

Epic Community Garden



In the spring of 2008, a community garden sprang up at Epic Gardens when nearby friends bemoaned their shady yards were at odds with their urge to grow fresh food. This latest venture is blooming under Patricia's irrepressible green thumb. Most participants live within walking distance and come almost daily to weed and water and pick. Children love it!

High Tunnel

This is the first year that we are using a high tunnel for season extension. We successfully produced transplants for our gardens and had many to sell.

The Epic Continues!



Patricia L. Stansbury is an organic gardener, educator, and marketer of wholesale and retail organic products. Her passion about natural foods and sustainable agriculture took root years ago when she became involved in some of Richmond's first natural foods coops, and developed into a wide range of interests and services, all centering on creating and promoting an environment for helping people eat healthier, while sustaining the earth.



Epic Gardens
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Edamame a Specialty

In 2006, Patricia – along with dedicated volunteer helpers – raised various types of edamame under a grant funded by the USDA and the EPA for Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. The result was featured in the online magazine *Common Ground* southern-sare.uga.edu/commongrnd/07spring.pdf and in *The Biological Farmer*, a quarterly publication of the Virginia Association for Biological Farming. Following this success, Epic Gardens Edamame has been introduced in local natural products stores and in at least one large grocery chain. In 2008, she plans to provide a substantial amount of fresh, locally grown Edamame, directly and by selling seeds to like-minded gardeners.

From Marketing to Market

In her garden in Chesterfield County, within earshot of Richmond's city limits, she began growing and selling vegetables, flowers and eggs directly to a growing list of friends and specialty grocers. Her background in marketing helped her develop the network and resources needed to carve a niche for herself and her products.

When not out working in her garden, she can be found at her desk researching, writing, and keeping in touch with her many supporters and customers through <http://EpicGardens.com>, the website which she created and maintains.

Ms. Stansbury participates in organizations serving the needs of people working in agriculture, i.e., the Sustainable Agriculture Conference planning committee, the Virginia Association for Biological Farming and Richmond Area Food Systems Council, which she co founded. This provides a network of people to invite to participate in innovative agricultural ventures.



A Speaker and an Educator

Patricia is very active in the educational aspect of sustainable agriculture, and has spoken at schools, churches, a military base and civic groups on topics ranging from *Environmental Stewardship as a Matter of Faith* to *Starting a Garden in Your Own Backyard*. She spoke on growing edamame according to G.A.O.P. (generally accepted organic practices, a phrase she coined) at the 2007 Virginia Biological Farming Conference in Harrisonburg, and at an international symposium on vegetable type soybeans at Virginia State University in September, 2006. She taught a seminar for women about eating low on the food chain for health reasons. She is available for conferences, seminars and workshops on a variety of topics including:

- ✎ Global Ethics and Economic Justice
- ✎ Community Garden Building
- ✎ Reducing One's Impact on the Earth through Daily Choices
- ✎ Growing food according to G.A.O.P. (Generally Accepted Organic Practices)
- ✎ Selecting and Growing Native Plants
- ✎ Environmental Stewardship as a Matter of Faith

Recent Venues have included:

- ✎ 2007 Virginia Sustainable Agriculture Conference
- ✎ 2007 Soybean Breeders' Conference (VSU)
- ✎ Northeast District Cooperative Extension office
- ✎ 2008 Women in Agriculture Conference
- ✎ William Byrd Community House
- ✎ Bon Air United Methodist Church
- ✎ Fort Lee's Earth Day Celebration
- ✎ Unitarian Universalist Church, Richmond
- ✎ Mennonite Fellowship
- ✎ Numerous garden clubs and civic programs
- ✎ On radio at WRIR Ip fm 97.3 & WRIR.ORG
- ✎ 2009 USDA Outreach to Small Farms at VSU
- ✎ Wherever people use G.A.O.P.

Background

Active in sustainable agriculture since the 1980s, Patricia may have provided the first local organically grown produce for resale in Richmond, Virginia when she presented an armload of daikon radish to the Organic Food Company in 1974. During her decades as a merchant in the natural foods industry she managed several stores, including a New York City branch of Nature Food Centres, and Richmond's Fare Share Cooperative, where she was a founding member in 1976. After serving on the volunteer board of directors in various capacities, including president, she was hired as general manager in 1986. While managing the store, she purchased local produce directly from farmers as much as possible. Later, she continued supporting local agriculture at an innovative grocery, The Galaxy, which she opened in 1992 with a chef. This store carried natural products alongside beer, wine and fresh cuisine, a concept that is now repeated throughout the country at Whole Foods Markets, Wild Oats and Richmond's own Ellwood Thompson's Local Market.