

Larynn Cutshaw & Maddy Coalmer
Perennial Gardens Project
Spring 2017

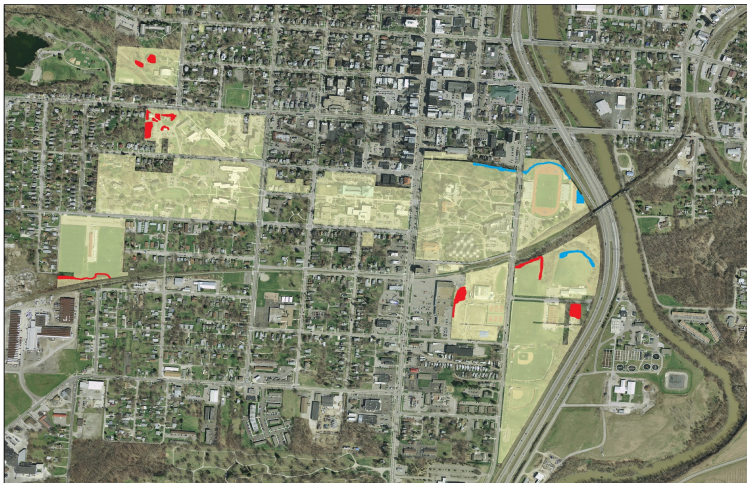
The perennial gardens project was introduced as a way to increase sustainability efforts on campus, earn revenue to support a sustainability coordinator, and increase gardening and outdoor education for students. We have found that the majority of the plants on campus are for aesthetic purposes and are maintained by a hired company by the university. As a way to have a low-maintenance educational experience, we proposed the perennial gardens project.

Larynn and Maddy explored campus searching for locations that are a little bit off the beaten path, in order to stealthily place perennial gardens out of sight and touch of campus visitors. After our adventures, we had compiled a campus map with proposed locations for the perennial gardens. The locations include:

- 1.) Along the tree/brush line near the tennis courts
- 2.) Behind B&G building, if space permits
- 3.) Behind Meek Aquatic Center
- 4.) Along the back treeline of the Jay Martin Soccer Complex
- 5.) Old P&J's yard, behind the Student Observatory, and a lean-to greenhouse constructed off of the maintenance garage in the Stuy parking lot
- 6.) Monnett Garden plots
- 7.) Following the Delaware Run creek bed
- 8.) Northern treeline of Selby Stadium

9.) Treeline of the discus throwing field

Figure 1. OWU owned parcels and proposed perennial garden locations.



Perennial plants selected include: asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*), mint (*Mentha* spp.), black raspberry bushes (*Rubus occidentalis*), red raspberry bushes

(*Rubus idaeus*), and possibly kale (*Brassica oleracea* var. *sabellica*). These plants were selected due to low, long-term maintenance and based off of the soil and drainage conditions of the selected locations. Asparagus needs to be planted in a well drained soil, therefore we thought it would be best to place it along the tree line surrounding the tennis courts. The berry bushes

would most likely successfully grow behind Meek Aquatic Center due to their sprawling and often unkempt appearance. Mint and kale are both able to be grown in less selective places, and could be placed at nearly any of the locations. The plan is to sell the harvested crops to either OWU's dining services (Chartwells) or to Yellowbird Foodshed CSA, a local foodshed organization, in order to provide funding for a sustainability coordinator on campus.

The proposal was first sent to the Botany/Microbiology professors, who offered suggestions for a successful garden and additionally shared their support for the proposal. A final copy of the proposal was sent to Buildings & Grounds coordinator Peter Schantz on the morning of April 19, 2017. We had asked their consideration for this proposal, approval, and to meet in person to discuss the project. Neither Larynn or Maddy has received a response from Peter or any other member from Buildings and Grounds as of the end of the semester.

Peter can be reached through his OWU email, pschant@owu.edu. We do not have a phone number to contact him directly. However, Buildings and Grounds can be contacted by email at bgowu@owu.edu or by phone number at 740-368-3400.

Both the final copy of the perennial garden proposal and the OWU parcel map can be found within GEOG499 Spring 2017 folder for the Food Collaboration projects. The goals from this project also coincide with the goals from the Garden Activity Courses and the Foodshed Initiatives. Although there is a pre-existing campus garden by the Student Observatory on campus, there has not been a long-term success rate at maintaining the garden. As a result, garden activity courses were proposed by Emily Howald as a way to increase campus involvement within the gardens. The classes would help maintain the gardens long-term, as it is an issue now of people graduating and leaving the projects behind.

Within the campus gardens, edible plants could be planted in order to increase food stability and sustainability on campus. The same plants from the perennial garden proposal could be incorporated within this campus garden as well. Larynn and Maddy reached out to prospective students for the garden activity courses and received high interest, if the class was offered at reasonable times.

Overall, the perennial gardens received positive feedback from the Botany/Microbiology faculty, showing that the proposal is realistic and within OWU's capabilities. The one downside, as of now, is the lack of responses from Building and Grounds and Peter Schantz. We hope that this was just reflective of their busy schedules at the end of the semester, rather than a reflection of their disapproval of the proposal.

As for the future, we would suggest contacting Building and Grounds again, especially toward the beginning of the semester. This would allow for ample time to meet and plan for the implementation of the gardens on campus. Additionally, if the garden would to be approved and supported by Buildings and Grounds, it would be beneficial to contact WSCA for funding, or even apply for a SIP grant through the OWU Connection.