



> continued from page 3

The compost heap is another essential part of the garden's symbiosis, and the gardeners fertilize the crops with Landscape Essentials fertilizer with each planting.

They have experimented with different crop combinations, including the Three Sisters — corn, beans and squash planted together.

The volunteers also bring the necessary tools and equipment to tend to the garden.

"This is my garden in my mind, so I like to contribute to the compost and the garden," said volunteer Steve Hinshaw.

Anyone who volunteers to plant and help with the garden is invited to share in the harvest, Toye said.

The Alamo Heights garden recently joined the network of more than 30 gardens facilitated by the Green Spaces Alliance, formerly the Bexar Land Trust, to use resources including gardening advice, seeds, gator bags and designs for the entryway.

The Alliance offers funding for startup projects and continuous support for the life of the gardens, explained Alliance community gardens assistant program manager Michelle Gorham.

She said the organization has worked with the gardeners in a variety of activities, including a composting workshop last spring and a recent Art for Water fundraising event in which artists decorated rain bales.

"They've helped us as an active and vibrant garden — the garden coordinators are very connected and helped make the events we held there very successful," Gorham said. "I think there's a lot of room for community gardens to grow in San Antonio. The gardens are serving as very good models of urban agriculture for many other urban agriculture projects that may come up."

The Alamo Heights gardeners are looking forward to planting spinach, onions and garlic in October and November and are discussing plans to install a Little Free Library, an opportunity for residents to engage in a book exchange.

Though the garden cannot solve all the world's problems, it can help solve one big one — the disconnection that people feel with the soil and with their food, said first-time volunteer Cynthia Marmolejo.

"This is a good way to help the community, plus you learn so much about gardening and as a volunteer you get to take home wonderful fruits and vegetables," Marmolejo said. "A lot of city kids have not been out to a farm, so it is a great opportunity for them to come out and get their hands dirty and learn to appreciate nature and see where their food comes from."

Toye said that students from Cambridge Elementary school had visited the garden recently and had really gotten a kick out of seeing the root vegetables.

"It's really important that we keep our kids interested and involved in their community, and this garden is a great way to do it," she added.

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