

NLR Community Garden Newsletter

Garden Spotlight: Hays Senior Center Garden Grows More Than Vegetables

Tucked within the Hays Senior Center is a flourishing gem that’s quietly making a big impact—the Hays Senior Center Community Garden. What began as a small container garden has blossomed into a vibrant space for growing fresh food, sharing stories, and building connections across generations.

The garden is lovingly tended by members of the community center who have come together not just to plant and harvest, but to connect, learn, and enjoy the outdoors. Numerous wooden push carts built into raised beds make the space accessible and the crops easy to manage. The variety of plants, including tomatoes, peppers, herbs, and flowers, will be shared with members on a weekly basis. “This garden gives us a reason to get outside and move,” says one volunteer, “but more than that, it gives us purpose and something to look forward to.”

The Hays Garden is also a beautiful example of what can happen when we invest in green spaces for all ages. With its friendly faces, and ongoing care, it offers more than just produce—it offers community, education, healing, and joy.



FALL 2025 FUNDING APPLICATION DUE ON JUNE 15, 2025

NEW GARDENS ELIGIBLE FOR UP TO \$1500
RETURNING GARDENS ELIGIBLE UP TO \$5000



Point your camera phone here!

STEP 1: Scan the QR Code to review the application located at the bottom of our website

STEP 2: Complete application and compile all required documents

STEP 3: Submit everything to NLRNeighborhoodServ@nlr.ar.gov

For assistance with your application, contact RKelly@nlr.ar.gov or NLRNeighborhoodServ@nlr.ar.gov 501-351-0184



Funding & Support for Local Gardens

Last call for funding this year! The NLR Community Garden Program provides seasonal funding each spring and fall to support both new and existing community gardens. Active gardens returning to the program may receive up to \$5,000 annually for materials, tools, and expenses, while gardens new to the program are eligible for \$1,500 to help them establish infrastructure.

Beyond funding, participating gardens gain access to free compost, seeds, plants, educational resources, hands-on assistance, and social media promotion. Applications are reviewed twice a year by the Garden Advisory Committee. Apply today!



Urban Garden Summer Care Tips

Drought-Resistant Watering Strategies for Zone 7b/8a

- **Water Deeply, Less Often:** Encourage deep root growth by watering thoroughly but infrequently. Aim for 1" of water once per week rather than shallow daily watering.
- **Water Early in the Morning:** Water before 10 a.m. to reduce evaporation and fungal risk.
- **Mulch Heavily:** Apply 2–4 inches of mulch (wood chips, straw, or pine needles) around plants to retain soil moisture and regulate temperature.
- **Group Plants by Water Needs:** Create “hydrozones” by planting drought-tolerant species together and higher-need plants in separate areas for more efficient watering.
- **Use Soaker Hoses or Drip Irrigation:** These systems deliver water directly to the roots, minimizing waste and keeping foliage dry to prevent disease.
- **Choose Drought-Tolerant Plants:** Native and adapted plants like purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, yarrow, and salvia thrive in Zone 8a with less water.
- **Improve Soil Health:** Add compost and organic matter to help soil retain water and nutrients more effectively.
- **Collect Rainwater:** Use rain barrels to capture and store roof runoff for use during dry spells. [Click here](#) to learn more about rainwater collecting.
- **Reduce Lawn Areas:** Lawns require more water than most garden beds. Replace some turf with native groundcovers, mulch, or edible landscaping.



Example of straw used as mulch in a raised garden bed. Every inch of soil is covered and protected.

An infographic titled "Mulch Much?" explaining the benefits of mulch. It includes a comparison of "Mulch vs. No Mulch" showing moisture retention and yields, a graph titled "Mulch Keeps Your Soil Cool" showing soil temperature differences, and sections for various mulch types: Pine Straw, Grass Clippings, Leaves, Newspaper, Compost, and Wood Chips. Each section includes a small illustration of the mulch being used in a garden bed. A "FIX" logo is in the bottom right corner.

Mulch Much?

Mulch vs. No Mulch

Moisture Retention and Yields

Plants grown with mulch produce higher yields than plants grown without.

Mulch
10% of rainwater evaporates

No Mulch
Up to 80% of rainwater evaporates

Mulch Keeps Your Soil Cool

How Mulch Affects Soil Temperature

Soil Temperature (°F)

Time of Day

With Mulch*
Without Mulch

*Study used grass mulch at 4 tons/acre

Pine Straw

Make sure to use with acid loving plants such as blueberries, strawberries, garlic, and potatoes!

Grass Clippings

Free and accessible! This type of mulch also adds nitrogen and nutrients to your garden.

Leaves

There are little to no drawbacks when mulching with leaves! Mowing them first helps to release moisture.

Newspaper

Particularly helpful at keeping weeds at bay. Helps to retain moisture if your garden is in a very dry location.

Compost

You can save and use your kitchen waste, or check around for chicken, horse, cow, or rabbit manure!

Wood Chips

Wood chips, shredded wood, or saw dust helps to keep your garden's soil moist and cool!

FIX

Urban Garden Summer Care Tips

Battling Bugs in the Heat: Smart Pest Prevention for Arkansas Summers

As Arkansas gardeners know, the summer heat brings more than just thriving tomatoes and sunflowers—it also welcomes a wave of persistent pests. From fire ants in the soil to whiteflies on your squash, it's important to stay one step ahead to protect your plants, your home, and your peace of mind. Here's how to manage common pests during the hottest months in The Natural State.

Proactive Pest Prevention Tips

1. Eliminate Standing Water: Check your yard for items that collect rain like buckets, flowerpot saucers, birdbaths, and clogged gutters. Dump or refresh water sources weekly to prevent mosquito breeding.
2. Seal and Shield: In the garden, consider row covers for young or vulnerable crops.
3. Mulch Wisely: Mulch helps conserve moisture in the heat, but keep it a few inches away from plant stems and your home's foundation to avoid attracting ants and slugs.
4. Invite the Good Guys: Attract beneficial insects like ladybugs, lacewings, and parasitic wasps by planting native flowers such as yarrow, dill, and coneflower. These allies help control pest populations naturally.
5. Stay Vigilant: Inspect plants regularly, especially under leaves and at the soil line. Early detection means quicker, easier control. Squash bugs and caterpillars can often be removed by hand.
6. Use Natural Defenses: Insecticidal soaps, neem oil, and garlic-pepper sprays can be effective and garden-safe options against soft-bodied pests like aphids, mites, and whiteflies.
7. Rotate Your Crops: Changing the location of your vegetable varieties each season helps break pest and disease cycles, reducing recurring infestations.
8. Timing Is Everything: Water your garden in the early morning. This reduces the chance of fungal growth and deters nocturnal pests like earwigs and slugs that thrive in damp evening conditions.

Looking for a safer, more sustainable way to manage garden pests? Natural pest control offers an effective, chemical-free alternative that protects your plants, your health, beneficial pollinators and the environment using options like garlic, neem oil, diatomaceous earth, and beneficial organisms like nematodes and *Bacillus thuringiensis*.



Click photo for more details.




Natural Pest Control

Natural pest control can be less expensive than buying & applying commercial pesticides that are filled with toxic chemicals. It's also safer for your garden, your family, and the environment.



 Garlic	 Mineral Oil	 Basil	 Bacillus Thuringiensis	 Orange	 Insecticidal Soap
 Cloves	 Eucalyptus Oil	 Chrysanthemum oil	 Boric Acid	 Ginger	 Turmeric
 H. Salt	 Bay Leaves	 Neem Oil	 Papaya Leaf Extract	 D.E.	 Chiles
 Nematodes	 Soursop	 Cinnamon	 Tobacco	 Beauveria Bassiana	 Sulfur



 [@nlrcommunitygardens](https://www.instagram.com/nlrcommunitygardens)

 [youtube.com/c/cityofnlr](https://www.youtube.com/c/cityofnlr)

 [North Little Rock Neighborhood Services](https://www.facebook.com/nlrcommunitygardens)



nlr.ar.gov/communitygardens

It's not too late to get growing! Summer is prime time to plant heat-loving crops like okra, peppers, southern peas, and melons. You can also succession plant quick growers like bush beans and squash through mid-summer. Keep soil cool and moist with mulch, water deeply, and harvest often to keep plants producing.



The closer to the bottom of the box a vegetable is listed, the closer to the end of the month it should be planted.

Click here for the AR Grown Fruit & Vegetable Harvest Calendar

U of A
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Summer Planting Guides

June	July	August
Watermelon	Basil	Southern Peas
Cantaloupe	Pak Choi	Lettuce
Basil	Bok Choi	Kale
Tomatoes	Cabbage	Mustard
Southern Peas	Irish Potatoes	Carrots
Collards	Collards	Endive
Pumpkins	Tomatoes	Beets
Sweet Potatoes	Southern Peas	Chives
Squash (Winter)	Sweet Corn	Cauliflower
Squash (Summer)	Cucumbers	Broccoli
Cucumbers	Pumpkins	Cabbage
Peppers	Squash (winter)	Cucumbers
Beans (Snap, Lima)	Squash (Summer)	Collards
Edamame		Beans (Snap, Lima)

June Garden Related Events

AR Farmer's Market - EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT!

4:30-7:30 pm until Oct. 30, 2025

Location: St. Joseph Center 6800 Camp Robinson

Growing Urban Farmers Meet-up

Wednesday, June 4th 5:30-7:00 pm

Location: St. Joseph Center 6800 Camp Robinson

Join our growing farmer community and chat about farming issues, ideas, and more. Park on the west side of the building by the white tent and Beer Shed.

Blackberry Night Market

Friday, June 6th 5:00-9:00 pm

Location: St. Joseph Center 6800 Camp Robinson

Come kick off blackberry season with us! Enjoy a lively night market featuring music, food trucks, & local vendors. It's a celebration of summer flavors you won't want to miss! Entry is free.

Soil Health at UALR (Growing Urban Farmers)

Dr. Stephen Grace

Wednesday, June 11th 5:30-7:00 pm

Location: UALR Campus Garden - 3343 Fair Park Ave., Little Rock

Grow Your Own Groceries - Peppers

Thursday, June 12th 12:00-1:00 pm

FREE Online Zoom Workshop.

Register for this workshop on the UAEX website.

[Click here.](#)

JOIN US IN
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE!

VOLUNTEER
SIGN-UP



NLR COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

GARDEN MANAGER MEETINGS

NEW Meeting Location! **JUNE 25** NEW Meeting Location! **JULY 23** **AUGUST 27**

NORTH HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CENTER
4801 ALLEN ST.
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Our meetings are an opportunity for NLR community garden managers, volunteers, and the general public to come together, exchange resources, celebrate successes, address challenges, and stay connected with our program. These meetings create a collaborative space where local gardeners can share knowledge, ask questions, and support each other. Best of all, they're free and open to everyone—come join us.

MEETINGS TAKE PLACE ON THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH (JANUARY-OCTOBER) AND THE 3RD WEDNESDAY IN NOVEMBER. NO MEETING IN DECEMBER.



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News



Events



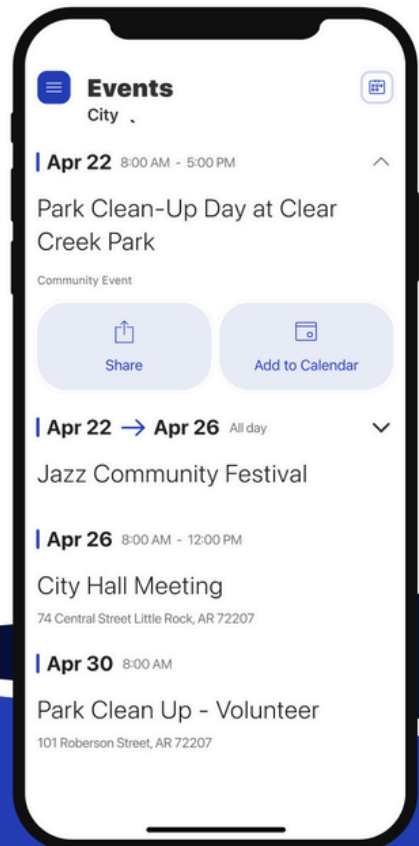
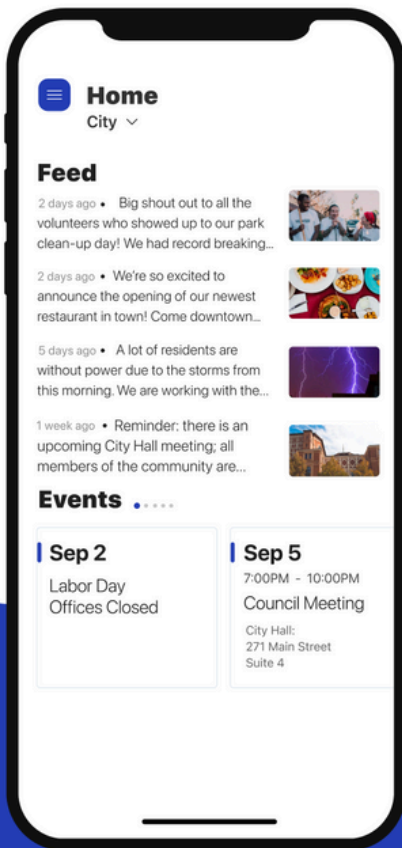
Documents



Staff



Notifications



Download the **City of North Little Rock** app from the iOS App Store or Android Play Store and enable Notifications.