Radford’s Community Garden Kickoff

Radford students and residents watched demonstrations on soil testing, fertilizing, and growth tips, to help them begin their own gardens and to get some real gardening experience.   
  
Virginia Cooperative Extensive master gardeners held a workshop at the Community Garden kickoff event, to give their best advice on the different types of plants that will be grown in the Community Garden and how to get the best produce out of the experience.  
  
Barry B. Robinson, Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Horticulture of V.C.E., demonstrated the importance of doing a soil test before the gardeners get to work.   
  
The V.C.E. group offers two free soil tests to any gardener with a plot in the community garden to get their gardens started. A soil test is recommended to be done on a garden's soil every four to six years to tell the gardener what the soil's pH levels are and what the best way to garden their plants is.  
  
With over 50 people in attendance, Robinson shared his knowledge of fertilization, methods used with each different produce, and when the best time to plant the produce,” You gotta know how to fertilize um.”  
  
The Virginia Cooperative Extension website has more information on crops and soils, as well as many other useful tips and information on plant diseases.  
  
Brittany Gerald, a graduate student at Radford University, has volunteered her time as co-director of the City of Radford’s community garden to make this year’s garden the best yet.   
  
For $10, gardeners pay to use a 15-by-15-foot plot on New River Drive in Bisset Park. “We have 20 plots now, and if we get eight more we will plow ten more,” says Gerald. Gerald has been working closely with Jim Graham, chairman of the Planning Commission, to have a successful season.  
  
Gerald has been encouraging everyone to donate their extra crops to those who need by giving the fresh produce to local food pantries, including Daily Bread, which serves over 20,000 free hot meals to people in need every year.  
  
As well as the donations by gardeners, Gerald plans on having a few “common plots” which will be run by volunteers.  
Gerald also hopes that Radford students and residents can get some “hand on experience” and that schools such as Radford University may use fresh harvest in their dining halls.  
  
The produce grown in the common plots will then be sold at the Farmer’s Markets in downtown Radford every Saturday. The money that is made each week will then be donated to Backpack Program.  
  
The Backpack Program is being started at a local school in the City of Radford by Radford University students. Every $10 to $15 dollars the program raises pays for one child’s food for one weekend.  
  
For more information on the community garden or signing for a plot, go to the city manager’s office of Radford to apply.