

# 2022 URBAN FOOD INITIATIVES REPORT

Denver Botanic Gardens is grateful for individual and community support that contributed to making the 2022 season of our Urban Food Initiatives a success. We are pleased to report on the programs that compose our Urban Food Initiatives: the Veterans Farm Program, the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, our partnership with Denver Housing Authority and Denver Human Services and food access efforts that are woven through all of these. We delivered a full season of veggies to our CSA members and donated lots of nutritious and fresh food to underserved individuals and families in the Denver metro area. This snapshot of the 2022 season highlights an expansion of fresh-produce access thanks to new and strengthened community partnerships.



This season we have directly served **843** individuals through free farm stands in partnership with Denver Housing Authority and more than 125 families every other week through Denver Human Services and Food Bank of the Rockies.

## MORE ON OUR PARTNERS:

### Veterans to Farmers

Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms and Veterans to Farmers teamed up in 2014 to establish the Veterans Farm Program, an educational program that teaches veterans vegetable production practices and self-care. Each participant of the program receives a CSA share while enrolled. Nine veterans completed the program this summer. They planned, planted and managed a learning garden with native plantings, vegetables and a perennial pollinator zone.

### Denver Housing Authority

We grow more than 30 varieties of produce using organic and regenerative practices on a half acre of urban land in DHA's Sun Valley and Mariposa neighborhoods. Produce is distributed through 30 free farm stands during the season.

### S.A.M.E. Café

For over ten years, we have been growing a significant amount of produce at both locations for S.A.M.E. The acronym stands for "So All May Eat," and the Denver café serves individuals in need with a pay-what-you-can restaurant and food truck. All meals are healthy, locally sourced and delicious.

### GraceFull Café

A community and café located in Littleton offering a place where people of all backgrounds can gather, eat well and be inspired to give back. The café offers free or sliding-scale meals to those who need them.

### Denver Human Services

DHS, in partnership with Food Bank of the Rockies, hosts food bank distributions for families across Denver experiencing hunger.

### Mo'Betta Green

Mo'Betta Green is a Black, woman-led farm, community center and educational organization founded by Beverly Grant. They have three Seeds of Power Unity Farm sites, located in Five Points, Park Hill and the Dahlia Campus for Health and Well-Being. They host youth-led farm stands, offer classes on cooking and nutrition and host restorative yoga.

### UpRoot Colorado

We began a new gleaning program with UpRoot Colorado, an organization that helps farmers and ranchers to glean their fields and donate to food pantries locally. They also supplied volunteer help for planting and weeding our crops.

## REGENERATIVE FARMING

Denver Botanic Gardens' Urban Food Initiatives serve a two-pronged mission: to expand access to fresh, healthy produce and to refine and share best practices in sustainable production. Over the last few years, our commitment and contributions to regenerative techniques has grown. Chatfield Farms focuses on managing soil for improved water retention and increased organic content; expanding composting programs; and incorporating cover cropping and pollinator zones. Some examples of this commitment:

- In 2022, we diverted approximately 161,813 pounds of organic matter from the landfill.
- 129 cubic yards of compost (about 11 dump-truck loads) was applied to our growing fields.
- We added pollinator zones to growing fields and planted a dozen larger, edible perennials in a new food forest/pollinator zone.
- We built a 100-foot-long, 3-foot-tall hugelkultur mound with on-site tree debris. As this decomposes over the next five to seven years, it will boost our soil's native fungal population, which will be incorporated into our growing fields in years to come.

Thanks to support from CSA shareholders, individuals and organizational donor partners, we can invest in these aspects of regenerative farming and land management. We apply this knowledge and these practices through Denver Botanic Gardens' agricultural partnerships locally and even globally.

