

News Release

Community and School Gardens Workshops Set for Late July in Four NW Minnesota Communities

By asvec on Wednesday, July 3, 2013

Four free workshops, open to the public, will be held across Northwest Minnesota in July and August and will focus on making community and school gardens a success. The workshops were developed by the American Community Garden Association (ACGA). Workshops will be held on Wednesday, July 24 from 3-7 p.m. at the Thief River Falls Public Library; Saturday, July 27 from 10:30-2:30 p.m. at the Pelican Rapids Public Library; Tuesday, July 30 from 3-7 p.m. at the Rail River Folk School in Bemidji; and Thursday, August 1 from Noon-4 p.m. at the White Earth Tribal College in Mahnommen. Preregistration is strongly encouraged to allow for discussion on important topics, and can be done online.

Participants in the workshops will learn how to develop community building and organizational skills to make their gardens successful. The workshops are based off of a series of mini-grants, aimed at building and maintaining community and school gardens in Northwest Minnesota, and will be conducted by Abby Gold and Noelle Harden.

Gold and Harden attended a two-day workshop titled Growing Communities Workshop that was held last January in Fargo and was put on by the ACGA and supported by the Northwest Rural Sustainable Development Partnership (NWRSDP). The ideas that they learned from the workshop are the basis for these community workshops. Harden stated that they wanted to "take the best activities and boil them down into four hour workshops." The workshops will focus less on food and what variety to plant in the gardens, and focus more on community organization, networking, boards of directors, and fundraising work.

A major part of the workshops is networking with other gardeners and community-oriented people. The workshop that will be held in Bemidji on July 30 is in conjunction with Bemidji's Sustainable Tuesday group. Part of the reason for the collaboration, according to Harden, was the idea of "how to tap into the energy and creativity from high school students and get them involved in the gardens." Participants at each of the workshops will have the ability to meet and network with a variety of gardeners and community members. Gold noted that these workshops are a "rare opportunity" to learn new ideas to continue a successful push for community gardens.

For questions or more information, call 218-280-5253 or e-mail Noelle Harden at harde073@umn.edu.

The Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (NWRSDP) serves the people in northwestern Minnesota as they experiment with innovative ideas, build and strengthen relationships and take practical steps into a hopeful future. For more details see <http://rsdp.umn.edu/northwest>.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

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