

Gateway Greening: City Seeds

Gateway Greening leads a collaboration of local non-profits, colleges, & universities to increase food security in St. Louis. <http://www.gatewaygreening.org/CitySeeds.asp>



Mission Statement: The City Seeds mission is to foster self-sufficiency in addicted and chronically mentally ill homeless; increase production and distribution of locally grown fresh food for low-income residents, and provide nutrition and food preparation/preservation programs.

The scope of the project is to:

- conduct a jobs training program for homeless battling drug addiction and mental illness
- help people grow their own food
- create markets for local farmers by delivering their produce to low-income neighborhoods



The City Seeds Urban Farm is located near Union Station in downtown St. Louis. Tended by St. Patrick Center clients, these urban farmers seek to overcome homelessness, beat drug addiction and cope with mental illness. Mentored by Gateway Greening, New Roots Urban Farm, and Master Gardeners, the farmers take classes in horticulture while learning hands-on vegetable production and landscape maintenance. As the seasons change, farmers undergo a personal transformation as their experience instills teamwork, responsibility and self-confidence. Food grown is sold at [Tower Grove Farmers' Market](#), [North City Farmers' Market](#) and [Local Harvest Grocery](#) to provide salaries for St. Patrick Center participants and is donated to food pantries.



Gateway Greening built hoop houses to grow out larger quantities of vegetable seedlings to distribute to inner-city gardeners. By providing more varieties of heritage and heirloom seedlings, people can consume healthy, fresh food at a lower cost. The hoop houses, plastic-sided greenhouses used to extend growing seasons and protect plants from winter weather, grow vegetable seedlings that are planted at the urban farm as well as distributed to community and backyard gardeners. Volunteers are instrumental in seeding

thousands of cool and warm season crops during spring, summer and fall. Seedlings are available at Bell Garden, Gateway Greening's [Outdoor Office](#), throughout the growing season.

Other components of the program serve to improve the economic well-being of both rural farmers and urban residents. Church kitchens host food preservation demonstrations to teach gardeners how to make the most of their harvest. Food Circles Networking Project, University of Missouri Extension connects rural farmers with inner city food distribution outlets to provide not only a new market for the farmers but a source for fresh, local and affordable produce. Community gardens are food distribution points while hosting cooking demonstrations. Operation Food Search conducts monthly food preparation demonstrations at City Seeds Urban Farm. The public is welcome to attend.