



# 7th Avenue Brooklyn Community Garden



## Revitalizing a community garden in a traditionally Black neighborhood in Henderson County

Pettis, S.

Henderson County Extension Agent, NC State Cooperative Extension, Hendersonville, NC 28791; steve\_pettis@ncsu.edu

### Situation

Located adjacent to Sullivan Park in the historic 7th Avenue District of Hendersonville, NC this community garden was started in 2011 with a partnership between the City of Hendersonville and a few dedicated community members to use city land for a community garden in the Green Meadows/Brooklyn Community. Brooklyn is a historic Black neighborhood established in the late 19th century that grew into a thriving community. In the 1960's the community was renamed as Green Meadows as part of an urban renewal project. To preserve and honor the legacy of the original community, this garden is named the Brooklyn Community Garden. The garden became disused and now community members and volunteers are working to revitalize the resource.



### Response

Henderson County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Jane Grossman began the revitalization and expansion of the defunct garden. Together with guidance and volunteers from several groups such as NC State Extension, HC Master Gardeners and Pomologists, Boys and Girls Club, Bee City, HC Beekeepers Association, and the community, Jane has led reclamation efforts. Soil testing was performed to assure there were no heavy metals. Invasive weeds were removed and native pollinator plants and trees will be replacing the weeds. Gribbley Permaculture company was brought in to consult on creating a sustainable garden. Raised beds are being rebuilt.

### Results

21 three hour workdays were held. EMGV Jane Grossman donated 641 volunteer hours (641 x \$31.80 federal vol. hour value = \$20,383.80). Grant funds are vital for making this project possible. To date, the City of Hendersonville and community members have come together and secured \$50,000+ in funds dedicated for the garden. These grants include \$25,000 from Healthy Babies Bright Futures, \$25,000 from the Community Foundation of Henderson County, \$5,000 from the City of Hendersonville Bee City USA program and \$2,050 from The Seed Money Challenge & N.C. Community Garden Partners. Gardener leader and community resident Ronnie Peppers hosted a breakfast for the Brooklyn Community Garden volunteers at A Place To Go community center. He outlined the next steps for the project and spoke about the relationships being formed and community building taking place. Ronnie said, "Over the last decade, neighbors have found the secret to resolving differences. They found that gathering to work the land, reaping the fruits and sharing the bounty with those in need created joy. Sharing a meal after a day of work outside opened the doorway for dialogue and discovery of common ground. Volunteering at the garden is an investment that will provide rewards beyond what we can see."

