

# Towne's Harvest Garden

*& Community Supported Agriculture Program*



# Annual Report

## 2011



*Locally, Sustainably and Educationally Grown*  
*MSU Friends of Local Foods*



**This report was written by Alison Harmon, Anna Diffenderfer and Charles Holt. Original design by Rachael Harmon.**

**Towne's Harvest Advisors:**

Alison Harmon, Department of Health and Human Development

Bill Dyer, Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology

Bruce Maxwell, Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences

David Baumbauer, Horticulture Farm Manager

**Towne's Harvest 2011 Managers:**

Charles Holt, Production Manager

Anna Diffenderfer, Marketing and Outreach Manager

**2011 Practicum Students:**

Nic Acker	Laura Cameron	Josh Chappel	Tarra Culbertson	Olin Erickson
Emily Fountain	Sam Kerivan	Kara Landolfi	Karl Lauenstein	Doug Keeble
Jill McIntyre	Candace Moyer	Richelle O'Leary	Weston Petty	Henry Randall
Ben Shepard	Max Smith	Tyson Stillman	Dylan Strike	Sterling Topp

**For more information about Towne's Harvest, please visit: <http://www.townesharvest.montana.edu>**

**Or contact:**

Alison Harmon, PhD RD LN  
Associate Professor of Foods and Nutrition; Sustainable Food Systems  
Department of Health and Human Development  
121 PE Complex  
Montana State University  
Bozeman MT 59717  
Phone: 406-994-6338  
Fax: 406-994-6314  
e-mail: [harmon@montana.edu](mailto:harmon@montana.edu)  
web : <http://www.montana.edu/wwwhhd/>

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**THG Practicum Class of 2011**

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## APPENDIX

THG Income 2011

THG Expense Records 2011

2011 Crop Notes

2011 Harvest Log

CSA 2011 Member Flier

CSA Distribution Log

2011 CSA Member Survey Results

2011 Food Bank Donation Record



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Towne's Harvest Garden (THG)** is a project that was initiated by **MSU Friends of Local Foods** Student Organization. Friends of Local Foods was formed in the fall of 2006 to bring a diverse group of students and faculty together to raise awareness about local foods and to encourage sustainable lifestyles on campus and in the community. Since that first year of production, Towne's Harvest has increasingly become integrated into the curriculum at MSU, and particularly the Sustainable Food & Bioenergy Systems Bachelor's Degree program. Additionally, Towne's Harvest operates as a Community Supported Farm, distributing produce to members, Gallatin Valley Food Bank clients, Bogert farmers' market customers, and patrons of the MSU campus farm stand. The mission of Towne's Harvest is to be a source of locally, sustainably, and educationally grown food for the campus and members of the surrounding community.

During the 2011 season, Alison Harmon of the Department of Health and Human Development supervised two THG managers— a Production Manager and a Marketing Manager. The Production Manager (Chaz Holt), who was hired in 2010 continued on as a full-time classified employee of MSU, allowing for the building of “institutional memory” related to all operations of THG. He was responsible for planning and overseeing all production activities. The Marketing Manager (Anna Diffenderfer) focused on accounting, supervision of students and communication with the CSA and community partners. THG Practicum Students were involved in planting, weeding, harvesting, and distribution, along with other volunteers and Montana Dietetic Interns. In future seasons, Bill Dyer of the Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology Department will assume supervision of the production manager.

In 2011 the Towne's Harvest budget totaled **\$66,843.46** for manager salaries and stipends, seeds, fertilizers, signage, mulch, drip tape and other supplies. Income included the sale of CSA shares (\$350 each= \$22,050), a contribution from the Gallatin Valley Food Bank (\$2478.50), fundraising efforts by the MSU Friends of Local Foods (\$1000), a significant contribution from the College of EHHD (\$24,000), sales to the University Foodservice (\$1,230) support from the Montana Dietetic Internship (\$7,200), and support from a USDA grant (\$13,000). Income from all sources (including \$5,000.00 from 2010 farmers' market sales) totaled **\$70,186.00** at the end of the year.

Labor was performed by the production manager, marketing manager, 20 THG Summer practicum students, 15 Culinary Marketing Students, 5 Fall THG interns, 13 Montana Dietetic Interns, volunteers, and organizations visiting the farm.

Towne's Harvest produces a variety of herbs and flowers as well as beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, Swiss chard, cucumbers, eggplant, mixed salad greens, Asian greens, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, arugula, melons, onions, parsnips, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, squash, and tomatoes. The total yield for 2011 was approximately **24,473 lbs of produce** which was distributed to CSA members, at the Bogert Farmer's Market and MSU campus farmstand, to the University Foodservice, through a mobile farm stand pilot project, to the Culinary Marketing Class and the Montana Dietetic internship, to the Food Bank, and as donations to other area organization fundraisers.

CSA member satisfaction is assessed annually in an end-of-season survey. In 2011, members expressed greater satisfaction with the quantity and quality of produce they received, as compared to the 2010 season . Many members expressed interest in a potential early season CSA share. Being able to come to the farm to pick up the weekly share was a valuable part of CSA membership for several members.

THG continues to be integrated into the SFBS curriculum through The Towne's Harvest Practicum (SFBS 246), Culinary Marketing Farm to Table (SFBS 445R/541), and as a place for student projects and advanced internships.

Towne's Harvest practicum students, interns, managers, and advisors conducted community outreach in the form of presentations and exhibits at a variety of events and conferences from March through October. These included the MSU Health Fair, Bogert weekly farmers' market, an MSU farm stand in May- September, a booth at Bite of Bozeman, and MSU Catapalooza. In July, members of the administration and MSU staff were invited to the farm for the annual 'President's Lunch' and a tour of the garden. Farm tours and volunteer opportunities were provided throughout the summer for groups such as the Montana Outdoor Science School, the Gallatin Valley Gardeners Club, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology.

Towne's Harvest once again had a very productive year, generating approximately **\$15,000-\$20,000/acre**. This effort continues to produce positive publicity for the collaborating colleges and the university, and our partnership with the Food Bank continues to be an excellent opportunity for MSU to serve the community. The proposed plan of operation for the 2012 season includes a similar organizational structure, with a full time production manager, and a part-time marketing manager. A significant percentage of manager time will be spent supervising an increasing number of students completing coursework and internships at THG. We will offer a smaller number of early season CSA shares (30), and a similar number of regular season CSA shares (60). We will continue to work with the Food Bank to provide the produce most desired by their clients. Continuation of THG into 2012 is dependent in part on investment funding from MSU. A proposal for investment funding was developed and submitted for review in 2011. Approval of that proposal was announced in early 2012.

Improved building infrastructure for teaching, outreach, and research continues to be needed at THG. At the end of 2011, plans for a new building at the MSU Horticulture farm were discussed. Among other uses, the new building will provide storage for THG, a room for post-harvest preparation of produce, and weekly distribution to CSA members throughout the season. We expect continued high numbers of students to spend a portion of their time in the SFBS program at THG completing hands-on field based learning experiences. We expect about 100 students to be enrolled in the SFBS major by the end of 2012.

THG students and stakeholders are very grateful for the support we have gotten from MSU, area farmers, and members of the surrounding community as we strive to become a permanent asset of the SFBS curriculum and the university.



**New Signage for 2011**





**Anna Diffenderfer, Marketing Manager (above) & Chaz Holt, Production Manager (right).**



**End of summer party with THG Practicum students.**