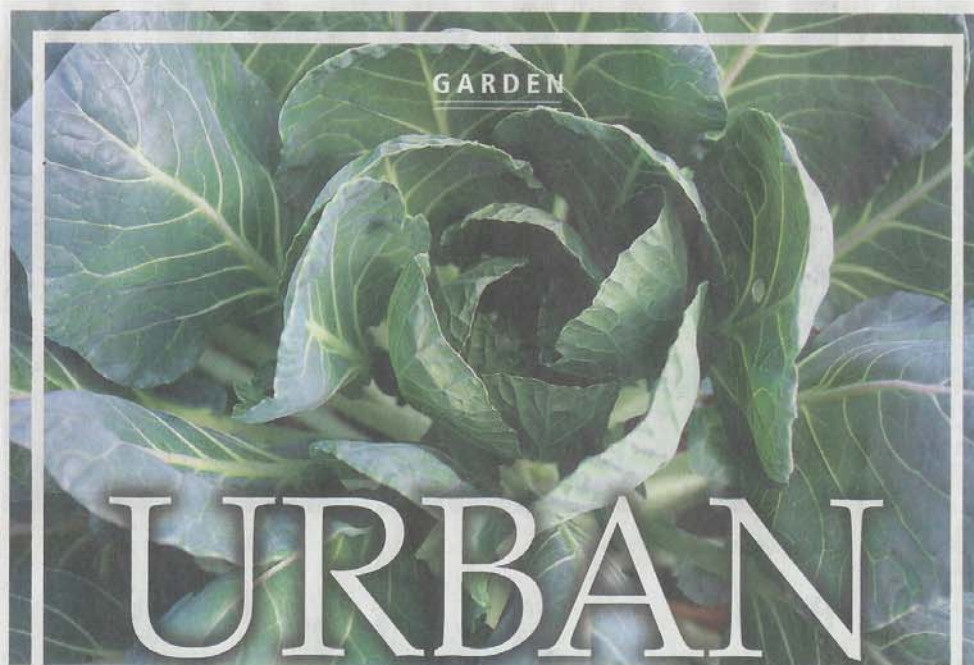


Spice up fall parties

Martha Stewart offers several ways to make your table beautiful for the upcoming season, **Page F6**



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URBAN GROWTH

A Bend woman creates a lush, green neighborhood garden with 28 veggie varieties on a vacant lot in NorthWest Crossing

By Leon Pantenburg • For The Bulletin

Talk about eating local. When Shelly Hutchins wants a salad or fresh vegetables for dinner, she walks across the street to the vacant lot where her garden grows and picks whatever is in season.

From the middle of June to late October, there is usually something ready for harvest in Hutchins' plot, located in the middle of Shields Avenue in NorthWest Crossing. The garden, approximately 20 by 40 feet, is a lush, green oasis. The lot is owned by a friend of Hutchins, who provides



Shelly Hutchins

the land and water. This is the second year Hutchins has had a garden on the site.

"Gardening around here is hard, but I put a lot of energy into it," she said. "I think the plants like attention, and I'm here a lot."

Hutchins' idea of using vacant urban property for agriculture is not new. During World War II, the U.S. Department of Agriculture encouraged Americans to utilize vacant land to grow "victory gardens."

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Shelly Hutchins gardens for herself, neighbors and a local food bank on a vacant lot in Bend's NorthWest Crossing neighborhood. Brussels sprouts, top, and cauliflower, bottom left, are among the vegetables Hutchins raises; but flowers grow among the produce, too.

Photos by **Dave Martinez / The Bulletin**



GARDEN



COVER STORY



Photos by Dave Martinez / The Bulletin

"Everyone in NorthWest Crossing watches the garden grow," said Shelly Hutchins, who lives across the street from the vacant lot in this Bend neighborhood. "I've never had any vandalism problems, and a lot of people come by to see it."

Garden

Continued from F1

The idea was that people could support the war effort by growing their own vegetables and thereby take pressure off commercial food production. An estimated 20 million victory gardens were planted. Fruits and vegetables harvested in these home and community plots were estimated to total about 10 million tons in 1943, according to the USDA, an amount equal that year to all commercial production of fresh vegetables.

Globally, about 200 million city dwellers are urban farmers, according to WorldChanging.com, a Seattle-based environmental nonprofit. Most of these farmers are women, and they provide food and income for about 700 million people.

Hutchins has no formal training in agriculture, but she has been gardening all her life. Her gardening motivations are simpler. She is not a vegetarian, but says she cares about the Earth and its ecology.

"I think I have a gift for making things grow, and I want to eat healthy," she said. "There is also some visual satisfaction, because I want the garden to look beautiful."

Toward that end, there are several clumps of bright-colored marigolds and other flowers integrated with the row crops. The garden has 28 varieties of

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— Shelly Hutchins



In addition to food, Hutchins' garden in NorthWest Crossing includes flowers and even statuary, such as this smiling Buddha.

vegetables, including radishes, several kinds of lettuce, spinach, beets, five different peppers, bush beans, carrots and turnips.

"Everyone in NorthWest Crossing watches the garden grow," Hutchins said. "I've never had any vandalism problems, and a lot of people come by to see it."

Some of the produce will be canned, and the rest is given

away. Hutchins said she is feeding about 15 friends, and at her garden's peak, could take 10 bags of vegetables out of the garden without making a dent. She donates pounds and pounds of surplus produce to a local food bank.

Hutchins sprinkles bloodmeal around the perimeter every night to ward off the rabbits and herds of deer that wander through the



Vegetables grow large in Hutchins' vacant lot garden. The NorthWest Crossing resident donates much of her garden's surplus produce to a local food bank.

area. She waters the garden for 30 minutes every morning and one hour every night. All food production is strictly organic and all Hutchins does to prepare the land for planting is till and amend the soil with compost.

Hutchins doesn't know how long she'll continue to garden her vacant lot. At some point, she says, a house will be built on the lot, and then she'll find another place to garden. Until then, the vacant lot garden gets a lot of attention from passers-by.

"A lot of people walk by regularly and stop to look at the garden, and I think it makes a lot of people happy," Hutchins said. "This inspires anyone to start a small garden, then that's when my heart is."

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