



THE NEWSLETTER OF HANSBERRY GARDEN AND NATURE CENTER

At Hansberry Garden and Nature Center, planting beds have been cleared and prepared for winter. Now it's time to review not only our harvest, but the progress made toward our goal of being a resource for environmental education and community building. Our nation's commitment to reducing

climate change is of the utmost importance and the need for environmental education is especially urgent. We take pride in the strides we've made in becoming a forum for education and facilitating discussion of environmental issues in Germantown in 2016 – but much remains to be done.

Expanding Our Scope With Workshops



“I will be in touch with our local government to talk about how bees and gardens can be used to better our community.”

“Not having to worry about lead in my soil is a huge relief.”

In 2016, HGNC significantly expanded the scope of our workshop offerings, inviting the general public to join us in the garden to learn about a variety of topics. We hosted eight workshops this year, some in partnership with other community organizations. New topics covered included

- Soil safety and free soil testing;
- Understanding water cycles and water quality;
- Gaining access to city land for gardening; and
- Beekeeping

Reactions to the workshops were overwhelmingly positive, with many participants reporting that they planned to make changes as a result of attending. Participants and HGNC members also suggested topics for future workshops, including foraging, pickling and preserving, community-supported agriculture (CSAs), food education, and how to start a community garden.

Making Space for Community

The most visible change of 2016 is the completion of a significant portion of Phase I of our ambitious Land Use Master Plan (LUMP). In October, we moved our toolshed. The shed now sits beside a deck that will soon support a bench, a stone utility sink and counter, and a small greenhouse. A trellis will cover the space between the two structures, and solar panels will be installed in the garden.

Moving the shed has opened access to the “grotto,” the small concavity that now hosts the garden’s beehives. Phase II of the plan involves excavating the grotto and building tiered seating to create a small amphitheater that can be used for presentations and performances.



“A lot of our dreams for the garden are about making it a resource for our whole community, so that it’s more than a gardening club,” says LUMP co-chair Kathy Miller. “Creating this space for presentations and gatherings is a very important part of achieving that goal.”

Supporting the completion of Phases I and II of the Land Use Master Plan will be our major focus for fundraising this winter and next year. The committee estimates the total cost, including construction, solar panels, and connection to the electrical grid, at \$11,275.

Partnerships



In 2016, we made connections with many other community groups, especially young people. Among our partners:

- Students from **Germantown Friends School** and from the **dental schools of Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania**, helped clear beds for new members, weeded the garden’s borders, and turned compost.

- **GO! (Philly Women Give to Others)**, marshalled volunteers for a spring-cleaning event.



- **John B. Kelly Elementary School**, continued to work with the HGNC-sponsored Kelly Green Project to improve school grounds. In addition to helping grow and maintain a garden on school property, KGP volunteers planted a “pocket meadow” in front of the school, using native plant species to beautify the grounds and create a space for environmental education.

- **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s City Harvest program**, through which we share our garden’s produce with Philadelphians who are in need. In 2016, HGNC donated hundreds of pounds of produce to the program.