



Good to Grow: Help for urban agriculture is available from the Kansas City Brownfields program

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By Andrew Bracker, Brownfields Coordinator, City of KCMO

For nearly as long as dwellings have stood where the Kaw and Missouri rivers meet, cultivation and gardening has been a part of life in Kansas City. Over the last century and a half, however, food production in the U.S. has become ever more centralized, processed and distributed over great distances. Kansas City, of course, has played a central role in that arc. More recently, as people begin to source more of their food locally, information is needed about sites for new gardens, orchards and farms in urban areas.

This article will explain potential health concerns when growing food in urban soil; best practices for safe gardening; how properties are investigated; and, how urban growers can access grant funds, incentives and technical resources through the Kansas City Brownfields Program.

Every day in Kansas City, growers are planning and starting to use vacant or underutilized urban land for cultivation. Some of these properties – previously used for industrial and commercial purposes – are considered “brownfields”



Switzer Neighborhood Farm has revitalized land on the vacant site that was formerly the EDCORE building in the Westside of Kansas City, Mo. Soil testing showed it safe for gardening in 1999.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Bracker

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Wholesale Success for Kansas City

By Katherine Kelly, executive director, Cultivate Kansas City

As an organization, we are committed to helping grow our local food system and to helping farmers grow and sell good food. Over the past few years, we've seen our urban and peri-urban growers starting to engage in conversations about scaling up.

Can we grow larger farm busi-

nesses in cities that provide a solid living for the farmer? Can we become job creators and economic drivers for our communities? We've also seen the scaling up of rural farmers resulting in positive changes in our urban food system— more food is being grown nearby and moved into town through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, restaurants and grocery

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A New Year with New Roots

By Rayne Diggins, program manager, Juniper Gardens Training Farm, Cultivate Kansas City

Changes abound at Juniper Gardens Training Farm this year. As the farm's new program manager, I bring with me new ideas, new visions, and a new way of looking at things from my experiences working with refugee farmers at a training farm in Iowa, as well as experience from operating my own farm.

I am excited to plant my own roots at Juniper Gardens and grow together

with all of its farmers.

The New Roots for Refugees program, a partnership with Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas, hosts refugees from many countries who have settled in Kansas City. They will spend the next four years at Juniper Gardens Training Farm learning how to become better farmers and building a sustainable livelihood. Many people in the United States probably don't really understand what being a refugee means or may have a misinformed definition.



New Roots for Refugees farmers gather around to learn about starting transplants during a workshop at the Juniper Gardens Training Farm. Photo by Rachel Pollock

'A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country in order to escape persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has

a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular so-

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Connecting the Dots of Food, Creativity and Innovation

Hannah Hess, development director, Cultivate Kansas City

In January, the Cultivate Kansas City staff met with the Innovation Lab, an initiative of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art to engage and inspire new audiences. As we brainstormed an event that would appeal to farmers, foodies, and friends of art, my head and heart pulsed with excitement because I am an art historian turned healthy food advocate.

Connecting the dots between creativity and Cultivate Kansas City thrills my soul!

After working in the arts for a decade, I've realized that my infatuation with galleries and museums was actually a love of the creative process. Creativity in inno-

vation, research, technology, the arts, and agriculture makes life better for everyone. Humans are creative by their very nature. But our creative capacity is fragile. Surges of creativity don't happen when we have a cold or food poisoning. We flourish when we feel our best.

What helps us to feel our best? Good food of course! Super-foods need superheroes! So, I have set out to be a Wellness Warrior, promoting health for the sake of catalyzing creativity.

Cultivate Kansas City's promotion of a healthy local food system is fundamental to the vibrancy of our city. The food we eat directly impacts how we feel. How we feel impacts what we do. What we do

impacts our family, friends, co-workers and community.

Food is so much more than eating. Our societal issues with food extend beyond the lack of it. Quality is equally important. Food drives help to address hunger, but when the majority of dry goods contain artificial, non-nourishing ingredients, we are given a false sense of addressing the issue. It's like putting ethanol into a



Hannah Hess, development director of Cultivate Kansas City, prepares fresh smoothies at a farmers market to help customers reconnect with fresh food and feel their best. Photo courtesy of Hannah Hess

diesel tank. The car might drive for a while but at some point, the warning

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stores. How can we support and engage with those farmers in our work to build the local food system?

These conversations inspired us to work with Katie Nixon from Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and FamilyFarmed.org to organize a Wholesale Success workshop on March 12 for Kansas City and regional growers.

The workshop will be taught by Atina Diffley, a farmer, farmer educator, agricultural activist, and writer from Minnesota. Diffley got her farming chops on her family farm, Garden of Eagan, an organic farm she and her husband started in 1973. When they first began, there was no infrastructure and were no organic standards.

"We were figuring out or-

ganics and farming and markets all at the same time," she says. "We lived really frugally in the '70s and '80s! There were twenty years where we didn't make any money. It wasn't until the '90s that we were able to make a decent living."

The farm really took off after the passage of the National Organic Standards, Diffley said. "Before that, grocery stores and processors really had a hard time integrating local and organic into their systems. There were so many different certifiers and different standards that it made it really difficult for processing; for marketing." Passage of the standards drove the explosion of organic and local sales and opened up wholesale mar-

kets that previously were not available.

When they sold the Garden of Eagan label in 2008, the gross sales were \$600,000 and they had grown into one of the largest organic farms in the Twin Cities area.

I asked Diffley about her thoughts on farmers starting to scale up into wholesaling. She quickly cited a study that was published in 2005, "Grower to grower: Creating a livelihood on a fresh market vegetable farm" by John Hendrikson, at the University of Wisconsin. The study followed 20 organic farms in the Midwest, looking at economy performance over three years.

"If local farming is going to be viable, if growers are going to make a living at it, you can make a lot of money in wholesale," Diffley advises. As we were talking, she pulled out the study and shared the numbers they'd found for larger scale producers compared to the smaller scale producers. The growers working three or less acres earned about \$4.96 per hour; the growers working 3-12 acres made \$7.45 an hour; at 12 plus acres, the growers took home \$11.36 an hour.

She encourages new farmers to think of the first four years of farming like college.

"You pay to go to college—you aren't losing money, you're getting an education. "Growers should learn and develop their systems, build their relationships, keep it small and keep it lean.

"Too much capital early on

cripples a farm. It's too easy to focus on money solutions, rather than systems thinking and development."

And, when a grower is ready to scale up and do more capital investment in infrastructure, a business plan is key and having market commitments are key. "Shooting into a national market won't do it. You have to have your relationships. You have to have a quality of production. You have to have established a level of professionalism that works for the buyers."

Diffley's solid experience as a grower, her decades of observation of the organic and local food movement, and her travels across the country working with growers gives her a depth of knowledge and understanding that really gave me food for thought. The 12-acre plus farms where farmers start to take home more money are going to be relatively rare in our metro community, but new models are emerging that may have the potential to produce large amounts of food on a small footprint. I'm looking forward to her workshop and to the conversations that the day will encourage.

Workshop details and registration: <http://www.cultivatekc.org/events/wholesalesuccess.html>



Atina Diffley, a farmer, farmer educator, agricultural activist, and writer from Minnesota, will lead the Wholesale Success Workshop in March. She brings decades of farming experience to share with Kansas City farmers.

Photo courtesy of Atina Diffley

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lights come on, and the car either needs an expensive mechanic or is beyond repair.

At Cultivate Kansas City, we are working creatively in food systems to address issues of hunger, food democracy, environment stewardship and our local economy. I am inspired daily by my co-workers who remind me that we are all part of the solution.

We've attracted support from both local and national foundations and companies. We've forged partnerships that continue to evolve and prosper. Global companies like VML pay their employees to volunteer with us on their Foundation Day because our creative energies feed off one another.

Chipotle Mexican Grill is another incredible partner

whose support of our work runs deeper than writing a check. They are continually seeking new and innovative ways to educate and engage people with better understanding their food system.

All of these companies recognize the same quality that drew me to Cultivate Kansas City – It's an organization that utilizes ex-

treme creativity to find solutions to our most pressing societal problems. This is why I am privileged and an honored to join this incredible team of dreamers and doers as the new development director.

That team includes you!

Dreaming, Doing and Connecting at Annual Farmers & Friends Meeting

By Andrea Shores

More than 200 people braved icy roads and winter weather to participate in our 9th Annual Farmers & Friends Meeting Saturday, Feb. 1. Focused on Food Democracy, it was an energizing and empowering reminder that each of us has the right, responsibility and power to determine food policies and practices both locally and globally. The day was filled with dreamers and doers motivating attendees from passive consumers to folks who are actively engaged with their food system.

Their stories were amazing.

Disheartened by the fact that a pharmacy is the highest-grossing food store on the east side of Midtown **Sean Starowitz**, artist-in-residence at Farm to Market Bread Company, wanted to see a change. In an area where you are more likely to see Wonder Bread, Starowitz set up a pop-up storefront to sell freshly baked bread at affordable prices. Sean's

engagement with the communities around him led to additional opportunities for his Fresh Bread pop-up to raise awareness about the lack of access to fresh, local food in areas across the city.

While visiting waiting rooms across the Midwest as a pharmaceutical representative, **Sarah Dehart** noticed a lack of connection between patients and their food.

While studying monkeys in rural Costa Rica, **Jessi Bishopp** noticed the same disconnect between the food, consumers and the environment.

These observations lead both Dehart and Bishopp to become partners and pursue work in sustainable agriculture, seeking to re-establish a connection with those things in their lives. They met in 2013 while working as apprentices at Urbavore Urban Farm. Following months of conversations in the field, together they formed Three Forks Farm to ensure people



Sean Starowitz pops up his FRESH BREAD stand at Westport Rd. & Main St., providing access to fresh food and creating space to raise awareness about where our food comes from.

Photo by Matt Kleinmann Photography

have access to healthy and justly-raised food. Though just in its beginning stages, Three Forks Farm is already making an impact in their neighborhood.

While looking for more land to add to their farm, Sarah and Jessi discovered a perfect area next to their recently acquired lot. They met with the landowners who run Teen Challenge, a

program that helps transform the lives of struggling adolescent girls. The partnership provides Three Forks Farm with land to grow on, while Dehart and Bishopp have the chance to provide hands-on education for the girls on growing and preparing food for their cafeteria.

As a long-time volunteer for Habitat for Humanity,

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Field Notes: Honoring our past as we look to the future

By Alicia Ellingsworth, farm manager, Gibbs Road Farm

As more young farmers emerge with hope for the future, we remember where we came from and how hard we've worked to get here. Just as good food starts on good soil, on fertile land, this movement started with the tireless labor and collective wisdom of the trailblazers before us.

Recently, a group of Agrarian Elders, as they are called, came together for a conference at the Esalen Institute to document their past and discuss the future of sustainable farming. Two dozen pioneers of the organic farming movement in the U.S. and Canada spent a week sharing decades' worth of stories, knowledge and anxieties about the future.

Their stories made me think about our own pioneers, our own Agrarian Elders, and how they built this movement in Kansas City.

As each new apprentice and volunteer steps onto Gibbs Road Farm, I ask them to honor the dedication of those who built the farm. And I reassure them that what they do here also matters and that they, too, will be remembered. What we do today will without a doubt take us to a better tomorrow. But what the elders accomplished here before us has brought us to this place of understanding and skill, of patience and pushing all into balance.

At this auspicious time of convergence and growth, the history of each garden and farm plot and the farmers who worked the land builds the fertility of the



Katherine Kelly, co-founder and executive director of Cultivate Kansas City, passes on her knowledge about seeding plants to a new crop of New Roots for Refugees farmers.

Photo courtesy of Cultivate Kansas City



Yia Herr, longtime Kansas City, Kan. farmer, starts seeds in the Community Greenhouse at Gibbs Road Farm and shares her knowledge with new farmers.

Photo by Alicia Ellingsworth

present. I share stories of how Katherine Kelly, co-founder of Cultivate Kansas City, searched for land big enough to farm, but near enough to the city where opportunity for community, culture and markets existed. I retell stories of her chipping potatoes out of yet-to-be-improved soil. I recount how Daniel Dermitzel, co-founder of Cultivate Kansas City, mapped the Sun's path across the land of the to-be food forest and how he dug each of three swales there to capture, hold and release rainwater. These stories are absorbed by new eager growers.

The Community Greenhouse at Gibbs Road Farm is a place of shared memories and wisdom. As Yia Herr, a Hmong farmer who

has been farming in Kansas City, Kan. since 2005 and in her homeland for decades before that, brings lemongrass to restart for the year, she meets our new apprentices. She relates how she grows it and sometimes she shares a start or two. Mr. Joe Jennings, longtime farmer at J-14 Farm also in Kansas City, Kan., visits when he has a reason. Last spring the decades-seasoned grower traded his peach seedlings for our vegetable transplants. Standing at the back of his weathered pickup truck, Jennings, with a no-nonsense approach, says each day he asks himself and others "who have you helped today?"

His question brings perspective. What we do, we do in community. Each

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cial group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.'

Military Dictatorship forced them from their homes and villages burning them to the ground, torturing the men, raping the women and burning children alive. Forced to flee, they traveled hundreds of miles on foot through treacherous mountains and severe weather seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Many lost their love ones along the way, including their children.

The refugees I've come to know are a peaceful and loving people. They are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons and daughters. They are farmers — they grow their own food in order to feed their families. They know what hard work is. They do what it takes to survive and to succeed. Growing food is their way of life. It is who they are. It is a part of them. It is all they know.

It is wonderful to have them here with us as they begin to rebuild their lives and put down new roots.

January marked the opening of the greenhouse with a workshop for all of the farmers to help them begin to start seeds of onions and scallions. It was truly amazing to witness and

share in their excitement, enthusiasm and eagerness as they began to return to a way of life that they for so long feared had been lost forever. Smiling faces, dirty hands and enthusiastic conversation completely filled the greenhouse space.

It was a beautiful day!

Who are these amazing people? Let me introduce you!

Khadka Regmi

Khadka grew up in Bhutan and fled his homeland to a refugee camp in Nepal. He brings a lifetime of vegetable growing experience to the farm. He is an Uncle to Tula, a farmer in his second year in our Training program. Khadka farmed in Bhutan and Nepal along the flat regions at the base of the mountains and sold his vegetables at the local markets.

"I hope to grow a variety of different kinds of vegetables, grow my business and earn enough money to buy my own house."

Sisi Cho

Sisi is from Burma and learned to grow vegetables by watching her parents. She farmed on a tiny plot inside the refugee camp where she grew up and sold her vegetables at a market inside the camp. She lives with her husband and 10-year-old daughter. They plan on helping her in the field and at market.

"My goal is to learn and after I complete the training program, buy my own land, continue growing and have a business."

Tu Rah

Tu Rah grew up as a farmer in Burma where he grew vegetables and rice on his 10-acre farm. His farm was set in the hills at the base of the mountains, so he needed to terrace his land in order to grow his crops. His only source of water was rain. He sold his vegetables to neighbors and at the local market. Tu Rah has been in the U. S. since 2009 and lives with his wife and four children.

"My goal is to complete the program and save money to buy some land and my own house."

Neng Khup

Neng Khup is from Chin state in Burma. He learned how to grow food from his parents and said he was in the gardens at a very small age. After fleeing his homeland to Malaysia, he worked in a restaurant helping to sell and deliver seafood. He lives very close to the Juniper Gardens Training Farm with his wife, two small sons and his brother-in-law. Neng Khup has big dreams for his farm business.

"I want to complete my four - year program and after that I can grow my own farm business and hire four or five people who can help me. I will sell at market and



A New Roots for Refugees farmer seeds onions during their workshop greenhouse production. The farmers will start transplants in the greenhouse to get an early start on the season. Photo by Rachel Pollock

maybe out of my home."

Oma Dar

Oma Dar grew up in Burma and learned farming from her parents where they grew vegetables in a large garden. After fleeing her homeland to Thailand she ran her own restaurant/ grocery store with her mother and husband. They made and served breads and curry noodles to their customers. Oma Dar has two years of growing experience in the U.S. and has set some great goals for her future farm business.

"My goal is to finish the training program and then find a way to buy my own land, grow my own vegetables and have my own business. I want to sell to wholesale customers and sell (export) my vegetables to other countries."

Mee Nge

Mee Nge with her husband Swa Dit had a two acre farm in Burma where they grew vegetables and raised cows and chickens. They ate most of what they grew, but also went door to door and sold excess to

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because they may have been contaminated or are perceived that way. Some examples are neighborhood filling stations, drycleaners, and even some vacant residential lots.

Lead and arsenic are naturally present in the soil, and at relatively higher levels in our region, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Lead in urban areas however commonly comes from paint on older structures, buried fuel tanks, decades-old leaded gasoline emissions, and many other uses. Other common contaminants in urban soil include arsenic and chemicals used as pesticides; PAHs (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) from burning wood, coal or diesel; PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) from leaking transformers and electrical equipment; and oils, fuels and solvents from garages, filling stations, metal shops and drycleaners. Historic fill material placed in cities long ago can come from industrial processes (smelters, foundries, fly ash, etc.), dredge spoils, or demolition debris, and contain high levels of metals and other contaminants.

Government and university studies find that typical urban soil contaminants, even at relatively high concentrations, adhere strongly to soil particles and get taken up in produce at levels well below what is considered harmful. The uptake does, however, vary with the type of crops grown. Leafy vegetables take up little lead, while root and tuber crops

(carrots, potatoes, beets, turnips) grab more and should be washed and peeled. Fortunately, the overall risk to the end consumer is very low if food is properly washed.

There is a greater potential risk to growers, especially children and women of child-bearing years, from inhaling or ingesting soil particles as they work in the gardens. Limiting exposure to lead, a potent neurotoxin, is especially important for young children. Thus, it is vital that gardens are well-designed and that all urban gardeners learn, and keep, good gardening practices. Government agencies, universities and non-profits generally agree on the following measures:

- Wear gloves and wash hands after gardening and before eating, and teach kids to do the same.
- Always supervise children, and consider separate play areas.
- Before consumption, wash all produce, peel root vegetables, and remove outer leaves of leafy greens.
- Keep garden footwear outside to avoid tracking soil indoors.
- Mulch bare soil to knock down dust and retain moisture.
- Add compost, topsoil and other soil amendments to reduce bioavailability.

- Deep digging and mixing of soils to dilute known isolated contaminants to surface soils.
- Grow in raised beds* with clean soil if contaminants are known or suspected.

*Remember to avoid older, pressure treated lumber (green-hued railroad ties, telephone poles, etc.) or creosote coated lumber when building raised beds. They can leach metals or other contaminants into the soil.

Growers are encouraged to test soils prior to building or expanding a garden, and look into past site uses or neighborhood knowledge of fill material or dumping activities.

Help is available through the Kansas City Brownfields program to perform environmental “due diligence.” Through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the City can fund a Phase I assessment. A Phase I report identifies environmental concerns through visiting the site, talking with owners and neighbors, and research into the historic land use, development, physical characteristics, and federal and state records about the property and its immediate vicinity. For instance, a Phase I report should tell you if the property ever had a registered fuel tank, was used for mining, or had a reported chemical spill.

A Phase I report can recommend further investiga-

tion of these concerns to see if contamination is actually present in the soil. The Kansas City Brownfields program can fund a limited **Phase II assessment**: sampling and laboratory analysis to determine the nature and extent of environmental impacts, if present. Results will be interpreted by environmental professionals and compared to standards considered safe for residential use and gardening. Technical assistance is also available from state and federal agencies.

Soils also can be analyzed for nutrients essential for cultivation, i.e., pH, organic matter, nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Organizations like Cultivate Kansas City, KC Community Gardens, and extension programs of Kansas-State University, Missouri University, Lincoln University can help evaluate these factors from the grower’s perspective. All of this information can help communities select the best urban land for gardening.

Currently, the Kansas City Brownfields Program has up to \$65,000 available to fund urban agriculture sites, which is enough to perform about 10 Phase I and 5 limited Phase II assessments. The program is seeking local growers who need Phase I or II environmental assessments. Urban agriculture projects may include community gardens, small business farms, orchards, farmer’s markets. It may also include investigation of new or existing structures (which may contain asbes-

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their neighbors. They have three children and have lived in the U.S. since 2008. Mee Nge has had a small garden for the past four seasons.

“Like the others, I want to complete the training program. If I am successful, I want to buy my own land and start my own farm business. I would like to sell at market and to grocery stores and restaurants.”

Saje Dar & Ha Li Mar

Saje Dar & Ha Li Mar are from Burma. They have two years growing experience at Freeway Park Community Garden. They are sister-in-laws and plan on growing and selling together. Between the two of them, they have nine children.

I am honored to be spending my days with these amazing farmers helping them learn to grow food in a new land, with different seasons, different climates and new challenges. I am honored in helping them establish new roots in a new homeland and become an integral part of their new communities.

They each have their own stories to tell. Stories of

sadness, stories of fear, stories of loss, stories of gratitude and stories of hope. No two of their stories are the same. I am grateful to be here with them, for the chance to get to know them, to learn about them and from them, and to listen...to their stories as they begin to create new ones.

Annual Meeting, Continued from page 4



Sarah Dehart of Three Forks Farm shares her story at the Annual Farmer's & Friends Meeting's dreamers and doers panel.

Photo by Ami Freeberg

Paul Grahovac helped build houses in the Quindaro area of Kansas City, Kansas. He felt a connection to the neighborhood and wanted to do more. Having grown up with parents who gardened, Grahovac saw an opportunity to put the neighborhood's vacant lots to use. He acquired a house and five vacant lots to create the

Quindaro Gardens Mutual Aid Society. His son, John is now living in the house and helping with the garden.

Over the past few years, the neighbors have started getting involved. Ms. Veda Monday, a neighbor of the garden, is now helping to get more people involved. The Quindaro Gardens Mutual Aid Society not only

feeds the neighborhood but educates the community on the cooking and preserving of various harvests.

After hearing the dreamers and doers' stories, participants of the annual meeting met in a series of breakout sessions where community leaders taught everything from how to compost to the economics of urban farms. Participants chose from thirty topics covering a wide variety of issues from the basics of starting an urban farm to beekeeping in the city to food preservation techniques.

“The backyard chickens breakout session was fabulous. I've done some reading, but the leaders' first-hand experience went way beyond anything I've read,” one attendee said

For others, the best part of the meeting is a chance to connect with people in the community who are passionate about changing the food system in Kansas City.

“There are so many others working in their own way toward the goal of making the Kansas City area more sustainable. We are not alone!” another attendee said.

At day's end I couldn't help but feel the air was light and filled with the energizing reminder that each of us is a seed. And that all of us hold the potential to grow, to transform and to nourish our communities.

When each of us engages with our food in some way – whether growing our own or shopping from an urban farmer or starting a farm business – we can grow food democracy in our city. When we work together, there is no limit to what can we grow!

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tos, lead paint and other hazards) for reuse involving greenhouses, hydroponics, aquaculture, food hub, or rooftop gardens.

Applicants should represent an organization or small business (not exclusively a home gardener), own or lease the intended site (or have a plan to do so), and demonstrate an ability to successfully start and sustain their project in the long-term. Experience with similar projects, commitments from partners, neighborhood engagement, and leveraged funding to meet projected capital and operating expenses are all highly recommended to demonstrate predicted success. Other helpful

considerations include reusing vacant land, location in a food desert, and the use of water and soil conservation strategies.

Finally, the land cannot be currently owned by the federal government; the City of Kansas City, Mo; Jackson County, Mo; or the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority; and



A young gardener at the Switzer Neighborhood Farm contributes to beautifying the once vacant land. Photo courtesy of Andrew Bracker

cannot be the subject of federal environmental investigation or enforcement. Other requirements may apply.

If the assessment identifies soil contamination, there are a range of proven remediation strategies, and additional brownfield resources to reduce exposure. These may involve simple methods such as adding compost, mulch, and constructing raised beds, to more involved projects to remove contaminated soil or add clean soil. The Brownfields Program can assist throughout this process.

Kansas City, MO also offers specific development

code provisions to accommodate urban agriculture, maintains a large inventory of vacant parcels through the Kansas City Land Bank, and will soon be the first to create special urban agricultural zones (UAZs) under new Missouri legislation that offer tax incentives and reduced water rates to qualifying projects.

To learn more, or seek brownfield assistance for an urban agriculture project in Kansas City, please contact: Andrew Bracker, Brownfields Coordinator, Urban Redevelopment Division, City Planning and Development, City of Kansas City, Mo. an-

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time I see the row of peach trees now growing along the eastern border of the field, I'm reminded of his words and of him.

Earlier this month, we held our Annual Farmers & Friends Meeting on a chilly morning after an icy winter's night. Hundreds showed up. The weather tested the will of a new crop of Kansas City growers as it will continue to test them. Seasoned and novice growers shared ideas, wisdom and passion. As beginning farmers, knowing we are not the first proves that we can overcome the challenges of farming. As Agrarian Elders, knowing we are not

alone comforts us as we pass the torch.

Kansas City is a vibrant urban agriculture community. Many opportunities exist to increase the skill of new farmers and gardeners. The Growing Growers Apprenticeship program, Get Growing KC, Rosedale Development Association, KC Community Gardens, university extension offices and many others offer workshops.

The sharing, though, doesn't have to be so formal. Each of us knows of a backyard gardener down the road from where we live. Now is the time to participate and to learn from

those who have been quietly growing food for years. All we need to do is take time to listen.

Standing on the shoulders of the grandfather and with the guidance of the grandmother, we meet the future. Youth is needed to break new ground while history keeps us rooted. Our community of growers is richly diverse. We are grateful to those starting new farms today and to those who sowed the first seeds.

Upcoming Events

Work the Farm | Second and Fourth Saturdays | 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Gibbs Road Farm | 4223 Gibbs Road Farm, Kansas City, Kan. | Get your hands dirty. Learn alongside urban farmers. Connect with a great growing community. Join us at our Gibbs Road Farm to Work the Farm! | Sign up today: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D44AFA72FA57-work2>

Volunteer Days | Fourth Saturdays | 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Juniper Gardens Training Farm | N. 1 Street & Richmond Avenue, Kansas City, Kan. | Join us at our Juniper Gardens Training Farm, home of New Roots for Refugees, for a Volunteer Day! | Sign up today: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D44AFA72FA57-juniper1>

TEDxManhattan Viewing Party | Saturday | March 1 | 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. | Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Auditorium | 4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, Mo. | TEDxManhattan, “Changing the Way We Eat,” is a one-day conference featuring a dynamic and diverse group of speakers addressing issues in the sustainable food and farming movement. Watch the Webcast LIVE from New York City with Cultivate Kansas City. Event is free but requires a ticket. <https://peo.nelson-atkins.org/show.asp?shcode=2290>

HamBINGO with Cultivate Kansas City | Tuesday | March 25 | 7 p.m. | Hamburger Mary's | 101 Southwest Boulevard, Kansas City, Mo. | What do you get when you add bingo + beer + a drag queen + farmers + farm fresh prizes? An awesome time at Hamburger Mary's! We can't guarantee that you'll win, but we can make sure that you'll have a good time while supporting a great cause! For only \$10, you get 10 bingo cards to play all night!

Wholesale Success Workshop: Grow Your Skills, Grow Your Business | Wednesday | March 12 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Rainbow Mennonite Church | 1444 Southwest Boulevard, Kansas City, Kan. | Hosted by Cultivate Kansas City and Lincoln University Cooperative Extension, this workshop is presented by FamilyFarmed.org and supported by the USDA to help farmers be successful in adding or expanding a wholesale component to your farm business. Guest speaker Atina Diffley draws on her decades of experience in vegetable production and marketing to provide operators of produce farms of any size with useful, practical, profit-making guidance on how to achieve the highest quality produce for sale! Our Economics of Wholesale Panel features growers who sell to the wholesale market. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wholesale-success-workshop-grow-your-skills-grow-your-business-tickets-9868531042>

Dr. Vandana Shiva “Cultivating Diversity, Freedom and Hope” | April 17-18 | Dr. Vandana Shiva is a physicist, ecologist, activist and author who is changing the way the world thinks about food, agriculture and sustainability. Her lecture, “Cultivating Diversity, Freedom and Hope,” will address the value of diversity in nature and in society, as well how the monoculture of the mind can destroy that diversity at every level. She will share what is happening to seed and food, and how “Gardens of Hope” protect Seed Freedom and Food Democracy. <http://cultivatekc.org>

For editorial comments please contact *Urban Grown* editor Ami Freeberg at ami@cultivatekc.org
The Cultivate Kansas City is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.

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