

## About the Garden

The PSC Community Garden provides our local community a means to grow their own food and eat healthier. The staffed garden provides our gardeners the information and tools necessary to be successful gardeners and to build relationships with one another.

Additionally, the garden is a learning opportunity for our students. Many of our students are unaware of the growing process and how far our food really travels before getting to their plates. Living in an urban area, few of them have had hands-on experience with digging in the dirt. The garden provides an opportunity to take our students out of the classroom to learn by doing.

The PSC Community Garden:

- Is conveniently located on campus (on the corner of Halsted Street and Vollmer Road)
- Employs part-time garden manger to answer questions and provide gardening assistance
- Is an organic garden
- Provides access to gardening tools, water, and other supplies
- Donates surplus crops to a local food pantry
- Is provided 24-hour security through PSC Campus Police Department

## What is organic gardening?

Organic gardening is gardening without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. But, organic gardening is much more than simply replacing man made chemicals with those derived from natural sources. It is a philosophy of gardening that supports the health of the whole system. In an organically managed yard or vegetable garden, the emphasis is on cultivating an ecosystem that sustains and nourishes plants, soil microbes, and beneficial insects, rather than simply making plants grow.



 **Prairie State College**

# Community Garden



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## *Our Story*

In 2012, Prairie State College (PSC) launched a community garden on campus, bringing together students, faculty, staff, and local organizations. Together, the PSC community learned basic gardening skills, including seeding, planting, and harvesting.

In January 2013, a student worker, through the work-study program, was hired as the garden manager. This student assisted in the development of a management plan for the 2013 gardening season. In May 2013, the PSC community garden opened for a second growing season. Faculty, staff, students and community members were invited to purchase a plot, and this particular season was the first to see gardeners of all ages working together to grow local, healthy food.

Through a series of gardening courses offered through the Continuing Education Department, gardeners had a sense of community and pride in their plots.

With two successful growing seasons, the community garden opened for a third and fourth growing season in 2014 and 2015. Twenty-six plots were sold, and faculty, staff, students, and community members grew a little bit of everything, once again, including tomatoes, zucchini, tomatillos, cantaloupe, brussel sprouts, corn, pumpkins, sunflowers, and more!

## *What is commonly grown in our garden?*

### **Basil**

Basil likes warm weather and well-drained soil. It grows best if planted in the spring and clipped regularly.

### **Broccoli**

Broccoli does well in full sun to part shade. It usually takes 55-60 days to mature. Broccoli grows best in moist soil with cooler temperatures.

### **Cauliflower**

Cauliflower needs full sun and cooler temps. Cauliflower does well in early spring and fall. It usually takes 85-100 days to mature.

### **Collard Greens**

Collards do well in full sun to part shade. They usually take 45 days to mature. Collards grow best in the fall, and are considered a cool crop because they like cool temperatures and are frost tolerant.

### **Curly Kale**

Kale needs moist soil and full sun to part shade. This plant, like collard greens, loves cool temperatures and grows best in the fall

### **Jalapeño Peppers**

Jalapeños need full sun and moist soil. They take 72 days to mature and will grow in dry, humid and cool climates.

### **Sweet Corn**

Corn needs full sun and plenty of water. Corn should be planted early, and generally matures in six weeks.

### **Sunflowers**

Sunflowers need full sun and plenty of water. They take 70 days to mature.

### **Tomatoes**

Tomatoes need full sun and a using cage is beneficial to help support the vines. Tomatoes may take up to 78 days to mature, and should be planted in early spring. Be sure not to underestimate how many tomatoes one plant produces.

### **Turnip Greens**

Turnips need plenty of water and full sun to part shade to grow. They grow fast and can be planted in spring, summer, or fall. They take about 30 to 40 days to mature.

