



Soil Fertility, Youth
Leadership and Food Security
— It Takes the Community To
feed The Community

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Soil Health, Youth Leadership and Food Security

Soil Fertility – Youth Leadership – Food Security intersect in Food Access

NOFA/Mass partnered with Home City Housing in Springfield, MA to work with the youth leaders and families of Tapley Court Apartments.

Home City Housing is a mix-income housing organization that has apartments and scattered sites throughout Springfield, MA. Over 300 families reside in their properties



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Tapley Garden is located on the site of Tapley Court Apartments in the Bay Street Neighborhood of Springfield.

It is primarily a Black and Brown Community

40 families live in the apartments, and they take advantage of the harvest and come events that take place in the garden

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The youth leaders [Youth Agricultural Scientists] are the managers of the garden and NOFA/Mass provides trainings for soil health, soil testing, organic growing techniques, food preservation and cooking using the food from the garden

This year, the garden exceeded prior harvests – over 2,800lbs of produce was harvested and given to the families of the apartments and to the surrounding neighborhood



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The youth and the community lead the way in terms of planning the garden.

The youth leaders actively plan the garden, and it focused on what families traditionally eat. The youth in collaboration with the community, created the crop list using their favorite foods.

This season, we were able to have some of the families provide cooking demonstrations with the food from the garden

Some of the meals we grew for included:

Sofrito, salsa and herbal preparations



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- Soil Health and continuously working in the soil was a major contributor to the increase in harvest
- This season we used several soil health techniques to improve soil quality
- Mulching, cover cropping, tarping, companion growing, and some DIY amendments all contributed to the taste, smell and look of the produce.





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- Over 5 years, the garden has become a fixture for the families of Tapley Court Apartments
- It was extremely important during the early part of the pandemic – the families would come to the garden to get what they need before they would go to the store.
- The soil health practices that the youth are performing really has increased the yield, taste, smell and look of the vegetables
- Their leadership and stewardship is the catalyst for the continued growth of this work

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We are always looking for volunteers and visitors to come to the garden



If you want more information on the Food Access Program— especially the Tapley Garden— please contact:

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