



## Vegetable Variety Trial Garden Project

What do you get when you bring youth, retirees and master gardeners together? A fabulous partnership for the Cornell Garden-Based Learning project, Vegetable Variety Trial Garden (VVT), a Citizen Science program involving Cooperative Extension offices from around NYS and Cornell Garden-Based Learning.

Cornell Cooperative Extension in Schenectady County (CCE,SC) submitted a grant application to create a demonstration garden and grow heirloom vegetables and other plantings as part of the VVT garden. CCE,SC took advantage of another program offered through Cornell University called RISE (Retires in Service to the Environment) in which retired adults are offered a structured training on various environmental issues, then upon completion, participate in a community service project. This year's service project involved creating a demonstration garden at the Sustainable Living Center greenhouse facilities in Schenectady's Central Park. In order to make the project intergenerational, we coordinated with our Roots and Wisdom youth program and Master Gardeners. Together we created a garden space that demonstrates square foot gardening to show-case the vegetable variety planting plan provided by the Cornell Garden-Based Learning project and use for future educational programming.



The demonstration garden project included the construction of nine, 3' x 3' raised garden beds, test and amend the soil then plant according to a pre-determined planting plan. Heirloom seeds and established plants were provided by the Cornell-Based Learning Center as part of the VVT garden project. In April we began seeding, then in May we planted the established plants provided from Cornell. The individuals raised beds had signage that described the planting plan. Some of the beds included perennials and others had seasonal plantings for Spring, Summer and Fall. At the end of the growing season, each bed will be cleaned out and finished with cover crops or other methods. The entire process was a significant learning experience for both the RISE and Roots & Wisdom youth volunteers.



The RISE volunteers, Roots & Wisdom youth and Master Gardeners met periodically this summer to harvest and taste the varieties plantings. The RISE volunteers took produce home and prepared their own recipes to sample beyond the garden. Each member of our group who taste tested the produce gave a rating which were averaged out and entered into the Vegetable Variety review database, along with yield and reliability for gardeners across the country to reference. To learn more, visit: [www.gardening.cce.cornell.edu](http://www.gardening.cce.cornell.edu)

