De Anza College Campus Garden

Our Mission

The De Anza campus garden will empower students, faculty, staff and community members to create and maintain a sustainable food production system on campus. It will serve as a space that fosters community and encourages all participants to feel a sense of investment in it. By growing healthy organic produce and serving as an educational tool, it will promote the values of the sustainable food movement in the local community.

Education

In our society today, there is a profound sense of disconnection from our systems of food production. We generally have only an abstract understanding of where our food comes from. It can be argued that in order for us as a society to achieve a more healthy and sustainable way of living on the Earth, it is important for all of us to gain a basic understanding of food production systems.

The De Anza campus garden will be a means through which students and community members gain a direct experience of a food production system, and an intuitive understanding of food as a process rather than simply a product. It will contain a wide variety of plant species, and demonstrate various irrigation systems and agricultural techniques. Through interactive displays, it will help guests to understand how what they are experiencing in the garden is representative of larger agricultural and biological systems. Throughout, the emphasis will be on demonstrating sustainable agricultural techniques. It will act as an open resource for De Anza classes, and community programs to be utilized for educational events and activities.

Community

It can be said that as humans, we each have an instinctual need to be a member of a community; and that healthy communities are an essential support of the psychological health and development of each individual, and our societies as a whole. Unfortunately, in our society today, it is easy for us to live our lives a manner in which we are not members of any strong community. As a two-year college located within a commuter suburb, it is particularly challenging to create and sustain a vibrant sense of community at De Anza College.

The De Anza campus garden will serve as a tool to build and enrich the community of De Anza College and the local area. By inviting students, college employees, and community members to collaborate in the planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, and composting; and in projects to improve, beautify, and add value to the garden it will be giving them an opportunity to be valued members of an interdependent system. By giving its harvest to the community, providing a gathering space to foster social interactions, serving as a public space for community events, and simply being a visible expression of a healthy community at work, it will promote a sense of community on campus and in the local area.

Environmental Sustainability

Many conventional agriculture techniques that are widely practiced today involve the use of pesticides and artificial fertilizers which damage the environment, and the planting of only a small number widely distributed, high yield, genetically similar plant strains which results in an overall loss of the biodiversity of our agricultural species, and therefore decreases the robustness of our agricultural systems.

The De Anza campus garden will be a model of environmental sustainability. By using an integrated compost system and growing complimentary crops which enrich the soil with nutrients, it will not require the use of artificial fertilizers. Through the planting of a diversity of crops; and the utilization integrated pest management techniques (such as companion planting, hand weeding, and natural ground cover) it will not require the use of pesticides or herbicides. By growing heritage strains of agricultural crops, the garden will contribute to the protection of the genetic robustness of the world's agricultural system. The goal will be to create an organic garden that can be sustained through the practice of techniques that have a minimal environmental impact.