The Goodness of Gardening: Community-Based Cultivation and Connections
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Abstract
The Luther Garden strengthens connections between students, staff, faculty, and community members. All of these people work together as a community to ensure that the college cafeteria has a local food source with diverse crops. Since its original creation, the operation of the Luther Garden has greatly expanded and has become a place of connection and learning for Luther College students.

Background of Farm
• Farm established in 2006.
• Location moved across Highway 52; surrounded by 40 acres of organically-farmed land.
• Growth: Couple hundred dollars during the first season to $13,000 in 2018.
• 6,000 pounds of food sold during 2017 growing season.
• Two edible landscapes on campus now.

“I love working in the gardens for many reasons; but I would say that it primarily gives me a way to form connections in ways that many college students don’t have an opportunity to.”
- Kira Dobberman ‘22

General Garden Information
• We farm 1 acre of land.
• Produce is sold to Luther’s Dining Services provider.
• 30 x 90 ft high tunnel extends growing season.
• Produce currently grown: lettuce, kale, spinach, beets, cherry and slicer tomatoes, watermelons.
• Different produce grown in past: butternut squash, rutabaga, asparagus, basil, fennel.
• Management: Student Farm Manager - Annelise Myers
• Contract Farmer - Clara Muggli-Toyloy.
• Oversight from Center for Sustainable Communities.
• Funding: Students paid with work study funding. Center for Sustainable Communities covers rest of garden budget.

Student Connections
• Garden crew workers connect to the land, the community, and to each other.
• Seasonal crews - approximately 5 students during summer, 10 during the school year.
• Students learn how to seed, water, harvest, process and deliver produce throughout the growing season.

Community/Campus Connections
• Crew uses Valders greenhouse to seed transplants.
• Crew uses a Facilities vehicle to carpool to garden.
• Facilities takes care of grounds and manages compost.
• We offer onsite community garden plots.
• Collaborate with River Root Farm.
• We provide food to our Dining Services Provider.
• Garden parties with food made from garden produce.

Related UN Sustainable Development Goals
Zero Hunger
• Locally-grown food for the cafeteria.
Good Health and Wellbeing
• Working outside, organic practices, positive connections.

References
• Records of Food and Farm Fellow, Sarah Forsythe.
• Quote from Garden Crew Member, Kira Dobberman
• Help from Toby Cain, Sustainability Coordinator