



2019

UMASS PERMACULTURE ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

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OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to create innovative and nationally renowned permaculture gardens that provide student education and leadership training, community engagement opportunities, and fresh, local, organic produce to the UMass campus and local community.

- In our 9th growing season, our gardens continue to be innovative regenerative landscapes where students can learn the principles and applied techniques that bring about healthy and productive working lands.
- In 2019, our ½ acre of gardens yielded **1,999 pounds** of produce, a 12% increase over 2018 totals.
- We harvested over **101 different fruits, vegetables, and herbs** this year. Our three most productive crops by weight were kale, beets, and tomatoes.
- The total value of all produce harvested was **\$12,469***, an increase of over **35% from the previous season**.
- Our food was utilized in all four DC's as well as in Blue Wall, Catering, and University Club. By poundage, **Hampshire received largest portion of our food**, a total of 415 lbs.
- 2019 saw our first ever **honey harvest**. 18 students were able to participate in the harvest, which resulted in **nearly 100 pounds of honey** being distributed to the campus community via specials events and markets.
- Garden infrastructure improvements in 2019 included **two new compost bins** at Franklin and **signage** on permaculture principles, ethics and garden norms.

*calculated based on cost of equivalent organic product

OUR GARDENS



OUR FARMERS' MARKET

- We hosted **13 student farmers' markets** over the course of 2019, with a total of **46 unique student vendors** selling produce, baked goods, crafts, literary journals, clothing, and more.
- UMPI expanded its scope of products to include elderberry syrup, cornelian cherry jam, raw honey, and an herbal headache balm.



"The Permaculture practicum opened my eyes and reminded me how important it is to with the world we live in. It also taught me about designing, creating, maintaining, and improving a garden using pretty much just the nature around us."

Catherine Urbano, Senior

OUR EVENTS

- UMPI hosted a total of **10 events around campus**, including Handmade Holiday Gifts, Eureka workshops for young girls, and a wild edible foraging walk.
- Along with the wider Dining Staff Sustainability team, we hosted the 2nd annual Diet for a Cooler Planet event in Hampshire DC. The event menu featured ingredients that regenerate the Earth's ecosystem while also reinforcing local, resilient economies. The event also featured a panel discussion about local carbon farming initiatives and a menu with a deeper focus on biodiversity and "ocean permaculture".



"This little garden is something I look forward to seeing every day. Seeing the beautiful colors and bees interact with each other is a miracle of nature....Even the air feels cleaner and more peaceful here."

Anonymous, found in the Franklin garden journal

OUR CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- We offered **14 class and community tours** in 2019 that reached 277 people. This year we also offered our first ever tour open to all DC kitchen staff to educate them about the permaculture, gardening, and our campus impact.
- We offered **20 New Student Sustainability Orientations (NSO)** that reached over 300 new students.
- We engaged **81 student volunteers** during our open garden volunteer sessions.
- Our practicum course, "Permaculture Gardening at UMass" had **36 enrolled students** in 2019, almost double last year's enrollment.
- We provided wide-ranging **leadership and skill-building opportunities to our 5 interns**. Among many opportunities, engaging volunteers in garden work, and redesigning gardens.
- Over the summer we **partnered with Amherst Public Schools** to help them look after the gardens located around the three elementary schools while school was not in session.
- Our gardens were promoted by the **USDA's Climate Hub initiative** as a model for a "climate-informed demonstration site".



"My experience in the Permaculture practicum this semester has been quite rewarding. With each class I learned something new or had some sort of new experience. From planting garlic to harvesting cherry tomatoes, each day was something new and exciting."

David Anderson, Sophomore



Our two student garden coordinators, Cam Farwell and Ellis Cordero, tabling during Local Week in Franklin DC



"Prior to taking this practicum, I always viewed gardening and permaculture with a pragmatic approach, neglecting to acknowledge the ways the act of gardening affects us as human beings. Through the act of cultivating the earth, a process of self-cultivation occurred."

Angele Noel, Freshman

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

- We are in the process of expanding the Franklin garden to include the East side of the building. This will significantly increase our physical footprint on campus and create more opportunities for turning resource-draining lawns into productive and beautiful gardens.
- In partnership with the Arts Extension Service, we have been able to hire an arts programming intern to facilitate arts happenings within the gardens and/or our campus events. This is part of our continuing goal to creatively expose the campus community to the values of permaculture and the beauty of our gardens.
- We will be hosting a variety of workshops this spring including: herbalism, spring foraging, mushroom cultivation, and a panel on the ethics of meat consumption.
- We are in the process of creating an audio tour of the Franklin garden to educate visitors about the cultural history and uses of the plants we grow.

