Published on *Kitchen Gardeners International* (http://kgi.org)

Angele Cupples Community Garden--Concrete, WA

Thu, 06/27/2013 - 10:31 -- bellm

Angele Cupples Community Garden includes eight 4 x 12-foot beds that are designated solely for growing vegetables for the Concrete Food Bank. All eight beds went into production during the 2012 growing season, and again during the 2013 season. They are planted with a variety of vegetables, including several types of beans, carrots, zucchini squash, tomatoes, cucumbers (two types), and corn. Four of the eight beds are being managed by Finney Farm, a local organic farm.

An adjoining Field Crops area also is fully planted for the 2013 growing season, and also is earmarked for the Concrete Food Bank. Produce here includes rhubarb, sweet corn, two varieties of pumpkins, and short-season varieties of cantaloupe and watermelon. A row of dahlias--plus dahlias interspersed among the gourd crops--are included this year to help attract pollinators and add beauty to the area, which measures approximately 20 x 40 feet.

The colorful, eclectic Children's Garden is one of the biggest success stories within Angele Cupples Community Garden. Sixteen randomly scattered raised beds lie within the garden's boundaries, and measure 2-foot, 3-foot, and 4-foot square. Children are allowed to choose a bed and garden in it for free. Using grant funds and donations, garden co-managers Marla Reed and Jason Miller provide children with free seeds, and fertilize the beds appropriately. Children are then expected to plant their seeds, water their plants, and keep their beds weeded. Watering cans are provided, with two pink "pig" watering cans being the most popular. Currently, all but two of the 2 x 2-foot-square beds are spoken for, with a wide range of plants growing in the beds. One boy planted his entire 4 x 4 bed with flowers. Others have planted cucumbers, carrots, peas, beans, tomatoes, lettuces, and strawberries.

The Children's Garden was one idea generated during an Imagine Concrete visioning workshop in April 2009, and folded into the larger community garden concept. Within the Children's Garden is yet another idea from that workshop: A bed planted with flowers that attract butterflies and hummingbirds. In the center of the bed rises a tuteur made of old fishing poles.

The Children's Garden is full of whimsy and color. The beds are placed randomly, rather than in rows. A 16-foot-long "colored pencil" fence defines the eastern boundary edge, while a three-board fence topped with cube birdhouses marks the western edge. A "Junior Gardeners" entrance into the garden includes a 4x4 crosspiece that denies easy access to adults. The primary entrance is flanked by two hog panel sections measuring approximately 8 feet wide x 6 feet high, on which grow multicolored sweet peas (in 2012) or Scarlet Runner beans (in 2013). Praying mantis egg cases are scattered throughout the Children's Garden. This year, an 11-ft.-tall signpost will be added, with directional signs pointing to destinations in county, state, country, and international. A peony and a blueberry shrub also are planned for installation. In July 2013, alpine strawberries will be planted to flank the main entrance.

In the works:

A 12 x 16-foot garden shed is planned for the southwest corner of the garden. After experiencing delays with the USDA grant process, Concrete Mayor Judd Wilson offered to cut down three danger trees in town (two cedars and one Douglas fir) for use as lumber to frame and clad the shed. A local man, Ed Rogge, will mill the trees according to specs, and keep the leftovers as payment. With wood for framing and exterior cladding, site preparation and foundation pouring should occur in 2013, with construction complete by end of summer 2014. The shed will then serve as a resource for all bed renters, offering seeds, fertilizers, educational materials, mailbox cubbies, tools, and more.

In the meantime, a 12 x 21-foot storage shed was donated by co-manager Marla Reed and her husband, and placed in the northeast corner of the garden in spring 2013. This utility shed has been made secure, and co-manager Jason Miller is moving items into it, such as extra perimeter fence pickets and extra colored pencil fence pickets for the Children's Garden. This utility shed also will be used to cure the wood milled by Mr. Rogge for the garden shed mentioned in the paragraph above.

A "Memory Garden"--yet another idea from the 2009 visioning workshop--is being built immediately north of the garden shed site. Currently it is partially framed in and has two pieces of hardscape in place: Two heavy-duty, powder-coated green metal chairs donated by a local couple, and a commemorative bench built by Concrete Mayor Judd Wilson. On the to-do list: finish framing in the space, add plantings and a water feature, and pathways. A small, child-size bench may be included. Of particular note in this area are the fence stringers, which are 4x4 posts that are turned so a 3.5-inch side faces passersby. Area residents are encouraged to have commemorative plates made for installation on the posts. So far, 5 plates are in place, with room for many more.

Garden co-managers are researching the purchase and placement of the first of three 12 x 16-foot greenhouses planned for the garden. The model under consideration is the Juliana Green Gardener 1800, which retails for about $6,500 (http://www.greenhouses.com/green-gardener-1800.html [1]). Co-manager Jason Miller has an "in" with the Juliana management, and plans to contact them to see if they can give him a deal.

Image (optional):

[illegible]ySf0dRD6TkH45RtBIfWbeYyIYshlTsYzdLPYEn