

# Using Gardens and Produce to Reach All Communities in Our County

Neal, Gigi, Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Jenkins, Margaret, Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences; Mahon, Mackenzie, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development/Family & Consumer Sciences; Royalty, Kelly, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development; Fiscus, Becky, Program Assistant, SNAP-Ed; Niekamp, Sarah, Program Assistant, SNAP-Ed; Burdsall, Meghan, Office Associate; and Master Gardener Volunteers of Clermont County

## OBJECTIVES

To have counties see the benefits of an educational garden, and ways to utilize the garden to better serve their counties and communities.

## DESCRIPTION

Over the past two summers, our county Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV) rehabilitated a raised bed garden at the Clermont County Fairgrounds. Twenty-two straw bales were placed in the beds with a variety of vegetables planted in each bale. Annual and perennial flowers plus herbs surrounded the bales as companions. The garden was used to educate the community on how to grow vegetables in straw bales and the importance of companion planting to attract pollinators and deter pests. The garden was open to adults and children who attended the Clermont County Fair and other events at the fairgrounds. In addition, weekly progress, observations, and photos were posted in the OSU Extension Clermont County eNewsletter.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- Clermont County Residents – adult and youth
- SNAP eligible individuals/families
- Seniors living in food desert

## THEMES

- Improving Partnerships
- Improving Products and Programs
- Improving People



## PURPOSE

- Educate the community about strawbale gardening
- Provide produce for SNAP-Education Programming, FCS preservation classes, and provide produce to a food desert senior living complex

## PARTNERS

- Owensville Commons senior living complex
- HOPE Community Center
- YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
- Clermont Developmental Disabilities
- Dining with Diabetes programs
- Clermont County Agricultural Society
- Wolfer Farms
- Grant Farm & Greenhouse
- Clermont County Master Gardener Volunteers
- OSU Extension Office Professionals

## THEME RELATIONSHIP

- Office and MGV collaborate to harvest
- Public display during the growing season
- Educational information on-site
- Re-established partnership programming with former sites
- Access to fresh produce for community nutrition in food desert
- Potential 4-H project interest

## MARKETING/PROMOTIONAL TOOLS

- 18 articles with photos promoted through weekly eNewsletter to ~2000 recipients
- 150 people visited MGV booth in the Floral Hall during the county fair
- MGV’s Strawbale Demonstration brochure with how-to guidance



## RESULTS

2021 – 270 pounds of produce  
2022 – 221 pounds of produce\*

\*The difference in pounds of produce is due to planting less and the scales were wrongfully removed.

Produce used in community nutrition food demonstrations and tastings, preservation course, donated to food desert community and used at the MGV booth during the Clermont County Fair.