



# UMD Community Learning Garden



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College Park Scholars Academic Showcase, April 30, 2021

## Introduction

During my past two semesters at UMD, I have had the opportunity to work as a Food Gardens Intern for the UMD Arboretum. Most of my work takes place at the Community Learning Garden (CLG), a living classroom that serves to educate about food production, sustainability, and healthy eating. During this time I have helped manage the garden along with doing virtual projects to improve the garden's outreach efforts.

## Activities:

- Help with pruning, planting, weeding, planning, watering, and harvesting
- Package and deliver harvests to the UMD campus food pantry
- Update arboretum website with information about Clarice garden species of shrubs and trees
- Produce labels and informational sheets for produce bags
- Help manage other campus gardens such as the “chef’s garden” in front of STAMP and herb garden in front of Juul Hall.



Image of me and another intern in the garden harvesting tomatoes

## Issues Confronting Site:

After recently receiving a sustainability grant, most of the challenges within the garden have related to installing improvements supported by the grant such as a new irrigation system and a produce washing station. Another challenge this year has been balancing COVID regulations with group work in the garden.



Image of the garden terraces



Image of a harvest from October 2020

## Impact:

This experience has been very rewarding because it has given me the opportunity to become a part of one of the largest sustainability initiatives on campus. I have been able to learn more about agricultural management and develop my leadership and communication skills through a combination of hands on work and virtual work. It has been rewarding to see the passion of all of the supervisors, interns, and volunteers toward the garden and it motivates me to make a positive impact on the UMD community.

## Future Work:

Throughout the rest of the semester will continue visiting the CLG on a weekly basis to plant new produce and clean up the overgrowth from the winter. I plan on returning to the CLG throughout my later semesters at UMD to continue to help manage the garden and expand its influence and impact on the local community.

## Site Information:

Community Learning Garden

Located between Eppely Recreation Center and School of Public Health

Supervisor: Meg Smolinski and Meredith Epstein

Site Mission: Learning and teaching about community health and sustainable agriculture

## Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Meg Smolinski and Meredith Epstein for allowing me to play a role in their management of the Community Learning Garden as well as Dr. John Merck and Dr. Thomas Holtz for their support throughout my College Park Scholars SGC career.

