

Resources for Baltimore City's gardens

SEED AND PLANT GIVE-AWAY DAYS

In 2009, the Community Greening Resource Network provided resources to over **67 community gardens** and **19 school gardens** in Baltimore City. Participants picked up over **2,766 seed packets** and **5,146 vegetable and herb seedlings** at Give-Away Days. Gardeners know that a successful gardening season needs basic resources like seeds and plants at key times during the year. Nurseries and retailers help by contributing their excess or a portion of their supply. The program's timely distribution of high quality resources allowed gardeners to maximize their potential for a productive season. Over **51 participants** volunteered more than **230 hours** to grow seedlings and facilitate the Give-Away Days.

COMMUNITY TOOL BANKS

Providing gardeners with access to additional resources that are not otherwise affordable or readily available provides opportunities to improve gardens and to incorporate advanced techniques and practices. In 2009, CGRN partnered with organizations to open four Community Tool Banks, providing 37 different types of tools (and over 1,000 tools) for gardeners to use.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Throughout the 2009 growing season, there was a valuable exchange between community gardens and **81 volunteers** giving over **194 hours of service**. Volunteers helped with garden preparation, planting, harvesting, and maintenance, as well as special projects like building greenhouses and benches and creating pathways and trellises. These efforts were much appreciated by gardeners. In return, the volunteers had the opportunity to contribute to the community, learning valuable lessons about community gardening and greening in Baltimore City. For many, this volunteer experience exposed them to the work of urban gardening and the value that gardens bring to urban neighborhoods and communities.

RESOURCES PROVIDED	
Greenhouses	2
Compost	2.5 yards
Soil	6 yards
Liriope	76 plants
Annual Flowers	38 flats
Perennial Flowers	347 plants
Perennial Fruit and Nuts	6 nut trees, 12 berries
Volunteers	over 420 hours
Garlic	208 cloves
Cover Crop Seed	5 lbs
Trees	16
Perennial Bulbs	2,160 bulbs
Seeds	2,766 packets
Seedlings	5,146 seedlings



Education for Baltimore City’s gardeners

CGRN WORKSHOPS

Gardeners never stop learning! Each season is an opportunity to explore something new and learn from past experiences. This year, **194 gardeners** learned and advanced their skills at **23 workshops** and trainings designed specifically for CGRN members. Each workshop was taught and hosted by a different garden, partner organization, or volunteer from all over the city, sharing their knowledge and time teaching gardeners to properly plan, grow, harvest, and cook the fruits of their labor. At seven construction workshops, basic skills and techniques were shared through hands-on building activities in informal settings that encouraged exchange of practical experience.

SHARED CALENDAR

The shared calendar included over **189** workdays, workshops, trainings, tree sales, celebrations, volunteer days, films, short courses, conferences, Give-Away Days, and tours for Baltimore’s gardeners, led by a variety of organizations and groups throughout the City! Included were rain barrel construction workshops, tree sales, and discussions on food security. When gardeners have access to a dedicated, streamlined list of educational activities, the information can be shared by and with many people so they can build their skills and connections.

SPECIAL WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTERS

Baltimore welcomed a number of local and national presenters, including Michelle Obama, Michael Pollan, Will Allen, and Tony Geraci to share their experience and expertise with our urban gardeners through special talks, discussions, and workshops. We were also proud to host visitors, researchers, and students from across the country, offering the experience and success of the Baltimore urban gardening community as a model for others.

WORKSHOPS	# OF ATTENDEES
Community Organizing (5)	38
Planning Small Vegetable Gardens	7
Vermiculture (2)	30
Stoop Gardens	3
Volunteers and Leadership	16
Urban Apiaries	16
Canning 101	10
Season Extension	6
Gardening With Students (2)	11
Cooking From The Garden	10
Salad Table Construction	14
Raised Bed Construction	5
Composting 101 (2)	12
Designing Your Space (2)	8
Greenhouse Construction	8



Connections between Baltimore City's gardeners

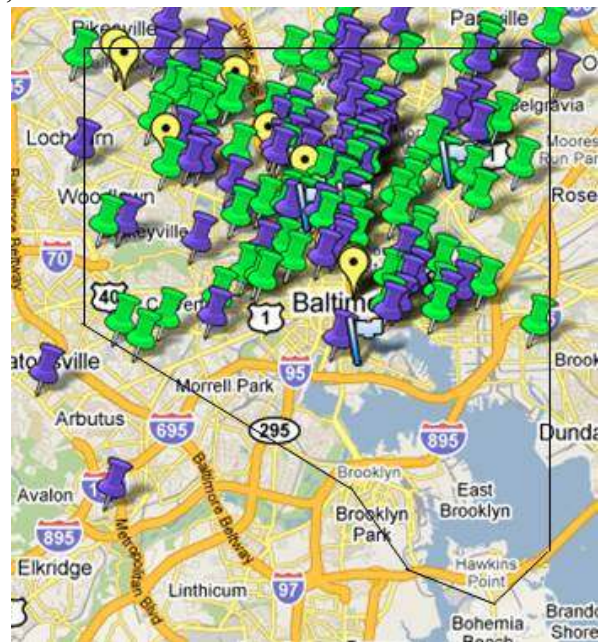
A CITY THAT GROWS TOGETHER

If you traveled through the City meeting gardeners, you would quickly learn about their diverse ideas, inspirations, and goals, and see how this diversity is reflected in their gardens and green spaces. In 2009, an estimated **1,281 adults** and **2,378 children** from organizations, block clubs, businesses, neighborhood groups, churches, and schools were members of CGRN. CGRN celebrates the diversity of gardens, recognizes their unique needs, and highlights the important resources and connections these groups and individuals bring to the table. CGRN facilitates activities on city-wide and local levels to help these groups connect to one another and take advantage of existing resources, ideas, lessons learned, and support in our gardening community. With the help of **15 partner organizations**, the events, including the Urb Ag Gala, City Farms and Community Gardens Supper, Harvest Ball, and Greening Celebration, promote communication and connections between gardeners and help further establish a city-wide resource network that supports healthy land and communities.

EVENTS
Seed and Plant Give-Away Days (4)
Additional Plant Distribution Days (2)
Focus Groups (3)
Strategic Planning (1)
City-Wide Garden Celebrations (4)
"See Green" Newsletter (4)
Monthly Info Blast (8)
Informal Gatherings and Events (Numerous)

GROWING LOCAL

A garden is only as strong and productive as the gardeners who participate in it. There are challenges to making resources and opportunities accessible and appropriate for all who participate. Regular site visits and meetings help keep CGRN decentralized and appropriate to the needs of Baltimore's diverse neighborhoods. In 2009, **27 gardeners** shared their input and feedback during focus groups located at sites around the City. **37 members** took the opportunity to meet and talk with other gardeners during garden site shares. Stories, information, feedback, problems, and successes were shared between the gardener and the one conducting the site share; these connections help build Baltimore's vibrant greening community.



Towards the future with *Baltimore City's* urban gardeners

PLANNING TOGETHER

Each year CGRN invites participants to provide feedback on the resources, education, and technical support they need to garden successfully. At the 2009 summer focus groups and end-of-year planning meeting, gardeners identified resources that are helpful and that could make their gardening efforts more successful; through CGRN's partners these resources are made available. Active participation encourages appropriate use of resources and builds relationships and connections between gardeners. Ultimately, these are what lead to the strength and sustainability of these urban gardens.

LEADERSHIP

CGRN is fortunate to have gardeners of all skill levels and backgrounds. Each brings unique experiences, ideas, and perspectives on how urban gardens and green spaces can grow, their purpose, and how they can impact our City. In order to keep up with the momentum of new skills, ideas, and motivation, we two new groups will bring leaders together interested in setting goals and taking action:

- A) The Baltimore Urban Farmer Selling Collective will take giants steps to bring healthy, fresh food from members' gardeners to Baltimore's farmers' markets and improve the knowledge of gardeners interested in marketing their produce.
- B) The Compost Work Group is increasing awareness and education about composting in the City. In 2009 they tabled at two farmers' markets and are developing a food waste pick-up program.

FOR 2010...

CGRN is moving full steam ahead with these initiatives:

- A) Expanded membership now includes private family gardens and gardens in areas of the County.
- B) Additional levels of support for school gardens include a list of funding resources, professional development, and maintenance calendars.
- C) CGRN is partnering with Sustainable Urban Infrastructures to open Small Batch Community Kitchen at the Mill Valley Garden Center so gardeners can process and sell value-added products.
- D) CGRN will organize spring meetings and tours that will further connect gardeners in the same neighborhoods, providing opportunities for gardeners to meet and help each other.
- E) New Community Tool Banks are being planned for the Greater Charles Village and Druid Heights neighborhoods.

