

P-PATCH POST

SPRING 2022 | BUILDING GARDENS, GROWING COMMUNITIES

— LOOKING BACK and MOVING FORWARD —

Visiting the Bradner P-Patch | Cara Caulton

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unique challenges to P-Patches throughout Seattle, and the Bradner P-Patch is no exception. Truly an iconic patch, the Bradner P-Patch is a 1.6 acre park featuring two children’s gardens, multiple community art installations, a concrete pavilion centerpiece, a children’s play area, a rustic windmill, a winding path through 7 themed gardens, and much more, all overlooking a beautiful view of the greater Seattle area. And yet, the Bradner patch has faced some of the most significant challenges of any garden throughout the pandemic. On August 24th, 2020, the garden’s pride and joy- a fully solar-powered building containing a tool shed, kitchen, classroom, meeting room, and bathroom featuring an insect-themed floor-to-ceiling mosaic- burned down. The community quickly rallied to offer support, but the damage had unfortunately been done. The building had been a multipurpose hub for the Bradner patch, offering a space for anything from cooking classes to GROW board meetings to a place to hold their annual spring plant sale. With the pandemic in full swing, the Bradner patch had to make do with a rented shipping container as a toolshed and hunker down for a long, cold quarantine.

It is now February, 2022. Audrey Griffiths, lead organizer and graphic designer for the P-Patch Post, and I are headed to Bradner to speak to Joyce Moty about the status of the patch. Besides some basic information on the fire, neither of us have any idea what to expect. We are welcomed in by Joyce and met with gorgeous landscaping interspersed with countless beds, all resting on a slope overlooking the wintery downtown. The paths naturally meander through the



BRADNER'S BEE!
the old bathroom mosaic

ornamental gardens, many of them labeled with informative plaques. Each garden seamlessly transitions into the next, with benches interspersed underneath trees whose shade will be much needed come summer. As we walk, Joyce points out the different projects scattered throughout the park. Different organizations contribute to different sections of the garden- Tilth Alliance, a Seattle nonprofit focused on sustainable agriculture, manages “teaching gardens” used in the classes they host, while Mount Baker Preschool manages the children’s gardens. In its beginning years, Seattle Master Gardeners helped design the 7 themed gardens that engulf the upper portion of the garden. Joyce guides us through each one: In the winter garden, hellebores offer muted tones of purple and blue against swaths of Oregon grape while witch hazel provides a splash of yellow against the gloomy Seattle sky. Even in the dead of winter the garden appears to be bursting with life. Farther down the slope, Joyce invites us to munch on leaves of spicy mustard greens as we chat. They fill the beds with color when all the other plants have shrunk back from the cold, something that Joyce learned from the Mien farmers who used to frequent the patch back in its early years.

And then, there is the old building. What remains is to our left as we enter the garden. Joyce leads us around back to show us the charred remains of the garden tools, still hanging on their hooks against the wall. I climb atop a bucket to get a glimpse of what is left of the bathroom mural; multicolored tiles scatter the concrete floor. It is an unfortunate sight, and Joyce leads us back to the pavilion to sit and talk about life at the patch since the fire.



JOYCE MOTY
& SCARECROW

LOOKING BACK and MOVING FORWARD continued

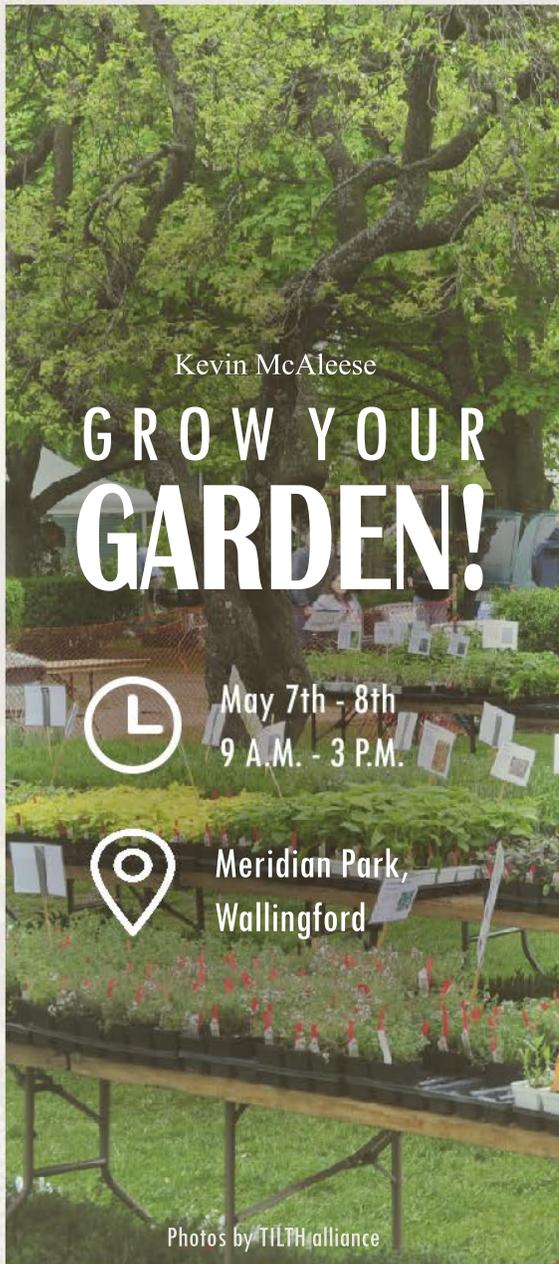
“We’re just kind of in a holding pattern waiting for this [building] to be rebuilt,” she explains. The initial support from neighbors allowed for the gardeners to buy back their tools and rent the shipping container, but the building remains defunct. “Neighbors are asking ‘When’s it going to be rebuilt? Is it going to be rebuilt? What’s going on?’ And it’s kind of a vague answer, because all that we’ve heard is that permitting is taking a long time because of COVID... The permit department downtown has laid off staff... And so hopefully it’s just now all coming back.” Joyce is hopeful that with the insurance money and donations there is enough money to fully restore the building. But until permitting is approved, progress is unfortunately at a standstill. It is a significant loss to the garden—without the indoor space, many events that were typical for the patch simply aren’t realistic. Outdoor summer concerts used to be a signature of the patch, but without electricity or a bathroom they too have been postponed.

Still, the garden is far from abandoned. An older man walks his terrier through the paths as we sit and talk. Rabbits, hidden among the native plant garden, stare up at us with big, glassy eyes. A boy comes to shoot hoops at the adjacent basketball court, adorned with garden-themed artwork created by Coyote Junior High students. Even after all its losses, the Bradner P-Patch remains a destination full of life, hope, and—of course—magnificent gardens.

We encourage our readers to send their support and love to the Bradner P-Patch through **GROW’s** donation page at:

<https://www.grownorthwest.org/donate>

From there, you can specify that you would like to apply your donation to an “Individual P-Patch” from the dropdown menu and write “Bradner P-Patch” to donate directly to the garden.



SHOP THE EDIBLE PLANT SALE!

May 7th & 8th.

Seattle’s gardeners and green thumb enthusiasts will welcome the return of one of the region’s top plant sales where they can choose from the largest selection of organically, sustainably, and locally grown plant starts in Puget Sound. **Tilth Alliance’s Edible Plant Sale is May 7-8; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Meridian Park in Wallingford.** Shoppers will find an impressive and diverse selection of fruits and vegetable starts, plus culinary herbs, edible flowers, pollinator plants and gardening supplies to help maximize the harvest year-round. Plants offered at the sale will be the best varieties to grow successfully in our Pacific Northwest climate.

Entry to the sale is **free**. Plant Prices range from **\$5-10**.

An **Early Bird Sale** will take place Friday, May 6; 5-7 p.m. This ticketed event is an additional fundraiser and lets you get the first pick of the plants! Tickets are available now at tilthalliance.org. Volunteer at the Edible Plant Sale to get in for free!

The health and safety of our shoppers, staff and volunteers is a top priority. Our COVID safety plan currently **requires face masks** to be worn by all attendees, staff and vendors. We will continue monitoring state and county guidelines and update our policy as necessary.

Learn more at tilthalliance.org and join our **Facebook event**.

the UNWATERED GARDEN

This February, the P-Patch Post decided to follow up on a previously featured member of the P-Patch community: John Siemion, who's innovative "sponge garden" technique appeared in the Fall 2016 issue of the Post. Since then, John has continued his experiments with soil health and water retention, making some surprising new discoveries. His new focus lies far beneath the soil, within the complex webs of fungi that span miles beneath our feet- and beneath our gardens. We sat down with John to discuss what he's learned since beginning his sponge garden in 2014, and how he has implemented these new techniques to create his very own unwatered garden.

John's garden, Located in Magnolia Manor Park, hasn't received a drop of water from him since 2016.

And yet, even on a chilly February afternoon, his beds are bursting with life. Tender tops of garlic poke out from beneath the soil, lightly dusted with straw but otherwise untouched for nearly 4 years. Kale, cress, fennel, celery, and parsley grow around the garlic, but when asked about overcrowding John confidently replies, "the more the merrier!" Last year, he grew over 300 garlic plants between his two beds, yielding a harvest of 45 pounds. This year, he's growing 1,000 garlic plants and hoping for an even greater yield, allowing for more donations to the food bank. Alongside the garlic, other plants continue to be grown and harvested including brassicas, celery, carrots, beets, fennel, greens and herbs. Guiding us through his beds, John explains that he's always been a scientist, and gardening is just another way for him to explore that natural curiosity. He keeps careful record of his annual yields, experiments with a variety of plants, and has had his soil tested on multiple occasions during his time at the patch. In his 2016 article, John described his "sponge garden" that involved burying woody material which soaked up winter moisture, providing year-round steady watering to the plants above. Since then, however, he's realized that there is an even steadier supply of untapped nutrients and moisture to be found in the soil: fungi.

By studying research done by soil scientists such as Elaine Ingham, John realized that there was an alternative route to supplying his plants with the moisture they needed. "She was studying the fungi specifically, and how that affected the health of the soil and the health of the plants' roots," John explains, referring to Ingham's work through her company Soil Foodweb Inc. "Through her research, I got the idea that you can connect to that fungi network." Here's a quick breakdown of how it works: Fungi absorb carbon and carbohydrates formed during photosynthesis through the plants' roots. In exchange, the fungi colonize the plants' root systems, expanding the roots' surface area and increasing their water absorption capabilities. In addition, the fungi offer vital nutrients to the plant such as phosphorus and nitrogen- For some fungi, up to 80% of the phosphorus they absorb goes to their host plants. This symbiotic relationship boosts overall nutrients in the soil, attracting other beneficial microorganisms and eventually creating a soil environment that is completely self-sustaining. Through research and experimentation, John's garden has tapped into this flourishing fungal network. "I buried all that stuff [wood material] in 2014, and of course I added compost, but then I stopped adding compost about 4 years ago. I don't fertilize or anything... fertilizers are for container plants or growing on top of the ground, but when you're getting that [nutrient] supply from underneath you're just overdoing it."

So how can you have a water-saving, self-sustaining, fungi-fueled garden? We asked John just that, and he offered a few tips.

1. Timing is everything.

"It's important to have stuff growing year-round... if you have bare soil, it's going to be imbalanced, but if there's always plant and root material in the ground then that helps attract and generate even more living organisms from the processes going on in the soil food web." Therefore, in order to ensure a bed is always hosting healthy soil, a crucial part of John's strategy is fall planting. "When it gets towards the middle of August, you better have your plan ready. Because if you miss that window of the first rain in late August or early September, all bets are off... If you plant in late September, there may not be enough warm time for those roots to establish." John advises starting with a soil test and composting initially to establish those healthy roots and encourage microbial growth. He's found that the woody material from his initial sponge garden experiment is not necessary- simply composting will do the trick!

2. Don't skimp on seeds.

As John says, the more the merrier! Buying bulk seeds saves money, and mixing plants within the bed encourages a diverse microbiome within the soil. "You get a lot more microbiota in the soil... with more variety of plants. Each plant exudes different kinds of sugars and starches so you get a different spectrum of microbial life." In John's experience, crowding has been a nonissue with this new method, as each plant gets exactly what it needs from the fungi network.

3. Wait for spring rains.

Along with your fall seeds, spring planting is an important part of John's garden. Knowing when those first spring rains will be is therefore crucial. "You want it to be warm for those seeds to germinate fast, and you also want it to be wet, so it's very helpful to watch those weather forecasts... if it looks like it's going to be a super rainy May, I'll wait to plant those seeds."

John is hopeful that by implementing these methods, more P-Patch gardeners will tap into the fungi network and hundreds more gallons of water will be saved each year. If you have any questions about John's unwatered garden, you can send him a message at:

healthprogressmedia@gmail.com.

- CARA CAULTON



PATCHES N' PODS!

CARA CAULTON | PAULA HARRIS-WHITE

This past February, the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods featured our very own Paula Harris-White on their community-focused blog “Front Porch” in a series of stories honoring Black History Month. Paula has been involved in the University District P-Patch since 2009 and has been gardening most of her life alongside her family. She became a site coordinator for the U-District patch in 2012, and once again in 2021. We wanted to follow up on Paula’s story and learn a bit more about where the U-District P-Patch has been, where it is now, and where Paula (hopes to) see it head in the future.

UNIQUE LEADERSHIP FOR A UNIQUE P-PATCH

Established 1976, the U-District P-Patch spans 14,400 square feet and provides gardening space for 60-70 gardeners, 50-60% of which are students. In a fast-growing city like Seattle it’s inevitable for P-Patches to face significant changes since establishment, though the U-District P-Patch in particular has grown to be a garden that is “constantly rebirthing”, as Paula describes. UW students make wonderful, but typically temporary, gardeners, meaning the U-District P-Patch is “a garden that is always going to be somewhat fresh”. For Paula, this means offering a leadership style that is adaptive, accessible, and consistent for everyone at the garden. The U-District leadership team accomplishes this through their 4 “pods”- sections of the garden, each with their own pod leader(s), that allow for better communication and tighter community within the larger P-Patch. Pod leaders are now offering a handbook and a digital orientation form to newcomers that lays out expectations and offers recourses. Paula notifies neighboring P-Patchers via email when somebody joins her pod to encourage first-meetings and open newbies up to the support of more established gardeners. During COVID, Paula offered a virtual tour of the garden as well. Paula emphasizes the importance of consistency and kindness in leadership; making sure everyone is on the same page through orientation and frequent communication helps mitigate possible misunderstandings within the garden.

COMMUNITY IN THE PATCH

Like many others, Paula has found community building to be one of the most rewarding aspects of her work at the U-District P-Patch. She sees the ever-changing nature of the P-Patch as a strength, with new ideas constantly being brought into the garden. Individuals offer their unique services to the community- Shed manager, compost leader, and work party leader are just some of the positions held. Paula has fond memories of the community coming together to build their communal shed, as well as assisting each other during hard times. Paula received an outpouring of support when she and a few other gardeners’ lots were vandalized back in 2016. COVID brought unique challenges to the garden, but the leadership team was determined to offer the same support to its gardeners that it always had through digital communications. According to Paula, “Community is built by the projects we do and the challenges we face”. Despite COVID concerns over the last two years, gardeners continue to support the University District Food Bank with fresh vegetables. Paula is incredibly proud of the work the U-District P-Patch has done for the University District and beyond. Thanks to her and many others’ skilled leadership, the U-District P-Patch will continue to thrive for many years to come.



A Look Over the U-District P-Patch | Jazz Maynard-Zhang, 2019

SGGN
SMALL GRANTS
PROGRAM
Peggy Murphy

Unexpected expenses can take the joy out of a giving garden project. If your giving garden needs help with unanticipated expenses such as broken or missing tools, willing volunteers who need a better style of glove, a rotting side-panel in the raised bed, broken hoses, a yard or two of compost, or similar issues, you can apply for reimbursement from Seattle’s Giving Garden Network’s Small Grants Program. We’ve a small pot of money to use for exactly these types of things and the process is surprisingly simple.

Contact us at info@sggcn.org to learn more about it!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

BY ELEANOR BOBA

Every garden has a story. Tucked into a quiet neighborhood of Ballard is a garden with a particularly unique back story: The Kirke Park and P-Patch



In 2009 the church property displayed the word "SALWT" laid out in bricks | Images by Clayton Beaudoin

Those with a basic understanding of Germanic languages will recognize that the word Kirke means “church.” The park was given a Norwegian name to honor the Scandinavian heritage of the Ballard neighborhood. However, there was a more specific reason for the name: Kirke Park sits on the site of a religious community that once occupied the property for nearly 80 years – not a traditional house of worship as one might find in many neighborhoods, but the residence of a millennial sect known as the Seventh Elect Church in Israel. Founded in 1922 by a 77-year old preacher, the church dictated chastity, vegetarianism, unshorn hair, and an unquestioning obedience to the authority of its founder, Daniel Salwt. Tall, imposing, with a long-white beard, Salwt ruled over a group of several dozen adherents who handed over property and money to his use, including a parcel of land on Ninth Avenue Northwest Avenue in Ballard.

Thanks to research carried out by the late Barbara Hainley and other neighbors, we know quite a bit about Mr. Salwt, a charismatic, itinerant preacher from the Midwest who arrived in Seattle in 1910 at the age of 65. Attracting followers from among the mill workers and other laborers, he gathered the “elect” to the Ballard property. To house the faithful, he moved (or possibly tore down and rebuilt) a wooden hotel or rooming house to the site, a structure he had also been given. A second, smaller building followed. There, with promises of eternal life, his followers lived communally, turning over their wages to the church and growing vegetables on plots assigned to them. Members also tended fruit trees, berry bushes, and ornamental flower beds. A tradition of gardening and self-sufficiency was established.

When Salwt died at the age of 84 in 1929, church members, believing he was an incarnation of Jesus and that he would rise again, refused to turn over his body to authorities until threatened with legal action. In the following decades a dwindling number of men lived on the church property, the last two dying in the millennial year 2000. The gardens were maintained, at least sporadically. An article in the Seattle Times from 1970 noted that while the church buildings were “somewhat run-down, the extensive flower gardens are neat and well tended.”*

END TIMES

The world did not come to an end, as Salwt had predicted; however, his church did. By 2008, the legal entity that was the Seventh Elect Church was heading for dissolution and the heir to the property was ready to sell. Neighbors had had their eyes on the property for some time and successfully lobbied the city to purchase the land for a small park. With funds from the 2000 Pro Parks Levy and the 2008 Parks & Green Space Levy, the decrepit buildings were torn down and a multi-use park designed by landscape architect Clayton Beaudoin of SiteWorkshop. The park includes a playground, an open meadow, a 31-plot p-patch, a large giving garden, a communal strawberry patch, and many “secret” nooks and crannies.

**Kirke Park is located at
7028 9th Avenue N.W. in Seattle.**

REMNANTS

Kirke is one of our city’s newest parks, dedicated in 2012, but its history is evident in more than just its name. A plaque explains the unusual story of the property. Several concrete foundation walls that were to support a temple that was never built have been reshaped and repurposed to create the illusion of a walled secret garden. The garden shed, designed and built by neighbor and gardener Jennifer Hammill, mimics a picturesque chapel. A few shrubs and trees original to the church’s garden have been retained, including an espaliered apple tree and roses. Beaudoin recalls that “there were many elements that created a sense of ‘ruins’ and we heard many requests to maintain the magic and mystery of the place.” Friends of Kirke Park, a group of neighbors and gardeners, coordinates garden activities – both work parties, including a Spring Cleanup, and purely social events such as the annual summer Hot Dog Party. Interested community members are invited to contact the Friends by sending a message to kirkeparksea@gmail.com

* Seattle Times, May 6, 1970, A9. Other sources for this story include an oral history interview with Jennifer Hammill, correspondence with Clayton Beaudoin, and an article by Barbara Hainley titled “The Seventh Elect Church in Israel: Seattle’s ‘Long-Haired Preachers,’” published in Communal Societies, Journal of the Communal Studies Association, 35:2 (2015).

FREEWAY ESTATES ORCHARD

CARA CAUTION

REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE

RENOVATING AND RECYCLING THROUGH GARDENING

Hidden in the Green Lake neighborhood of North Central Seattle, nestled between residential 6th Ave NE and bustling Interstate 5, a community garden over 10 years in the making offers charm and tranquility to all who are lucky enough to come across it. Tended to by a dedicated team of volunteers, the Freeway Estates Community Orchard (FECO) is a glowing example of public land restoration and revitalization. The orchard is located alongside a portion of the I-5 sound wall on land managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Ruth Callard and Nancy Helm moved to the Green Lake neighborhood in 1986 and quickly saw a gardening opportunity in the sunny strip of unmaintained land. With help from interested neighbors, they entered a fiscal sponsorship with GROW Northwest and successfully reached an agreement with WSDOT to lease the land for the orchard. They acquired a \$10,000 grant from Seattle's Neighborhood Matching Fund and quickly got to work hiring an architect, hosting community design workshops, and working with landscapers to bring the community's designs to life.

This was back in 2010, and the orchard has applied for multiple grants and seen many improvements since its beginning years. New additions to the garden are the only constant- farther up the road, Nancy shows off the native plant garden that volunteers have been developing along the shady hillside overlooking the orchard. The orchard features two chestnut trees and an assortment of fruit trees including apple, pear, figs, persimmons, plum, mulberry, medlar, and many berry varieties all among winding gravel pathways and grassy spaces perfect for picnicking or soaking up the sun. A \$10,500 Department of Neighborhoods Matching Grant in 2017 allowed the garden to install innovative new water conservation infrastructure, including a gravity-fed drip irrigation system, a 1,000 gallon water cistern and treadle pump, and clay Olla pots that allow for slow-release water seepage. Nancy explains that although FECO had the opportunity to become a P-Patch early in its development, the

community ultimately chose to go an alternative route and leave it as a multi-purpose community space. This choice shows in the unique landscaping of the orchard, with open spaces and a variety of community projects featured between the eight raised beds and multiple fruit tree guilds.

Perhaps most notable, however, is the creative use of materials on display throughout the orchard. Similar to how the area is a recycling of unused land, much of the garden features "found materials" that the gardeners have recycled to create functional, and often artistic, garden infrastructure. Nancy explains that the orchard strives to "use what's onsite" as she guides us through beds fenced by metal clothes hangers and walled off with chunks of torn-up driveway and sidewalks- a material that Nancy affectionately calls "rubble". One bed is partially bordered with squares of dark grey marble, salvaged by a volunteer and offering a beautiful contrast against the surrounding woodchips and straw. It being early spring, many of the beds are covered with cardboard boxes or burlap sacks. Nancy explains that the bags come from a local coffee company, while the boxes are donated by a nearby bike shop. Woodchips that line the beds are donated by an arborist, while spent grains are offered up by neighborhood coffee shops and a microbrewery. It's an inspiring display of the ingenuity of the gardeners who tend to FECO, and creates a delightfully playful energy as one discovers surprising uses for the everyday objects hidden among the garden. Thermal composting ensures that nutrients, too, will remain onsite and nourish the orchard for years to come.

In nearly every way, the Freeway Estates Community Orchard is a story of sensing an opportunity- whether that be in a pile of torn up driveway, or a strip of overgrown, sunny land- and seizing it for the benefit of the greater community. FECO has a website detailing their story, as well as information on how to support the orchard, on their website <https://freewayestates.org/>. You can also get in contact with them at freewayestatescommunityorchard@gmail.com for updates on orchard projects and events, as well as to be notified of volunteer opportunities.



A SECTION OF "RUBBLE" WALL



RAISED BED MADE OF REUSED MARBLE



CLOTHES HANGERS REINFORCING NETTING

1. AMAZON SMILE

Amazon is a top sponsor for GROW and the P-Patch Community so Grow is excited to share that we are registered with AmazonSmile, a donation platform where the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate a percentage of your online spend with Amazon.com to our nonprofit organization in support of our programs. For more details, please visit:

<https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/community/how-to-sign-up-for-amazon-smile>

2. Fred Meyer Community Rewards Program

Did you know that if you have a Fred Meyer Shopper Card, you can sign up for their Community Rewards program that allows you to earn points and donate to a local organization? All you need to do is create an online account with Fred Meyer, link your card to GROW and Fred Meyer will make a donation based on your percentage of spending. It is a fast and easy method of supporting GROW. For more details, please visit:

<https://www.fredmeyer.com/i/community/community-rewards>

3. DYNAMIC PAY

Support your favorite nonprofit while making everyday purchases, in line or online, using the cash back app "Dynamic Pay". What is it? Dynamic Scrip is an innovative fundraising app that offers digital gift cards for purchase. You can use them to shop at your favorite retail stores and restaurants or to gift to friends and family. Each purchase results in a cash back reward for you to save or to share with the nonprofit of your choice.

Dynamic Pay partners with over two hundred of your favorite retail stores and restaurants. For more information on how to support GROW through Dynamic Pay, please visit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smscN4P_wdY

Michelle Blume

SUPPORTING GROW!

while everyday shopping

We get it. In today's economy, it's hard to find the extra cash to support charitable organizations whose mission upholds the causes that you are passionate about. What if I could tell you how you can still support your favorite nonprofits while doing your weekly shopping without hurting your wallet?

Here are three programs that allow you to shop and support GROW.

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Available on Google Play and Appstore

TO GET STARTED: Go to

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P-PATCH GARDENERS' 2022 DISCOUNT COUPON

This coupon is good for 10% off purchases related to your P-Patch or other community garden. Be sure to present your coupon BEFORE the cashier rings up the sale. **Happy gardening!**

City People's Garden Store:	2939 East Madison; 324-0737
City People's Mercantile@ Sant Point:	5440 Sand Point Way NE; 524-1200
Greenwood Hardware:	7201 Greenwood Ave N; 783-2900
Indoor Sun Shoppe:	160 Canal St; 634-3727
Magnolia Garden Center:	3213 W Smith; 284-1161
Ravenna Gardens	2600 NE University Village; 729-7388
Sky Nursery	18528 Aurora Ave N; 546-4851
Swanson's Nursery	9701 15th Ave NW; 782-2543
Urban Earth	1051 N 35th St; 632-1760



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HAPPY GARDENING!

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