

Dallas Youth Garden News 2021 Annual Summary

This season was again impacted by COVID-19. Fortunately, we were able to apply the rules and procedures learned in 2020. This season Polk County 4H was not able to sponsor our club due to COVID-19 concerns and we again operated the garden under the direction of the Polk County Family & Community Outreach Department. Throughout the season we followed CDC/Oregon Health Department Guidelines which meant we started the season with social distancing and masks, transferred to just social distancing and reverted back to social distancing with masks to end the season. Our interns learned a lot about following changing rules in the work place and all-in-all it was a great lesson.



an experiment to explore how growing pole beans would work as a new garden vegetable.

Our interns then spent the rest of the season caring for their gardens which included weeding, watering, and keeping an eye out for pests. Interns learned what sustainable gardening is and how to apply sustainable gardening skills such as adding lime to sweeten the soil, mulching, and to recognize different garden pests such as flea beetles and cucumber bugs.

Interns started May 4th. Their first task was to develop a plan for their 25'x50' garden. May weather was good and plant starts provided by volunteers were beautiful. Interns got their gardens planted in record time. After planting, interns mulched their gardens with recycled paper and straw. Post mulching our interns installed tomato cages. We replaced over half of our tomato cages using a grant provided by the Dallas Rotary Club. We also put-up pole bean fences, 5' cattle panels, as



In late June our interns harvested their first crop of radishes and the following week harvested the first crop of summer squash. The hot weather in June was tough on most of our plants but the heat really contributed to a bumper crop of lettuce which was a fun surprise for us and our produce distribution partners. From June on, we weekly delivered produce to the Polk County Family & Community Outreach and Dallas Food Shelf food programs until the end of our season on October 5th. Interns were also required to assist the Polk County Team with food distribution. We had one of our best tomato harvests ever this year. This can be attributed to the great donated starts and our efforts to sweeten the soil with lime. Our experiment with pole beans proved to be a major success. Pole beans were much easier to maintain, are prolific, and easier to pick than bush beans and our distribution partners really liked the beans! In addition to a great crop of lettuce, beans and tomatoes we also had ok harvests of beets, carrots, cabbage and dill. Unfortunately, the hot weather did impact our summer squash harvest which was not as good as last year. All-in-all in was a good season and we delivered over 4100 pounds of produce. (Not all produce was delivered to our distribution partners, on Thursdays interns were allowed to take one to three produce items home to share with their families.)



interns could research ways to improve our garden, learn about food insecurity in our community, or any other topic that they could relate to our garden or their job.

It appears that our interns learned a lot. They had to maintain their daily time sheet, track harvest weights, and record the progress weekly on their website (<https://www.dallasouthgarden.org/home/2021-interns>). In addition, they had to identify what they learned from their experience. Here are some examples of what they said they learned:

- Time management, definitely when it comes to being productive within the hour we have.
- Communication is key to getting anything and help is always appreciated.
- To come in with a plan on what to do to stay on track.
- How to keep a time sheet.
- Its ok to make mistakes sometimes, as long as you take that as an opportunity to learn.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, especially when you're unsure. Its better to just ask then flounder.
- Mulching was very helpful so I didn't have to weed more.
- It is really important to know how much to water certain plants, because when I watered my peppers less they did better.
- Weeding early is really important, and if you don't weed a row early on it will affect the plants as long as they're alive.
- I learned how to grow/harvest dill.
- That pole beans produce a lot more beans than I had expected.

Again, we had great support from our garden supervisors who donated one to two hours a week to work in the garden and assist our interns. A big thanks to our supervisors: Amanda, Abby and our master gardeners Nan and Amelia. Everyone especially appreciated Amelia's Saturday treats. We also had great support this season from a variety of individuals and organizations including: Polk County Family and Community Outreach for sponsoring our program. Dallas Community Foundation, Polk County, and Polk County Master Gardeners with funding for interns. Dallas Rotary, Old Mill Feed & Garden, Maps Community Foundation, Starker Forest, Wilco and Sally Davies for providing discounts and funds for much needed equipment and supplies. The City of Dallas and Trinity Lutheran Church for providing water and land for the garden. Polk County Extension and 4H and Dallas High School with assistance in hiring. Anderson Mobile Service for providing straw for mulching and equipment transportation. Finally, a big thanks to Linda Fox and Jean Nielsen for such beautiful plant starts, Nan & Gary Cordy for replacement fruit trees and the many other individuals who contributed time and materials that made our season a success.

This summer was challenging, we were not able to take our usual field trips or participate in the county and state fairs. In spite of that our interns still learned new gardening skills, learned important job skills, and learned how to contribute to our community.

Dean Anderson
Garden Coordinator

Supporting Organizations

(in Alphabetical Order)

- Anderson Mobile
- Dallas Community Foundation
- Dallas High School
- Dallas Rotary
- Maps Community Foundation
- Old Mill Feed & Garden
- Polk County Economic Development
- Polk County Extension & 4H
- Polk Family and Community Outreach
- Polk Master Gardeners
- Starker Forest
- The City of Dallas
- Trinity Lutheran Church
- Wilco Farm Stores