Growing Green
Local and Organic Food

From the editor: The arrival of spring holds all types of associations. Some are reminded that summer vacation is just around the corner. Others think of pollen, allergies, and sunblock. Yet the resurgence of spring means one thing to the gardener: planting season. Luckily for our taste buds, local and organic food is becoming the fashion. While local and organic are not synonymous, they both emphasize diversified, smaller scale production and stewardship of the environment. The Athens Farmers Market has grown tremendously in the last few years and backyard gardens are popping up all over town. Even UGA has caught the local food bug. The new Certificate Program in Organic Agriculture at UGA was started just three years ago. Within the last year, students at UGA have started a new student organization UGArden (pronounced “u-garden”) to promote sustainable food production and start a campus community garden. These small steps point to a larger trend of making our food network energy efficient and ecologically sound. It is more than planting veggies. It is designing for sustainability.

Aside from the numerous health benefits associated with eating food grown without chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides, organic produces’ societal benefits can be every bit as important. As organic farms tend to be smaller scale and require more labor than conventional large-scale automated farms, the money and energy used is more likely to stay in the local community. While potentially creating small jobs for homeless, at-risk youth, welfare families, or mentally challenged, the rise of organic growing can also spark interest in improving our land rather than simply using it. Organic farmers, as well as others involved in the process, devote so much time and care into their land that they develop a sense of pride and commitment. This in turn encourages farmers and consumers to spend and invest their profits in the local community. The importance of strengthening these social networks and community links is vital in retaining and rebuilding local economies. By connecting these networks we can begin to create sustainable systems that promote positive growth and higher quality of life. So, all that sounds nice and fuzzy but where do we start? Well, the best part is, anyone can do it. Whether you have acres of land or just a windowsill, you may be surprised what can be grown. Try it out, watch it grow, and be a part of the process.

— Andrew Huie, fourth year BLA

Know Your Pros

Rene Shoemaker is the librarian for the Owens Library on the ground floor of Caldwell Hall. She previously worked at the UGA Main Library while getting her Bachelor’s of Fine Arts in fabric design from UGA. After she completed Library School at the University of South Carolina, she began working at the Owens Library. As a solo librarian, Shoemaker does everything for the library from cataloguing to managing. The library is named after Hubert Owens who brought Landscape Architecture to the University. It is unique in that it specifically serves our college and is housed within the College’s building.

One of Shoemaker’s greatest services is running the archives for our college. This includes documenting the history and the work of professors and students. She has also created a digital library of photography from Georgia’s historic architecture and landscapes, photographs taken by Owens and John Linley. These archives can be found under “OWens Library Projects” on the CED website.

Working at the Owens Library has informed Rene’s art through the experience of place. Shoemaker paints images on silk that are inspired by her surroundings. Her work is on display at the Ramsey Center, and has been exhibited in Monroe, Georgia, and Greenwich Village. Her work is currently being exhibited at Ciné. Next year she will retire from the library, so be sure and stop by if you need some design inspiration. Not everything is found on Google.

— Robert Evans, Fourth Year BLA

Hands On Athens

Come out and volunteer with GSLA, EGB and ASID (American Society of Interior Designers) for Hands On Athens the weekend of April 9th through 11th. Hands On Athens is a coalition of organizations dedicated to assisting low-income Athens-Clarke County homeowners in historic neighborhoods to maintain, repair and restore their properties as part of overall neighborhood revitalization. The project will involve painting, cabinetry, tile work, roofing, and landscaping. Email Cat at cadunleavy@gmail.com to sign up.

Say it at CED

We would love to hear your suggestions, opinions, or requests. If you would like to share your experiences at the CED or your thoughts on design, the environment or anything else, contact the editor Agustina Hein at gslaofficers@gmail.com. Photo above: downtown Athens panorama, Agustina Hein.