

**NEW MEXICO CENTENNIAL GARDEN PROGRAM
2012 APPLICATION**

Please complete the following application and return to the address below:

**New Mexico Centennial
401 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe, NM 87501**

Questions contact: Jodi Delaney (505) 984-2012 or email: contact@nmcentennial.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

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GARDEN INFORMATION

Type of Garden: (please check one) Community School

Please answer the following questions.

**1. Tell us your vision for your Centennial Garden. What will it include?
(Attach a drawing/plan and a photo of the proposed site.)**

Our vision for the Gomez Park Community Garden in Las Cruces is to be a catalyst for building a local food community that involves formal educational organizations, service organizations, and nearby residents. The garden will provide impetus for a proliferation of gardens throughout the Las Cruces community, including the schools. The garden project is creating a robust network between local organizations that share a focus on healthy life styles, food, education, and public service.

The project will be accomplished by using the Gomez Park Community Garden site to increase the interest, knowledge, and educational opportunities in Las Cruces for gardening. We will provide education sessions through the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department, and demonstration plots and educational sessions facilitated by the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Master Gardeners and NMSU agricultural students (located within 1 mile of the garden site). Las Cruces High School horticulture students (located within .5 mile of garden site) will be involved working on two plots, one dedicated to flowers and one to vegetables. Paid stipends for high school students will be provided to assist with the maintenance of the plots over the summer months. Peace Village of Las Cruces will maintain a plot for their Peace Camp, a multi-week summer program for elementary, middle and high school students. Border

Servant Corps, a ministry of Peace Lutheran Church, will also maintain a plot, given that their AmeriCorps volunteers are housed a few blocks from the garden site. Additional plots will be available through the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department for individual, family, and group plots at a nominal fee of \$15 per year.



2. Who will take part in its creation and maintenance? Tell us of any special credentials and/or experience of the team.

The following partners will be involved in the creation, development, and maintenance of the garden:

- a. Mark Johnston, City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Director, has several years of experience in community gardening from Seattle and is ready to develop community gardens in Las Cruces.
- b. Darrol Shillingburg, NMSU Extension Master Gardener, works closely with several schools and local community gardens. Darrol is the School and Community Garden coordinator for the Master Gardeners.
- c. Aaron Sharratt, La Semilla Food Center Co-Director, has extensive knowledge, expertise, and experience with the development and maintenance of community gardens and youth development through gardens.
- d. Mark Uchanski, NMSU Assistant Professor of Horticulture and Vegetable Physiology, Small Farm Institute interim director, and a Faculty Advisor to the Organization of Aggie Students Inspiring Sustainability (OASIS), a student organization in the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES) at NMSU.

- e. Jessica Corrie, Las Cruces High School Horticulture Teacher, a graduate of NMSU and past member of OASIS, is involved in getting students participating in the garden.
- f. Olga Pedroza, Las Cruces City Councilor, has established the Las Cruces School Garden Partnership to bring together schools and city programs in support of gardens throughout Las Cruces.
- g. Jeff Anderson, Doña Ana County Cooperative Extension Agronomy Agent, has several ties to community groups working on community and school gardens.
- h. Dawn Sanchez, New Mexico Department of Health Region 5 Health Promotion Program Manager, facilitates Healthy Kids Las Cruces, which is a collaborative of multiple partners to empower Las Cruces children, youth, and families to adopt eating and physical activity behaviors that support healthy lifestyles.
- i. Ryan Steinmetz, Border Servant Corps Director, works with many community and faith-based entities through programs that place full-time AmeriCorps volunteers in agencies throughout the border region.
- j. Peace Village of Las Cruces, an interfaith, multicultural day camp that welcomes children from all spiritual and cultural traditions.

As you can see from the many partners involved in the creation of the garden, there is extensive knowledge that will be imparted to the volunteer coordinator of the garden. A Border Servant Corps volunteer will be placed with La Semilla to provide assistance and programming at the garden site. This Border Servant Corps volunteer will receive additional education and supervision through the many partners providing instruction at the garden and will work closely with the City of Las Cruces Park and Recreation Gomez Park Coordinator, in charge of the overall scheduling of the garden.

3. How will the garden be maintained over time? What is the long-term plan for annual maintenance and harvest, and who will be the primary caretaker? For schools, how will the garden be maintained during the summer months?

The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department will continue to administer and coordinate the garden long-term as the garden is located on city land. Individual plots will be maintained by their “owner.” Coordination and supervision of volunteers will be a joint effort, with ultimate authority residing with the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department. A certain number of Las Cruces High School horticulture students will receive a stipend to maintain the garden over the summer months. The Border Servant Corps volunteer assigned to La Semilla Food Center, NMSU Master Gardeners, and individual plot owners will work in the garden throughout the summer season. An adjacent neighborhood watch group, in the Heritage Farms neighborhood, has expressed interest in having their own plots and offered support for “keeping eyes” on the gardens on an ongoing basis. These programs will collaboratively seek ongoing support through outside supply and service contributions.

The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department has already invested roughly \$5,000 in materials and supplies along with 100 man hours in preparing the Gomez Park Community Garden site. Between the major members of the community garden – Border Servant Corps, La

Semilla Food Center, Master Gardeners, Las Cruces High School and NMSU students – there are already some secured resources to help with seed, general maintenance, and harvest. This shared space will serve to build community within and beyond the Gomez Park Community Garden. In addition, Master Gardener demonstration plots will be maintained by about 20 Master Gardeners year-round. Bed maintenance will be part of the Master Gardeners activities during their assigned "mentoring duties" in the garden, scheduled times when they are available to answer questions and offer instruction.

Harvesting of produce will take place on an ongoing basis. Surplus produce will be donated to the Las Cruces' Roadrunner Food Bank Southern Branch, who provides produce to our local food banks. Produce that is "garden edible" (needs no preparation) will be harvested when ready and used as part of the teaching/mentoring activities. It is a valuable way to instruct others about what is edible, when it's edible, and how good it tastes, providing additional encouragement to grow edible gardens. Produce that requires preparation will be utilized by participating Master Gardeners, other plot gardeners, and visitors, or given to the local food bank. If produce exceeds its optimum harvest date, it will be composted and returned to the soil.

4. What is the source of water for your garden? Please outline the plan to distribute water efficiently and effectively.

The City of Las Cruces water system will be utilized. The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department will install several water spigots along the perimeter of the garden plots. We are requesting funds for drip irrigation supplies to install a water-wise irrigation system, based on the plant variety and garden water needs.

5. Who will be in charge of tools and where are they to be stored?

A prefab tool shed will be provided by the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department and installed inside the fenced area of the garden. Some tools will be provided by the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department and stored in the shed. We are also requesting funding for additional tools and supplies that will be shared among all gardeners and stored on-site. Access to the shed will be controlled by locking the shed, with keys provided to all gardeners.

6. Will your garden be used to support and enhance science education? Cultural connection? Entrepreneurship? How?

Las Cruces and Doña Ana County have a rich agricultural heritage. The region is well-known for producing a wide range of edibles including onions, chilies, tomatoes, squash, and pecans. Though the region has historically been an agricultural community, it is not uncommon today for children and families to have lost that connection with growing their own food. This garden will facilitate and re-invigorate knowledge about gardening. Children and families will have direct exposure to growing their own produce and will have the support of expert Master

Gardeners to help them be successful. Gomez Park's community partners include the La Semilla Food Center, Border Servant Corps, and Peace Village of Las Cruces, organizations committed to bringing diverse communities together and working cross-culturally.

Nearly half of the garden plots have been dedicated to local organizations (Border Servant Corps, Peace Village of Las Cruces, Las Cruces High School, and NMSU Master Gardeners and Agriculture Programs) that are focused on using their garden presence in multiple ways (education, demonstration, etc.). NMSU students who are earning academic credit will share NMSU resources with other gardeners as an outreach component. Some of the education may be provided within formalized curricula standards (Las Cruces High School, NMSU); however, much of the education will be informal, directed toward the general public. When members of these academic institutions are present in the garden, they will be available to all garden members as a source of informal learning about all aspects of gardening.

The mission of the NMSU Master Gardeners is to bring science-based gardening to the general public. To fulfill that mission, Master Gardeners will conduct scheduled onsite gardening workshops on a variety of subjects pertinent to soil/site preparation, seasonally appropriate varieties and planting, garden bed maintenance and sustainability, pests and problems, appropriate harvest and handling methods, and other specialized subjects as the interest arises. Master Gardeners will also be available on scheduled "mentoring duty" during high-use times, including evenings and weekends. In addition, Master Gardeners will distribute print and web gardening information. This information will be appropriate to the garden audience and rooted in current science- and place-based knowledge.

La Semilla Food Center's mission is to build a healthy, self-reliant, fair, and sustainable food system in the Paso del Norte region of southern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. They work with children, youth, and families to build awareness around food issues, provide informed analysis, and create alternatives for healthier environments and communities. La Semilla will help provide technical assistance to all project partners, especially regarding Chihuahuan Desert gardening and culturally appropriate garden-based education. La Semilla staff has extensive experience developing community, school, and youth garden programs. La Semilla will also provide site supervision of the Border Servant Corps volunteer who will work in partnership with the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department garden coordinator.

The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation staff assigned to the Gomez Park Garden project has extensive knowledge in horticulture, gardening, and teaching.

7. How will the garden support healthy lifestyles in your school or community? To whom will the produce be distributed and how?

Produce that is "garden edible" (needs no preparation) will be harvested when ready and (1) used as part of the teaching/mentoring activities and (2) consumed by garden members and families. Garden workshops will help educate about all aspects of produce cultivation, harvesting, and consumption, providing additional encouragement to grow edible gardens.

Excess produce will be donated to the Las Cruces Roadrunner Food Bank Southern Branch for distribution to local food banks. If produce exceeds its optimum harvest date it will be composted and returned to the soil.

The garden will be used as a demonstration and educational site during the primary gardening season (February through November). NMSU Master Gardeners may continue demonstrations and workshops on winter gardening, depending on community interest and participation. The City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department will also potentially provide winter cover crop instruction.

Students from NMSU and Las Cruces High School will have their own plots for educational purposes. In addition, NMSU students will have the option of donating their crop to campus dining services for use in campus cafeterias. The garden will be open for field trips from other schools such as Valley View Elementary School.

Healthcare providers involved with the Healthy Kids Las Cruces initiative are interested in posting signs within the garden, providing nutritional information and healthy benefits associated with garden-grown produce.

Through these various avenues, the garden will truly be a vibrant community space that promotes good nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

8. Tell us about your proposed budget, and what will be needed over time to sustain the garden year after year. (Attach budget and multi-year sustainability plan.)

Proposed Budget:

1. Border Servant Corps volunteer – \$4,750
2. Las Cruces High School horticulture student stipends – \$1,000
3. Irrigation systems – \$1,000
4. Garden resource manuals, printing and binding – \$500
5. Materials for educational demonstrations by NMSU Master Gardeners and agriculture – \$1,000
6. Garden signage - \$750
7. Supplies (tools, etc.) – \$1,000

Total: \$10,000

Budget Details

Item	Purpose	Quantity	Cost	Total
Border Servant Corps Volunteer (placed with La Semilla Food Center)	The volunteer will oversee garden activities and address needs during education/ demonstration sessions at garden. The volunteer will work in coordination with the City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Gomez Park Coordinator, who does the overall scheduling for the garden.	.5 FTE	\$4,750 (1/2 cost of a full-time year-long BSC volunteer)	\$4,750.00
Las Cruces High School Student Stipends	Horticulture students will receive a stipend to provide maintenance of the gardens over the summer months. If time permits, they will also work at established school gardens in the area.	TBD	TBD	\$1,000.00
Drip Irrigation System	To water during weekends and holidays.	1	\$1000	\$1000.00
Printing and binding of garden resource manual	Utilize garden resource manual and provide a copy to attendees of educational sessions.	TBD	\$500	\$500.00
Educational materials (trellis, cold frame materials, etc.)	NMSU Master Gardeners and agriculture students to use during their demonstration and educational sessions.	Varies	\$500 each	\$1,000.00
Garden Signage	Signs for the garden.	2-3	\$750	\$750.00
Supplies	To be utilized for various other needs such as additional tools, seeds, etc. with no other funding source.	Varies	\$1,000	\$1,000.00
<i>Total</i>				<i>\$10,000.00</i>

Multi-Year Sustainability Plan

There is currently high interest in school and community gardens at several levels within Las Cruces, from the City Council to schools, community organizations, and residents. In fact, the City of Las Cruces and Las Cruces Public Schools have developed a Joint Use Agreement in support of community and school gardens that is currently under revision. The robust collaboration that has developed to create the Gomez Park Community Garden is a testament to this enthusiasm. The garden will be sustained by the continued interest and collaboration among a host of individuals, organizations, and agencies, including partner families, Border Servant Corps, the City of Las Cruces, Las Cruces High School, La Semilla Food Center, New Mexico State University, Healthy Kids Las Cruces, and NMSU Master Gardeners.

The NMSU Doña Ana County Extension Master Gardeners is a self-sustaining organization of about 60 active members, a third of which are participating in the Gomez Park Community Garden project. The group has adequate membership and annual funding to sustain multiple major projects simultaneously; once initial development is completed at Gomez Park, they will be able to provide labor, educational instruction, and funding required to sustain demonstration plantings and their educational presence within the larger garden project.

Students from the NMSU OASIS Club, as well as the Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, can earn service learning/special topic credits through NMSU (HORT 200). The continuity of a faculty mentor will help to manage student inputs. In addition, if credit is offered, the students will have an additional incentive to maintain their plots.

Timeline (to occur on an annual basis besides initial setup):

When	What	Who
December 2011 – January 2012	Prepping of the site including compost, installation of secured fence, gate, and shed.	City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Staff
Mid-February 2012	Work party to setup plots, assign keys, etc.	All partners
Late February/Early March 2012	Develop schedule and commence with planting, education instruction, etc.	All partners
April – November 2012	Continue demonstrations, education instruction, harvesting, etc.	All partners
**Maintenance ongoing.		