



## GARDENS OF THE MONTHS

March 2010: 645 E Ridgewood St.  
April 2010: 421 Broadway Ave.  
May 2010: 629 E Livingston St.

## COMMUNITY GARDENING: A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

By Jeff Thompson, RLA, ASLA

A community garden is taking shape not too far from Lake Eola Heights! Community gardening, as an urban movement, is to be gaining ground nationwide and is a small step that individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint and help save the planet. It's a great way to "think globally and act locally."

Most of us get in our cars to drive somewhere to buy food grown the globe, shipped at no small expense, burning fuel and adding carbon to the atmosphere. The available food is often produced on large-scale factory farms that diminish natural areas and habitat for wildlife and use vast amounts of water and chemical fertilizers that degrade the environment.

As an alternative for city dwellers, community gardens are created on vacant land close to the homes of those who farm them. Ideally, gardeners can walk or bike to their plot. Compost can be produced from kitchen scraps and garden debris making 'free organic fertilizer,' which provides nutrients for the garden and reduces what ends up in the landfill.

The health benefits are also significant. The vegetables and fruit produced are healthier than processed foods. If you grow it, you're much more likely to eat it. The exercise getting to the garden and working in the garden is good. Then there is the stress released by getting outside, doing something productive and becoming with nature. There is the camaraderie of working with your neighbors towards a nobler pursuit. All of that yields significant psychological benefits.

The garden east of Lake Eola Heights is near Colonial Promenade next to what is known as Fiesta Park, on Robinson Street between Primrose and Maguire. The City of Orlando has provided the site, the National Institute of Health is providing the funding to study the health benefits of gardening and UCF is administering the grant. And of course there are the local volunteers who have built the garden and will farm the plots. About half a dozen folks from the neighborhood are participating.

Each gardener receives a 4' x 12' plot to grow whatever they like. There is an expert involved to provide advice and to suggest the best crops to grow

and when to plant them. The city provides water; there is a garden shed with tools and a compost pile. The entire garden is protected by a 6' high fence to keep out the two and four legged varmints.

There are still a few more plots available. If you are interested in participating, please contact Richard Powell at [festivalparkcommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:festivalparkcommunitygarden@gmail.com)

You may not save the planet single-handedly, but community gardening is a rewarding step in the right direction ... it is important to make a difference wherever you can.

Happy gardening!

### Hillcrest

by Allana Grace Crawford  
Hillcrest is my school.

My school is very cool.  
It is hard sometimes,  
but at least I learn to rhyme.

The people there,  
that sometimes sit and stare,  
are very nice,  
and luckily don't have lice!

We get recess sometimes,  
and have very fun times.  
but then,  
we get back to work again.

I learn French here,  
and if you need them,  
friends are always near.  
We learn a lot of words.  
So many it is absurd!

Hillcrest is my school!  
My school is very cool!  
My school is Hillcrest,  
and Hillcrest is the best!

