

## Learning Garden Club at Lane Community College

The Learning Garden Club is a student group dedicated to growing organic food on campus. The group focuses on educating fellow students about the value of local, sustainable food systems. The garden is designed as a living laboratory that demonstrates the connections within human and natural systems. Students strive to help people understand how their food choices can impact their personal health, environmental integrity and the well-being of the community. The club has established an on-campus farmer-chef connection with the Culinary Arts Department.

The LCC Learning garden was established in the spring of 2006 and has evolved from one 20' X 20' plot to over 4,000 square feet of raised beds with deer fencing and an irrigation system. This year we have expanded to more than double that current size. The garden is located at the southwest edge of campus, behind buildings 24-27, with access through Parking Lot D. The garden produces a wide array of organic vegetables and fruit to provide healthy options for people who want fresh, local food in the cafeteria.

The garden encompasses three separate growing areas, each with its own focus. In one plot students grow small amounts of vegetables to experiment with seasonal varieties and save seeds. The second plot is a production area where larger production crops are grown for the Culinary Arts Department for use in the Renaissance Room and special events in the Center for Meeting and Learning. The third plot will be designed as a permaculture food forest where we are planting a small fruit orchard and plan to incorporate perennials and native food plants.

The LCC Learning Garden offers students valuable leadership experience through planning and managing hands-on activities. It is a great opportunity to be actively involved in implementing sustainability measures on campus. Learning Garden student volunteers can qualify for work-study, internships, service learning hours or class credit from specific faculty who support the garden with their curriculum. There is a continuing education class offered during Summer Term that includes the garden as an outdoor classroom: Organic Gardening Principles and Practice. Sign up now to learn more about growing your own food!

Students meet in a unique context, build friendships and savor the rewards of their labor. The garden offers opportunities to explore creative garden design, observe and cultivate plant communities, learn basic organic agriculture and Permaculture principles, and help develop the garden into an outdoor classroom. We are a diverse, energetic group dedicated to environmental stewardship, honoring the natural world that sustains us, and providing organic produce for delicious meals!

If you would like to get involved and help contribute to Lane's sustainability, please consider joining the Learning Garden Club. Come on down and enjoy the fresh air, delicious food and fun! To get on our email list and receive information about our meetings and work parties, please contact us at: [learninggarden@lanecc.edu](mailto:learninggarden@lanecc.edu). Visit our information table in the north end of the cafeteria. For more information, contact the Learning Garden Specialist at [learninggarden@lanecc.edu](mailto:learninggarden@lanecc.edu) or 463-5899.