



Master Gardener Volunteers of Cobb County Plant a Row Project



Project Location: 2382 Pine Mountain Road, Kennesaw, GA 30152

Project Workday: Wednesday, 9 a.m. (Time may vary during summer months.)

Project Chair: Susan Dawsey (770-426-7479) **Co-chair:** Marge Igyarto (678-398-0569)

The original vegetable garden was started at Backacher eight years ago and was tended by patients at the Garden of Hope. When the county could no longer bus them to the garden, the Master Gardeners assumed responsibility.

In 1999 they heard about the Plant a Row project and decided to donate the produce. PAR began in 1994 in Anchorage, AK, in the garden column of Jeff Lowenfels, former Garden Writers Association president, when he

asked gardeners to plant a row of vegetables for Bean's Cafe, an Anchorage soup kitchen. Since then, PAR has grown exponentially through continued media support, individual and company sponsorship, and volunteerism.

Susan Dawsey became the project chairperson in 2000. Echoing the sentiments of the other volunteers Susan said, "I love the idea of giving fresh vegetables to people to make a difference in their diets and lives." Helping people locally is a big incentive to all the volunteers.

The new location of the garden at the Smith-Gilbert Arboretum is a dream come true. It was chosen because it was the site of the plant nursery for the estate and it has an irrigation system.

Each year is a learning experience at PAR. The various varieties of vegetables are chosen based on research, experience and recommendations from people who have experimented. The garden is organic save for 10-10-10 fertilizer. Practicing what they preach, the PAR gardeners also do soil tests and follow the recommendations. Records are kept of crop rotation, insect problems and the poundage of the individual crops. Each week the volunteers pick ripe tomatoes, corn, beans, okra, peppers, cucumbers, squash, melons, watermelons and basil. Everything is bagged, weighed and then taken to the Center for Family Resources in Marietta for distribution to their clients. In 2007 they donated over one ton of fresh produce.

The harvesting begins with white potatoes in June and ends with sweet potatoes in mid-October. Then the garden is put to bed for the winter. Susan says they clear out the dead plants and go home. In the spring the cycle is repeated when the mulch goes down and the plants go in. All volunteers are welcome. As Susan says, "This is a BIG garden!"



The mission of the MGVOCC is to advance the horticultural education and practices of its members and to promote the knowledge of and interest in gardening to the members and to the public.

For more information contact Carolyn Gentry, Master Gardener Coordinator at the Cobb Extension. Phone: 770-528-4070