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Linfield's Community Garden

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Linfield's community garden



Students can cultivate vegetables, herbs and gardening skills at the Linfield Campus Community Garden, just outside Renshaw Hall.

The quarter-acre garden “provides a space for students to explore their relationship with their food,” says Duncan Reid ’10, sustainability coordinator. “It’s an educational garden.”

The garden allows students to practice hands-on sustainable agriculture on a small scale, and it is also a living laboratory educating the community about local and organic produce. The garden has one work-study garden manager position each semester, and is also tended by volunteers.

Sarah Stark ’17 and Quinn Riesenman ’17, who managed the plot over the summer, say the garden has tomatoes, turnips, kale, chard, lettuce, squash, lemon cucumber, strawberries and blueberries for harvest, all pesticide-free.

They also planted carrots, beets and romanesco broccoli for the fall. Riesenman says when it comes to gardening, “persistence and patience are very important.”

The garden started in 2009 at half its current size. It expanded in 2014, and a greenhouse was added in 2016.

The garden is open to student volunteers of all experiences and backgrounds, from those with green thumbs to those who are all thumbs.

Neither Stark nor Riesenman had any gardening experience before they started at Linfield. Growing up outside of Phoenix, Ariz., Stark’s knowledge of where food came from started and ended at the grocery store.

“Having a space that was really close to me, and knowing I planted those seeds, and now I can take the food from that, has been a key piece in many of the lifestyle changes I’ve gone through as a student,” she says.

While Riesenman, a creative writing and religious studies double major, didn’t connect the garden to his studies, Stark did so for her degree in environmental policy. She had an interest in sustainable agriculture, and completed an internship where she put in hours in the garden.

Produce from the garden goes to its volunteers, as well as to local food banks or soup kitchens. Students also plan to start a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

— Christian Feuerstein