

**Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Community Garden  
798 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC**

The Community Garden, begun in 2010, is a three-season garden, tended spring through fall. Vested volunteer gardeners both from Grace Covenant Presbyterian and from the surrounding community cultivate the garden. They are led by the Garden Manager, a part-time staff member of the church, and the garden Steering Committee, which includes four Team Leaders. Volunteers are organized into 4 teams, each working every other week either on a Wednesday or Saturday morning. About 80-90% of the vegetables we produce are shared with community organizations that distribute food to those unable to afford fresh vegetables and in need of nutrition. The Garden Steering Committee meets yearly to plan and problem solve for the upcoming season. Vegetables we grow include collards, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, spinach, kale, chard, broccoli, cucumbers, squashes, tomatoes, peppers, turnips and many others.

**Some of the community organizations that receive and distribute our vegetables:**

[YWCA](#)

[Youth Transformed for Life](#)

[Western Carolina Rescue Ministries](#)

[Loving Food Resources](#)

[YMCA of WNC](#)

**Basic Facts about Grace Covenant Community Garden:**

- We cultivate our community garden “farm style”. We plant crops with the same growing requirements either in full beds or in blocks within beds. This planting practice facilitates three-season growing and ease of weeding and nutrient management. Crops are not interplanted or mixed with competing crops. Beds are rotated with crops from different plant families at least every year for pest and disease control.
- We base our crop selection on the needs of our partners and their clients as well as which varieties typically produce healthy and high-yield fruit in our area. We survey our partners yearly to ensure we are meeting their needs.
- Seeds are purchased from independent seed farms, such as [Johnny's](#). Vegetable plant starts are typically purchased from [Banner Greenhouses](#) (Bonnie), though plants are sourced more locally when available. We select varieties that have demonstrated disease resistance or tolerance. Organic seeds and plants are used when available, and no GMO seeds are used.
- We practice [Integrative Pest Management](#) as much as possible at the direction of the Garden Manager. May - October, when necessary and all other options have been

exhausted, we treat our plants for disease and insect pests using low-spray methods and primarily organic pesticides. Later in the season, we sparingly use some preventative/protective fungicides on tomato plants. We follow all label instructions. We do not use herbicides. Garden volunteers and community members should refer to the kiosk sign for “no harvest days” due to spraying.

- Soil tests are performed every year, and some commercial fertilizer is applied according to test results at the end or beginning of the season. Organic fertilizers are used when possible. We follow the guidelines of the [Southeastern US Vegetable Crop Handbook](#) written by the SE Agricultural and Land Grant Colleges and Universities. We apply liquid fish fertilizer, micronutrients and beneficial microbes for ongoing nutrition throughout the season. Finished compost is also applied to each bed once a year.
- Garden volunteers may harvest for their family table during regular team harvest times and at other times convenient for them. Crops generally benefit from frequent harvesting as they mature. Gardeners should refer to the kiosk sign for crop harvest instructions on days they are not with their team.
- Each team has a Team Leader who works with the gardeners to coordinate the activities for each garden work day from the direction of the Garden Manager. Team Leaders are responsible for communication with their team, delegating tasks for each work day, and ensuring the produce is delivered to their corresponding partner.

**We partner with Compost Now to receive free finished compost for the garden.**

Our neighbors send their food scraps to Compost Now to be turned into black gold compost. The neighbors tell Compost Now that instead of receiving the finished compost back, they would like the finished compost to be donated to the GCPC garden. This is an incredible resource for us to receive. Go to [Compost Now](#) to sign up for this program and help us receive more free compost.

**We partner with our neighboring McDonald’s to compost and use their coffee grounds in the garden**—a McDonald’s business practice toward sustainability and reducing waste. McDonald’s generously purchased the large-wire composting bins. “Composting with coffee is a great way to make use of something that would otherwise end up taking up space in a landfill. Composting coffee grounds helps to add nitrogen to your compost pile.” Click [here](#) to learn more about composting with coffee grounds.

**Interested in knowing more or joining one of our garden teams? Please contact:**

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