

Edible Avalon Summary Report 2009



2009 Program at a glance:

- Grew to 6 sites from a single site in 2008
- Built 13 raised beds including 7 permanent stone beds
- 59 participants and over 90 people involved in program including children and seniors
- Almost 1,000 lbs of organic produce harvested by participants
- 38 types of vegetables grown, including many that were new to participants
- About 60 recipes shared based on what was ready for harvest
- Classes in basic food preparation and preservation
- Special children's programming
- Community celebrations open to participants, non-participating Avalon tenants, and neighbors
- Avalon tenants have requested expansion of program in 2010 so more can participate
- A cadre of participants are willing to assume mentoring and teaching roles in 2010

Goals of the Edible Avalon Program:

- Make fresh organic food accessible to urban apartment dwellers
- Teach new skills in growing, preparing, and preserving food
- Catalyze individual growth, mentoring, and leadership
- Build community & create common ground for tenants & neighbors

Executive Summary

The Edible Avalon program had a very successful second year. It has had a positive reception from all quarters – from participants, Site Coordinators, neighbors, staff at both Avalon Housing and Project Grow, and any and all who have heard of the program or sought out information about it. It has made a real and significant difference in the lives of many Avalon tenants, thus meeting its goals of empowering participants and enriching their daily lives in their community. It has succeeded in getting participants interacting more with community and neighbors, and vice versa. Participants showed clear learning and improvement in their ability to organically grow food, willingness to broaden and increase their diet of nutritious food, and readiness to assume mentoring and leadership roles in the program.

Sites differed dramatically in the health and abilities of participants, extent of community-building already in place, the physical space for the garden, and the extent to which the sites lent themselves to group activities like canning or cooking. Each Site Coordinator adapted to her particular situation and tailored programming and learning appropriate to the tenants at her site. Participants made much



progress in growing food, but lagged in knowledge of how to prepare it, thus increased emphasis on basic food preparation skills is planned.

For 2010, gardens at Arbordale and Parkhurst will be expanded at tenants' request. Much was learned in implementing the program this season which can be used to improve it next year. The program has also been restructured to run at a fraction of the cost to increase its sustainability, replicability, and stay true to its grassroots character.

2009 Measures of Success



The 6 sites combined produced almost 1,000lbs of food. This is likely an underestimate of the true total, since it represents only the harvests Site Coordinators were aware of through their twice-weekly visits. Much was harvested in between!

Tenants reported an increase in the amount and variety of fresh produce in their diets. In some cases, tenants stated that they might not have had any fresh produce without the program.

At the end of the season, nearly 60 recipes were gathered, and we hope to produce a garden cookbook to give to residents (both participants and non-participants) to encourage use of fresh produce year-round.

In all cases, positive feedback was received from participants. They in fact expressed thanks repeatedly to site coordinators for running the program and for supporting their gardening efforts. Positive feedback concerned not only the value of the gardens, but the increased social opportunities, the greater spirit of community, the learning, and the interaction with site coordinators and neighbors. Volunteer site coordinators felt appreciated and welcomed.

At least two sites are slated for expansion next year: 1030 Arbordale and Parkhurst. Arbordale participants have requested expanded areas to grow "field" crops (e.g. expansive crops like winter squash), while Parkhurst residents have requested the building of at least two new stone beds to accommodate more gardeners and provide a seating/gathering place for residents. There are also plans at Parkhurst and Stimson to incorporate perennial food sources (fruit shrubs and trees) into the productive landscape.

Every Edible Avalon site received positive feedback from neighbors and community members. Neighbors stopped by to thank volunteers and to say that they think the gardens are a benefit to the neighborhood. At the Third St. Site neighbors have requested a similar garden for their property and said "Now you have the nicest garden on the street!". At Arbordale, the nearby children's daycare once again participated in the program. Children who gardened at neighboring Parkhurst would stop at Arbordale to say proudly that they had gardens, too.