

Growth from Community: The Horticulture club

Jaume Plumb-Planas, staff writer

For over a decade, a small tamed patch of the PVCC grounds has been growing and evolving.



**View of the garden from the northeast end.
Photography by Jaume Plumb-Planas**

What began as a garden started by a single student and a few co-advisors, with plants being grown directly out of bags of soil, has evolved into a community of its own.

“We started out with no fence, no beds,” said one of the club’s co-advisors, Director of Student Success and Retention David Lerman, “We tried to plow up the ground, but it’s all fill from when Dickinson building was built, so it’s too rocky. Eventually, we came up with the raised bed model.”

From there the community pitched in. A construction academy that used to be at PVCC built the shed they use for storing tools, a UVA service fraternity raised money for hoop houses (a type of small greenhouse), and a pump and underground water delivery system were added to the garden.

The club not only seeks to be a community project, but also a way for individuals to give back to their community while

gaining a hands-on education. “The club’s initial impetus for being was trying to feed the hungry in the community, and we’ve tried to stay pretty close to that mission. Because we’re at an educational institution, there’s also a component to education ... so some piece of what we’re trying to do is we connect people with the joys of growing their own food. Teaching them sustainability,” said Lerman.

The garden is student led, and they take the initiative when it comes to hosting events. Whoever has permission to grow in a bed can basically grow whatever they want. Students, teachers, and community members grow everything from indigo to sorghum. During the winter, students grow in the greenhouse or in hoop houses and plan out what crops and expansions they would like to see for next year.

“That’s kind of the delight of watching a community garden; it’s that it’s truly organic. It shifts and it ebbs depending who’s involved in it ... I would encourage people who are curious and want to know more to come on down and visit the garden and to contact me, and I’ll give them the tour. Garden@pvcc.edu is the easiest way to reach me,” said Lerman.



Student led event, where members of the community garden painted canvas bags. Photography by Jaume Plumb-Planas