

Sustainable Landscape Demonstration Garden: Impact & Future

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Introduction

The Sustainable Landscape Demonstration Garden is an ongoing Creative Inquiry (#827) project under the direction of Dr. Ellen Vincent designed to develop ecosystem health in Clemson University's urban landscape and holistically promote interaction between people and their environment. Since 2011, the Sustainable Garden has empirically affected the ways in which students, faculty, and visitors interact with Clemson University.



Photo by Carson Colenbaugh

Methods

- Daily garden maintenance performed by students enrolled Creative Inquiry #827 (HORT 4080, Dr. Ellen Vincent) and supported by Clemson Landscape Services
- Students are certified as human subject researchers
- A perception-based survey (IRB2012-096) is used to consistently track changes in personal responses to the garden related to:
 - aesthetic preferences
 - perceptions of the Sustainable Garden's health and maintenance
- Ecological health and productivity gauged yearly with:
 - soil tests
 - observations related to garden plants
 - wildlife
- Signage and a supplementary website support ongoing environmental education

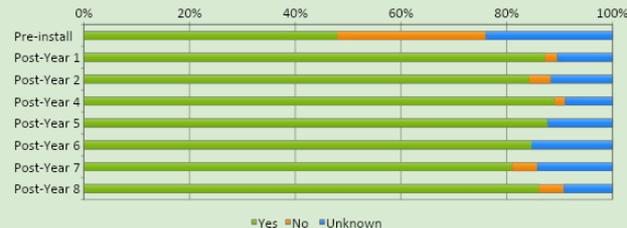
Outcomes & Implications

- Individuals using the garden perceive an increase in environmental health
- Perceptions of environmental health also correlate positively with personal wellbeing (see figures below).
- Since the website went live in 2013, more than 48,000 unique individuals have visited the page to learn about plants
- Survey results indicate passersby report higher levels of safety, aesthetic beauty, and maintenance in and around the garden area.
- Soil data show an increase in soil health over the past 10 years
- Observational data from students indicates increased visits from insects and other wildlife following garden installation

"Do you think (the space) is good for the environment?"



"Do you think (the space) is good for human well-being?"



In addition to the garden's environmental and health effects- the garden has impacted the Clemson community by creating interdisciplinary partnerships with:

- Horticulture and Plant & Environmental Science faculty and horticulture design students
- South Carolina Botanical Garden personnel and plants
- CAFLS Media
- Campus Planning and Landscape Architecture
- Clemson PSA and Cooperative Extension
- Landscape Services

The sustainable garden is truly a collaborative, active, learning, and research environment.



Photos by Sarah A. White

Future

- Research and maintenance at the Sustainable Landscape Demonstration garden will continue after its move to a new location between Barre Hall and the Academic Success Center
- The garden will be more accessible to the Clemson community at the new location
- We can also trial new plant material, design styles, and maintenance methods to continuously advance the goals of the Sustainable Garden



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