

Emmanuel Community Garden Purpose & Vision

The Emmanuel Community Garden (ECG), a ministry of Emmanuel Baptist Church, seeks to provide an opportunity for those who need or want to grow some of their own food, and also to provide food - free in Jesus name - to those who may not otherwise be able to afford wholesome, fresh produce. To that end, excess produce is intentionally grown to be shared - in various venues - to bless the community. Those venues include, Emmanuel Baptist Church (EBC), the Greene County Housing Program, the Xenia Family Violence Prevention Center, the Xenia Walter Sellers apartment complex, and numerous friends, neighbors, and family members of the ECG participants. Participants care for and harvest produce from group plots. The ECG seeks to minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides to ensure healthful produce.

In addition to providing for the needs of our own families and blessing the community with high quality produce, the ECG seeks to impart gardening knowledge and skills to our members, facilitate friendship, fellowship, and encouragement among our participants, and provide opportunities for outreach and evangelism by and through the efforts of our members.

The ECG grows a wide range of annual fruits & vegetables. There are also plantings of perennial cane, bush, vine, and tree fruits, including asparagus, rhubarb, blackberries, black raspberries, red raspberries, blueberries, grapes, strawberries, apples, cherries, peaches, pears, and plums. Participants share in the care and production of all of these. With no shortage of space for growth, the ECG seeks to expand as the number, interests, and energy of our participants allows.

Emmanuel Community Garden Guidelines for Participation

To be successful, a community garden requires the active participation of its entire gardening community. To that end, the following guidelines are provided:

- Participants are asked to commit to an average of at least 1 hour per week working in the garden from April through September (6 months, ~26 hours), excluding time spent picking produce for your own consumption. This will not be tracked or recorded; it is strictly by the honor system. This does not need to be 1 hour per week; 4 hours on a Saturday afternoon counts for 4 weeks. Three hours spent picking blackberries for your family to eat doesn't count; that's part of the payoff, not the work of getting there. Three hours spent picking blackberries for the Red Cross counts. You get the idea. Participants should not feel limited to 1 hour per week; there are always things to do in a garden.
- Participants are encouraged to donate \$10 annually toward the cost of garden seeds, plants, supplies, and tools. This can be donated to EBC designated for the Emmanuel Community Garden or provided directly to the current lead, Paul Jero, who does most of the purchasing. This will also not be tracked; it is voluntary.
- The ECG has and will make available a variety of hand tools, seeds, supplies, a shredder, and a rototiller. These are stored in a shed next to the garden, which is kept locked. During the gardening season, some of the hand tools may be left next to the shed to facilitate availability. Several participants have shed keys and keys are available to borrow as needed. The church office also has a shed key which can be borrowed.
- Participants may come and work or pick produce at any time, however participants are encouraged to come at set times on Tuesday evenings starting at ~7:00 PM and/or Saturday mornings, starting at ~10:00 AM. Working together will facilitate the goals of expanding knowledge of gardening as well as friendship,

fellowship, and encouragement among our participants. It is also true that many hands make light work. It is anticipated that in addition to working together, these times will be used to pick and distribute whatever is ripe at the time. Harvesting of tree fruits (the fruit from a given tree generally being picked all at one time) will occur during these group work sessions to allow sharing amongst the members. Some of the time may be used to pick produce for distribution at EBC, the Red Cross, or another venue. A given group work time will be cancelled in the event of inclement weather.

- One of the goals of the ECG is to provide high quality produce – free in Jesus name – to those that may not otherwise be able to afford it. Produce provided to others is carefully prepared and packaged as appropriate to the venue. If you are interested in picking, preparing, or delivering produce to one or more of the selected venues, please contact Paul Jero.
- When in season, berries (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries) need to be picked every other day. A schedule will be developed to ensure that they get picked regularly. Depending on the size of the harvest, the raspberry and blackberry patches may be divided into 2 or more zones, with different people scheduled to pick each zone. If the harvest exceeds the capacity and desire of the participants to harvest, picking will be opened up to the church. Pint and quart plastic berry boxes will be kept in the shed. We don't recommend using these when picking for yourself, but they add a nice touch if you are sharing some with a friend or neighbor.
- The same need to pick every other day applies to fast growing vegetables like cucumbers and summer squash/zucchini. We will not schedule the picking of these vegetables, but if you're at the church to drop someone off, just passing by, or live down the street, make a quick pass through the garden to grab a couple squash, a cucumber, a couple tomatoes, some lettuce, or whatever to complement your lunch or dinner. This is the real benefit of having a garden. [We keep a quart basket of cherry tomatoes on our counter all summer long. We munch on them regularly; we must go through a couple gallons every year. They are much healthier than what we would otherwise be tempted to munch on. We really miss it when the tomatoes are done.]
- If you want to pick significant quantities of green beans for canning or tomatoes for saucing or whatever, let Paul know so it can be scheduled so as not to deplete the item just before some other known need for the item. Depending on the number of participants and the production of any given item, this may not be possible.
- Participants are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to join them, for instance in picking berries, and sharing in the harvest. The same applies to the vegetables, but this needs to be done in moderation. If your friend ends up joining you every week, they should join the group and participate in the work as well as the benefit. No need to join at the beginning of the year. No need to attend EBC.
- If you have a favorite fruit or vegetable that we don't grow or don't grow much of, and you have some time and energy to help fix that problem, let us know. We want to meet the needs of our members.

If you have other questions you are welcome to contact Paul Jero at 937-372-7624 (home), 937-572-0213 (cell), or jerofamily@att.net. We're looking forward to gardening with you!

March, 2016