

The Columbus Green Patch

Wrapping Up the Year with Growth and Leadership | [VIEW IN BROWSER](#)

Welcome!

As we close out the year, we're excited to celebrate a powerful milestone for Growing to Green and Franklin Park Conservatory, the graduation of our first-ever Urban Garden Leadership Academy (UGLA) cohort. This milestone represents months of learning, collaboration, and leadership growth among community garden leaders from across Central Ohio, and we couldn't be more proud of what this group has accomplished.

Throughout this year, we've seen gardens grow, partnerships deepen, and new leaders step forward with inspiring ideas for food access, education, and community connection. As we reflect on all that's been accomplished this year and look ahead to what's next in the year, we're grateful to our partners, participants, and supporters who make this work possible. Thank you for being part of the Growing to Green community and for continuing to support local leadership, food access, and thriving green spaces.

Growing to Green Team



Congratulations to UGLA first cohort, with gratitude to the partners who made the Urban Garden Leadership Academy possible.

Looking Back

URBAN GARDEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2025 COHORT GRADUATION

The 12-week journey of the UGLA cohorts concluded with an exciting graduation ceremony attended by graduates, their families, our partners, and mentors. This academy combined interactive workshops, cohort capstone projects, and site visits that covered essential topics including garden planning, advanced growing techniques, food systems and policy, community outreach, storytelling and visibility, budgeting, fundraising, and organizational leadership, and has been one of the most empowering experiences for participants. After graduation, many of the cohort members will continue mentoring with outstanding community partners and garden leaders for several months to further build their gardens and refine their learning. The academy's inaugural cohort reflects the region's vibrant and diverse gardening community: 19 participants representing 15 gardens across Central Ohio, ranging in age from 21 to 78 and bringing a wide range of lived experiences, roles, and leadership aspirations.

For many participants, UGLA has been a transformative experience, here are some highlights from the participants' own words.

"What's been most rewarding about my UGLA experience is getting to be in a room of people with such different backgrounds and having the space to bring my own unique experience and abilities to the table," shared UGLA participant **Max Rojanasakdakul**. "Although I may have been younger than most people in the room, I felt like I was never seen as less experienced or amateur."

Others are already putting their new skills into action. **Sam Arthurs**, who works with Local Matters' garden education programs, said, "I absolutely plan to apply what I've learned in UGLA. I plan to utilize the skills I outlined above to search Land Bank for space and build a garden around the Local Matters mission of food access and education... I feel much more confident after this class than I did before it."

Participants also highlighted how the program expanded their understanding of local collaboration and community assets. **Angela Beasley** from Mari Sunami Garden said, "I was able to identify potential partners through asset mapping and the steps to engage in future collaboration. I realize the assets that we have just 2 blocks away."

"The most rewarding experience has been the trips to various places and seeing how some of the gardens and initiatives in the area operate," shared **Harjote Kaur**. "I like to hear the inner workings of various initiatives to see the strategies people implement."

Through sessions instructed by subject matter experts and garden leaders across central Ohio, on-site experiences at gardens across the region, participants gained new perspectives on what makes community gardens thrive.

Thank You to Our Partners

The Urban Garden Leadership Academy was made possible through the generous contributions of experts and partners across Columbus, including OSU Extension, Columbus City Public Health, Department of Building and Zoning Services, Land Bank, and several community organizations, and experienced garden leaders. We are deeply grateful for the knowledge, mentorship, and collaboration that helped make this inaugural cohort such a success.

Please see details of our partners at our page [HERE](#)

Current Projects

Free Communal Garden Class Series

MANAGING YOUR GARDEN

Learn the strategy on managing your garden for success and fostering collaboration and connection within urban community gardens. In this class, we'll explore effective ways to engage neighbors, and volunteers, establish clear, inclusive garden rules, and discover how to build meaningful partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits to support your garden's growth and sustainability.

DECEMBER 9 | 6:00-7:30 PM | WELLS BARN

1851 E BROAD ST, COLUMBUS, OH 43205

INSTRUCTORS: GROWING TO GREEN STAFF

Growing to Green is the largest organized effort in Columbus dedicated to supporting and sustaining urban agriculture. For over 25 years, we have helped establish and revitalize hundreds of urban agriculture projects across Central Ohio, transforming available urban land into thriving hubs for food production, education, and community connection.

Learn more & register here!

The Communal Garden Class Series is generously supported by a grateful gardener.

Looking Ahead!

WE DIG OHIO

2026 Urban Agriculture & Community Garden Summit

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens' Growing to Green program will host a half-day summit focusing on urban agriculture and community gardening topics.

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026

Join us for a morning of learning, networking, and collaboration focused on the future of urban agriculture and community gardening.

Growing to Green

Franklin Park Conservatory | The Wells Barn
1777 E. Broad St. | Columbus, Ohio 43203
614.715.8090 | www.fpconservatory.org

More details are coming soon on the **We Dig Ohio Summit!** Stay tuned as we finalize the theme, confirm speakers, and share all the exciting updates with you.

COMMUNITY GARDEN GRANT

We've just closed the Franklin County Community Garden Grant application period and are currently reviewing submissions. Thank you to everyone who applied! We're excited to work with you and will announce the awarded applicants in January.

2026 FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMUNITY GARDEN GRANT

APPLICATIONS CLOSED ON NOVEMBER 24th!

- Awardees will be notified in January 2026.

LEARN MORE HERE!

Additional funding opportunity:

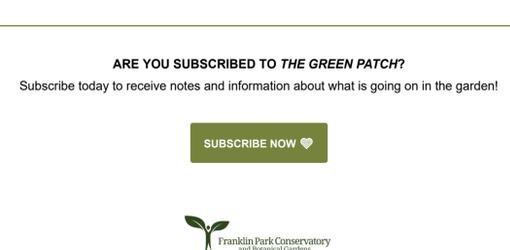
The Columbus Foundation is happy to announce the 2026 Community Garden Grant! This year our funding partners will include the City of Columbus Health Department and Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation.

The 2026 application will launch **January 15, 2026**, and the deadline is **February 15, 2026**, with decisions and payments by **March 4, 2026**.

NOTE: Scotts products will not be part of this year's program. Instead, there will be a separate application to request a \$300 mini grant to help with product purchases.

This mini grant is in addition to the Community Garden Grant, and **gardens may apply for both or just one of two grants.**

Community Corner



COMMUNITY GARDEN SPOTLIGHT: SOUTHEAST GARDENS AND FARM

About the Garden

Southeast Gardens and Farm (dba Southeast Urban Farm) is a 6,000-square-foot urban farm in Canal Winchester, OH, dedicated to serving its local community. The farm provides fresh, locally grown produce while creating hands-on engagement opportunities for neighbors and volunteers alike.

About the Garden Leader

Ava Johnson is the founder and farm manager of Southeast Growers and Farm. Under her leadership, the farm has expanded its reach and impact each year, nurturing a stronger sense of community and supporting access to healthy food for residents.

Location
SE Urban Farm
3919 Brice Rd, Canal Winchester, OH 43110

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Stay Connected With Growing to Green!

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ARE YOU SUBSCRIBED TO THE GREEN PATCH?

Subscribe today to receive notes and information about what is going on in the garden!

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COLUMBUS, OH 43203
fpconservatory.org

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