently it is tended by church members, but there is the possibility of it eventually being expanded and opened to others in the neighborhood.

One of the greatest fruits of our Rees & Sumach Community

Garden has been the opportunity to get to know, learn from and work together with a variety of neighbors and local residents on a common project.

Community gardens grow more than healthful local vegetables, fruits, and flowers — they grow community.

If you'd like to organize

a community garden of your own, we'd be glad to share our experience and ideas with you.

You'll also find a link to a community garden start-up guide on our website.

Daniel Clark coordinates the Rees & Sumach Community Garden, and also serves as president of the North Main Area Neighborhood Association. He can be reached at 509-522-0399 or clarkdn@charter.net.