

Lettuce Ink



Lettuce Link connects low-income communities in Seattle with fresh organic produce, gardening information and resources to grow their own food.



Celebrate the Harvest at Marra Farm!

Join us for Fall Fest
On September 27th.
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Community Fruit Tree Harvest

Once again, our Community Fruit Tree Harvest project has taken off at a breakneck pace. As plums became plumper, apple boughs sank lower, and blackberries darkened, eager volunteers started to pick, pick, pick—and they turned up a harvest truly representative of Seattle’s late summer bounty. Gail Savina, our project coordinator, finds available trees, coordinates volunteer harvesters and drivers, and connects them with communities that want to receive the fruit.

By early September, volunteers had already picked at more than 54 separate harvests! The unexpected abundance of August apples surprised everyone. Pickers found plentiful pockets of red, yellow, and green apples—wormless ones—where last year there had been few until September. Needless to say, volunteers (literally) have their hands full.

As the word spreads, individuals are taking initiative within their neighborhoods to find plentiful sources and connect them with those in need. For example, Dustin, a veteran volunteer from

the Central Area, single-handedly delivered over 350 pounds of fruit from trees near his house to two nearby facilities. In Phinney Ridge, Joslyn hosted the Rain City Rotary Club's group harvest on one of Seattle’s hottest Saturdays. Kim and the Shoreline Rotary members harvested more than 600 pounds of apples and delivered them to the HopeLink Food Bank the same day.

The success of Lettuce Link’s Community Fruit Tree Harvest project has helped prompt similar efforts in surrounding areas. The Community Harvest of Southwest Seattle, which started as a satellite neighborhood group last year, has already met its goal of doubling its 2007 harvest by collecting 2,000 pounds this year. We helped an Eastside Harvest Group get up and running and talk to other groups daily about starting up their own harvests.

Autumn is a busy time for harvesting fruit—12,526 pounds have been picked this year, and there is still a bounty of fruit to harvest and new of friends to make.

Seattle Girls School at Hawkins P-Patch

Three years ago, math and science teacher Darin Reynaud decided to integrate hands-on gardening experience into her curriculum at the Seattle Girls School. Many of the skills used in planning and conceptualizing a garden plot, such as measuring perimeters and calculating areas, fit perfectly as applied math for her 6th grade curriculum. Further, she had recently become passionate about eating locally and wanted to pass such awareness on to her students. So along with the mathematics and nutrition, Lettuce Link helped Darin incorporate service-learning elements through Growing and Giving and tracking donations into the gardening project.

The program has grown and changed since its first year. The first season, the students were unable to harvest a majority of the food they grew because they had already left for summer vacation. In following years, they planted seeds and starts provided by Lettuce Link that they could harvest earlier, such as spinach, kale, radishes, and onions. “We harvest lettuces every week, and the students are able to see what is going to food bank,” says Darin. All harvested food goes to nearby St. Mary’s Food Bank.



Seattle Girls’ School
Giving Garden at
Hawkins P-Patch

This year, Darin will be working with an especially tenacious crew of young gardeners. Instead of incorporating the gardening workshop into the 6th grade curriculum, it will be offered as an “internship” opportunity for 5th - 8th grade students. With a smaller, self-selected group and a longer chunk of time to devote to the garden, Darin thinks that they can do even more. “I’m hoping they will direct what they want to do with it,” she says, “This year they’ll be more into it than ever!”

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Lettuce Link’s Summer Kids Program

Now in its 10th year, Lettuce Link’s Summer Gardening and Nutrition Education Program at Marra Farm finished up at the end of August. Twice a week, throughout the summer (except on those rainy summer days), a dedicated summer teaching crew welcomed a pack of youngsters from the South Park Community Center. Each day offered new activities and lessons about healthy eating, cooking, and growing food. We welcomed back many of the older children for their 3rd or 4th summer and were delighted to introduce the younger 5-6 year olds to the farm for their first time.

The kids loved to help with the farm tasks, chop and eat veggies, run through the sprinklers, munch on raspberries from our ever-prolific bush, and watch as their favorite vegetable plants grew and evolved over the sunny weeks of farm bliss.



Summer Teaching Crew: Keiko, Liz, Michelle, Kristiane, Bridget, Sophie, Emily, & Angie

Eastlake P-Patch's Day of Giving



Small and Generous Eastlake P-Patch

September 11, 2008 finds Salaha Warsi harvesting vegetables from several beds at the Eastlake P-Patch for their annual Day of Giving. The tradition began after the events of September 11, 2001 left the Eastlake neighbors in shock and at a loss for what to do.

All of them shaken and some personally affected by the tragedy, they headed to the P-Patch and harvested food to donate to a local food bank. The Day of Giving is now in its seventh year.

Salaha donates hours of her time caring for the designated Food Bank Plot, managing donations and organizing and harvesting gifts of food for local food banks and meals programs, including

fruit from her own backyard. When asked why she gives so much of her time, Salaha simply says, "You see a lot of need."

While food banks prefer donations of large amounts of a single crop, meals programs such as the University Baptist Church Soup Kitchen love any amount of fresh produce they can add to their meals. Salaha, however, urges donors not to be discouraged by small donations, "People need to get it in their frame of mind that even a little bit adds up." This year's day of giving yielded 55 pounds of squash, tomatoes, greens and beans donated to St. Martin de Porres Shelter, with a running total of 203 pounds of produce grown and donated by

Summer Movie at the Farm

In partnership with the Community Alliance for Global Justice, Lettuce Link co-hosted an evening of open-air cinema at Marra Farm in early September. With the help of a kind neighbor who lent us electricity, we showed "*The Greening of Cuba*" and "*Zapata's Garden / El Huerto de Zapata*" on a large projection screen.

The Greening of Cuba is a Food First film that profiles Cuban farmers and scientists working to reinvent a sustainable agriculture, based on ecological principles and local knowledge rather than imported agricultural inputs. "*Zapata's Garden / El Huerto de Zapata*" shows how indigenous men and women in the Autonomous Municipality of Emiliano Zapata are fighting the effects of globalization and government corruption through their work in their collective garden.



Harvest Moon

We roasted farm-fresh corn under a clear evening sky and the full harvest moon. Luminaries lit the pathways, lending an almost magical feel to the farm. A view into what others around the world are doing to maintain cultural and food sovereignty gave us insight into the shared interest in food, fairness and the knowledge of everyday people. We gained a sense of power about our ability to transform our regional food systems here at home through collective action and enjoyed seeing so many people from all over the city gathering at the farm.

20 years and growing up

Tote Bags

Reduce, reuse, look good and help support the work of Lettuce Link by getting your own Lettuce Link Tote Bag! (\$20 suggested donation) They're roomy enough to hold a large bag of groceries.

Supply is limited; contact us to order yours today at 206.694.6754 or lettucelink@solid-ground.org



*A garden is never so good as it
will be next year.*
—Thomas Cooper

From the Office

Can you imagine the great things we could do if the government invested \$700 billion into strengthening our local food systems and anti-poverty efforts so that the need for food banks became obsolete and gardens abounded? If only that were possible!

In the meantime, though we are facing ever more grim headlines and tightening belts YOU are making a positive impact by contributing time, resources and sweat to make sure that good food is getting to those who need it and that food is not going to waste. In a time of increased anxiety, the work we do in our own communities is ever more important.

As you think about ways to stay involved next year, consider that we need reliable volunteers to start plants for Giving Gardens around the city—we've relied on donations, yet with growing interest in gardening, donating vendors are happily selling out of their veggie starts. Though planting by seed is possible, many gardeners prefer to plant seedlings in their food bank plots to get ahead of the weeds. We are seeking specific crop starts such as collards, lettuce, spinach, and mustards. Get in touch if you're interested.

This year, Lettuce Link celebrated our 20th anniversary with a Squashing Hunger party at Marra Farm. We enjoyed food, music and friends that came out to celebrate the successes of our program. Thank you for joining us on that lovely day in August and for your continued support as we enter into the fall harvest season. I hope to see you at Fall Fest!

~Michelle

Join us for Fall Fest

Join us for Marra Farm's annual Fall Fest September 27th from 12-3. Featured as part of the King County Farm Tour, we welcome you to join us in an end of the season community celebration. The whole family is invited for an afternoon of tasty treats, games for kids, and farm tours in the only farm right here in Seattle!

Bring a dish to share and help us celebrate another successful year of farming and friends.

