

JUN 09 1994

Monsanto

FROM (NAME-LOCATION-PHONE)

Diane Herndon, A2SP, x2915

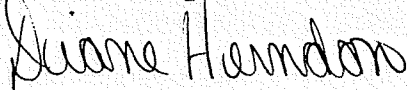
DATE : June 8, 1994 cc: Larry O'Neill
Loren Wassell
SUBJECT : East St. Louis Urban Garden NAPS release Jerry Ingenthron
Gary Barton
REFERENCE : Steve Archer

TO : Kevin Cahill
Lisa Drake

Attached are several copies of the North American Precipitation Syndicate (NAPS) release on the East St. Louis Urban Gardening project. This was drafted after the harvest last fall, then held until spring so it would be picked up during the planting season. In addition to your approvals, Sr. Cecilia of Operation New Spirit, and Sue Kohler, SIUC, also reviewed and approved the copy.

As you know, NAPS distributes these pre-set, camera-ready stories to thousands of newspapers across the country. They are usually picked up by smaller publications including suburban and rural papers, and regional city papers. As I receive placement reports, I'll pass them along to you.

Thanks for your assistance.



Diane Herndon

DSW 135098

STLCOPCB4035057

Environmental Protection News & Notes

Urban Gardeners Harvest Hope

(NAPS)—Corn and hope both grow in an innovative gardening project to help improve America's urban environment.

Several vacant and abandoned areas in East St. Louis, Illinois were transformed into thriving gardens that celebrated their first harvest last summer. Where waist-high weeds once grew, chest-high corn flourished. Debris was replaced with manicured rows of plants—crunchy peanuts, colorful hot peppers and cantaloupes the size of bowling balls.

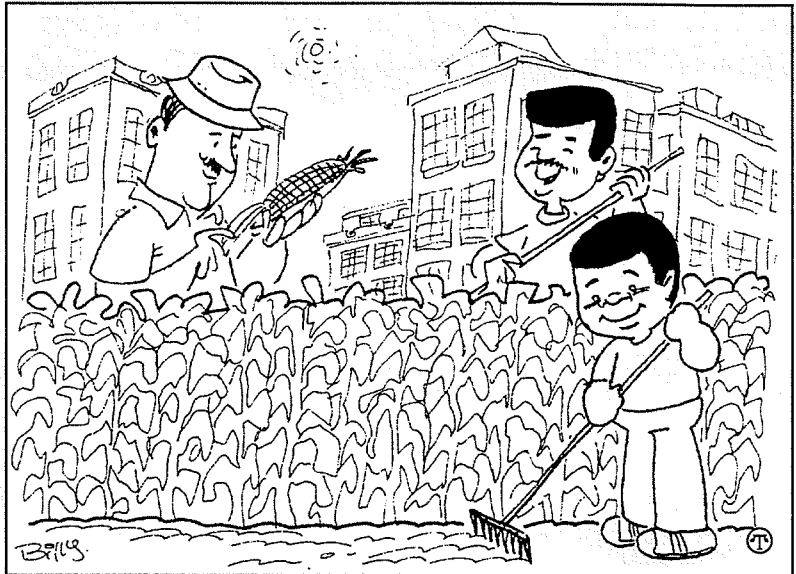
The urban gardening project was a joint effort among Operation New Spirit—an East St. Louis citizens group working for a brighter city future—and the Office of Economic and Regional Development and the Graduate School at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC).

An herbicide to control weeds prior to planting, Roundup DRYpak, was donated by Monsanto Company, which also provided financial support matched by SIUC. Another company supplied seeds.

Dozens of East St. Louis residents, ranging in age from seven to 70, participated in the urban gardening project. Many were first-time gardeners.

"They came away with a sense of accomplishment and community spirit as well as a bounty of good, nutritious things to eat," says Sister Cecilia Hellmann, a neighborhood organizer with Operation New Spirit.

Four gardens were planted last spring throughout the city, yielding an abundance of produce. Among them was a community garden tended by senior citizens and a demonstration garden on the



Seeds of hope and change are bearing fruit in an East St. Louis urban gardening project.

campus of State Community College.

The urban gardening project had three goals:

- To provide educational and technical assistance to neighborhood groups and individuals to develop inner-city gardens.
- To provide economic development opportunities through the cultivation of vegetables and flowers that might eventually enable East St. Louis residents to open a farmers' market.
- To provide a means for East St. Louis residents to improve their nutrition.

"Last year was the pilot year for the project and we were pleased how well everything went," says Dr. Susan Kohler, a research project specialist with the Office of Economic and Regional Development at SIUC

and project director. "It couldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of so many people in the community." People such as:

- Sgt. Steve Saunders, who supervised a crew of first-time offenders who helped prepare and maintain the garden sites.
- Willie Beard of the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension, who guided and motivated a group of young 4-H gardeners whose crops were entered in 4-H shows and agricultural competitions.

Organizers would like to expand the project this year to additional sites in East St. Louis. Says Sister Cecilia, "Our ultimate goal is to have self-supporting gardens that contribute to the health of East St. Louis citizens and inspire us to respect and renew the Earth."