



Wisconsin Rapids

# “Growing Friends” Community Garden

Since 2013, "Growing Friends" has helped Wisconsin Rapids residents get "back to nature" in the middle of the city. Originally a cooperative effort between First Congregational Church/United Church Of Christ, Riverview Hospital Association, Wood County Health Department, UW Extension, Wood County Master Gardeners, City of Wisconsin Rapids, Clean, Green Action, and the Family Center, the Garden continues under the supervision the FCC/UCC, the City and WCMGA.

Master Gardeners serve their community by teaching and supporting local citizens working on their own food security. Some of them gardened long ago, at the foot of a beloved grandmother, while some of them are gardening for the first time. Master Gardeners host teaching sessions, answer questions, and help provide solutions to gardening problems that arise over the growing season.

In addition, our Master Gardeners plant and maintain demonstration gardens that are used for education. The produce harvested from these gardens are donated to FOCUS, the local food program that provides weekly meals and a food pantry.

About 40 garden plots of various sizes are available for use for a nominal fee. Gardeners bring their own plants and seeds or sometimes can benefit by donated ones. Education on square foot gardening techniques, companion planting, pest control, mulching, and other beneficial gardening techniques are shared. A stocked tool shed is available for those needing an assortment of tools, a wheelbarrow, or fertilizer.

The City of Wisconsin Rapids provides water, compost, and mulch. The site also has cameras for security.

A central area with seating has a small library to share planting tips, a message board, a weigh station, and a logbook.

Recent planting of fruit trees and shrubs with funds provided by WCMGA have added more educational opportunities, and food sources for people, birds, and pollinators.

