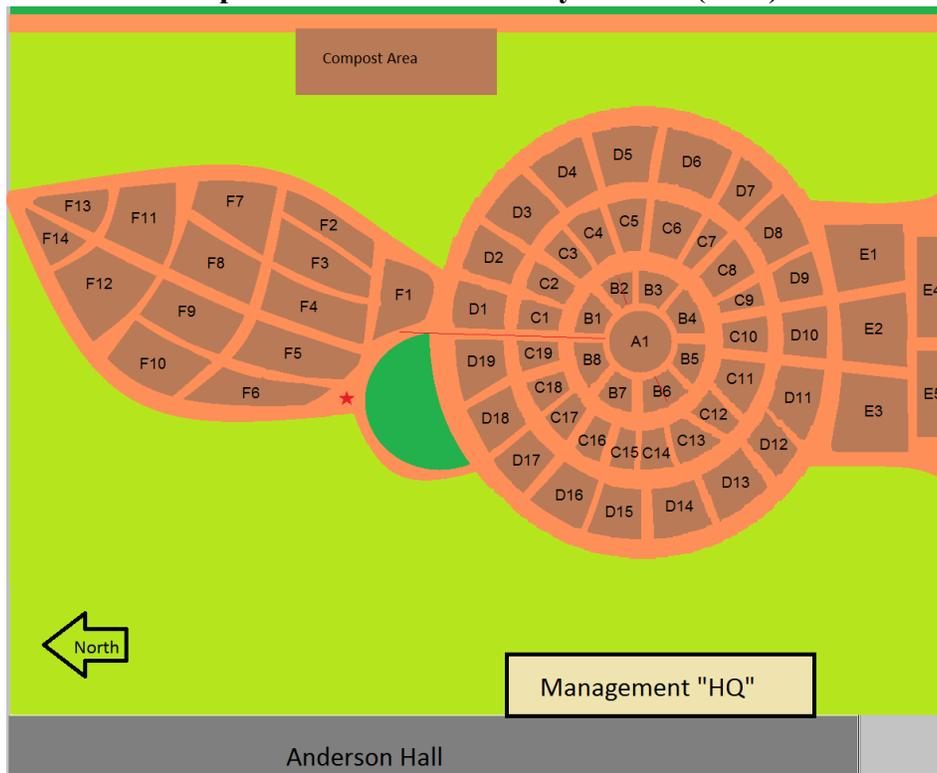


NIU Communniversity Gardens
2018 Volunteer Guide
DeKalbgardens.org - niu.edu/communniversitygardens

DeKalb County Community Gardens (DCCG) and NIU Communniversity Gardens (NIUCG)
Goals and Objectives:

- Strengthen people's access to local, sustainably grown produce
- Donate produce to food pantries, day care centers, schools, meals on wheels programs, and other similar locations
- Fortify relationships within the community of DeKalb County
- Promote awareness for and educate public about local food systems that benefit the environment and address the food shortages in DeKalb County
- Teach members of the community how to garden

Map of NIU Communniversity Garden (2015)



Located outside Anderson Hall on Garden Rd, DeKalb, IL

Each plot number is labeled with a brick on the outer edge so you can easily locate the different plots. There are also maps in the shed if you want to reference it while out in the garden.

1. History of DCCG and NIUCG

DCCG began in 2012 and has over 50 locations around DeKalb County. The organization has donated more than ten tons of food to a variety of places in need of nutritious produce.

NIUCG started in 2014 and has several locations around campus. The primary location is the Sandra Streed Garden adjacent to Anderson Hall. Most of the produce from NIUCG is donated to the Huskie Food Pantry located in the Chick Evans Field House. The Huskie Food Pantry primarily supports students who are food insecure.

2. Liability Waiver and Statement

Each person who volunteers in the NIU Commiversity Gardens is expected to read the “Assumptions of Risks and Liability Release Agreement” as well as the associated “Visual and Audio Documentation” release. Copies of these documents are found in the volunteer binder and online at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxpbhjO8iLB0ZFNNazNaWnhPM0E/view?usp=sharing>

3. Getting Started

The shed is the main base of operation. The shed houses the tools, gloves, water keys, garden stakes, volunteer binder, and other garden necessities. Watering supplies (hoses, nozzles, and watering cans) are located in the plastic storage box adjacent to Anderson Hall. All tools and supplies need to be returned to their proper location by the end of each volunteer day.

4. Volunteer Positions

A few seasoned, consistent volunteers are referred to as Lead Volunteers. They are well-versed in the garden and understand how to do almost every task available. Along with the interns and co-managers, they will assign tasks for volunteers. If you are interested in the role of Lead Volunteer or Garden Intern, contact the co-managers (Melissa Burlingame and Michaela Holtz) about current and future opportunities at niucg@niu.edu.

5. Attendance

Make sure you mark the time you begin and end your volunteer hours in the volunteer binder inside the shed. A member of the garden management team (interns, lead volunteers, or co-managers) will have this handy, so just ask one of them for the log to mark your attendance. This not only assists in documenting your valuable volunteer time, but helps us write grants which allows us to have more funding to support the garden!

If you would like your attendance documented for Business Passport (P) or Honors Engaged (H), be sure to indicate the appropriate designator in the margin on the

volunteer sign in sheet. If you need a form signed for class, any member of the management team can sign the paperwork for you.

6. Attire

It is best to wear clothing and shoes you don't mind getting muddy or dirty since the gardens tend to get a bit messy with some projects. Sturdy boots are recommended to best protect your feet and for easier shovel use. Pants and long-sleeve shirts are generally recommended as well to best protect you from the sun and biting insects, but you are welcome to wear whatever you feel comfortable in as long as it is socially-appropriate attire.

7. Personal Items

Your personal items are your responsibility while you volunteer. There are spaces to temporarily place your items like back packs. If you would like to keep a pair of shoes, garden gloves, or personal tools on site, please email a member of the management team at niucg@niu.edu to discuss arrangements.

8. Eligibility

Volunteering is open to all persons age 18 and older (see liability statement and waiver). Any person under the age of 18 should be accompanied by a responsible guardian or chaperone.

9. Shed Organization

Generally, the shed has all of the tools necessary to complete projects in the garden.

Please keep the shed as organized as possible by returning tools to their original spots when you are done with them. Gloves should be folded together and tools should be free of debris (see tool maintenance).

10. Tool Maintenance

Make sure to wash off or scrape the soil off tools before returning them to their proper locations in the shed. This will help to prevent them from rusting and will allow them to work as well as possible! Please return tools to shed once you are finished using them and not at the end of your work day to ensure the tools are all accounted for. If a tool breaks, please let a lead volunteer, intern, or co-manager know so they can account for it.

****Safety Alert****

Make sure to place shovels upside-down when laying them down outside so no one gets injured. We don't want any Daffy Duck incidents!

11. Clean Up

Please make sure all the tools are cleaned and that there aren't any materials or tools left around the garden. Also, empty the hoses of water before putting them away. Lastly, make sure to put the water key away in its proper location and double check that the water is securely turned off.

12. Planting

Planting varies upon which seeds are being planted and which plants are ready for transplant. Please consult with the lead volunteers, as planting only takes place under their supervision.

13. Watering

This can easily be a two person job leading up to and during peak season, since one person will water while another navigates the hose around plants to make sure they aren't harmed from it. It's important to water in the mornings if possible to minimize evaporation loss. Remember to water towards the roots and the ground and to avoid watering the actual plant since roots are the things that need the water! Otherwise, only water if the soil is dry an inch down and/or if you observe wilting occur on the plants in a plot.

Consult with a lead volunteer about locating the supplies if you have not previously watered during volunteer hours.

14. Weed Control/Pest Control

Since this is a sustainable garden, weeding is primarily done by hand! When pulling weeds out, it's best to use a shovel to make sure you fully extract the root of the weed. Only pull what you are confident is a weed; if you are unsure whether a plant is a weed, you can ask a lead volunteer or just leave it be. Place the weeds/organic plant matter into the Stage 1 compost bin on the east side of the garden. With pests, specific instructions on how to deal with them is located within the care binder.

15. Harvesting

It is important to only harvest the produce you know how to properly collect. Some plants need a specific technique to harvest, so consult the care binder or a lead volunteer if you are unsure how to harvest a specific plant. Otherwise, only harvest the plants that can be taken to local food pantries. There is a list in the volunteer binder of local food pantries and their hours of operation. When you harvest produce, make sure to weigh the produce and record its type and weight appropriately in the harvest log section of the volunteer binder.

16. When to Take Produce Home with You

All volunteers are allowed to pick produce at whatever amount they need. However, this should be done after pantry donations have been completed for that week to ensure that the food pantry receives all the produce it needs.

17. Borrow a Bag Option

When harvesting season is around, volunteers are free to take the produce that they want or need with them. If you need a bag to bring these items home, feel free to take one of our bags to carry them home; just please remember to bring that bag (or another one) back to the shed!

18. How to Prepare Produce for Pantry Donation

With produce that we are going to donate to the pantry, it is important to first make sure that it is going to the pantry. After this is declared, the produce should be washed in cold water to clean, cool, and prepare the produce for others to eat. Next, the produce should be stored in a container to be taken to the pantry. When it comes to transporting the produce, it is usually driven over by a member of NIUCG to the Huskie Food Pantry. So, volunteers can also transport the produce if it is just a small load, like herbs or if we are only able to harvest one plant. Also, feel free to ask any intern or lead volunteer if you have any questions about the produce you're preparing for the pantry!

19. When to Come to Garden and How to Stay Connected

Starting in April, volunteer days are typically Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays from 4-6pm. These days and times are weather permitting, so it is best to check NIUCG's Facebook page for the most up-to-date information. To find it, look up on Facebook "NIU Communiversit Garden Work Page." Also, if you ever have any questions about NIUCG or volunteering, feel free to send an email to niucg@niu.edu.

Volunteers will need to sign up online in advance of their shift.

20. Current Volunteer Projects

One of the main projects that is in progress right now is the wild edibles extension to the garden. This project has included incorporating more perennial plants that are native and non-native including asparagus, sorrel, raspberries, rhubarb, garlic chives, and more!

The types of projects that occur in the gardens are always evolving. Be sure to stop by or check in on social media for the latest updates.

21. How to Represent Garden & Talk to New Volunteers

Please talk to other volunteers and be friendly to one another! Some volunteers may have more experience in gardening than others, so just remember that some people

may need more help than others. With that said, never feel afraid to ask a question about any task; everyone is glad to help! You can also represent the garden by wearing our T-shirt.

Talking Points:

- The gardens are an affiliate of the DCCG and has been in operation since 2014.
- The gardens are entirely volunteer operated, and community oriented.
- Our goal is to reduce food insecurity and to educate the community about sustainable food systems.
- The food grown by the NIUCG is donated to the Huskie Food Pantry.

22. Getting a T-Shirt

If you would like to purchase an NIUCG t-shirt to represent the gardens and support the NIUCG fundraising efforts, shirts cost \$12 each and you can email one of the co-managers to arrange your purchase (niucg@niu.edu).