

DELTA DEALS

FARES AS LOW AS \$479.*

delta.com

[Book Now](#)

*Round-trip purchase required. Travel may be on other airlines. Add taxes/fees/baggage fees and restrictions may apply.

The Salt Lake Tribune

TUESDAY, May 11, 2010

Search

This Site
 Web - powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH**

[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Sports](#)
[Features](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Business](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Close-Up](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[More Sites](#)
[Legals](#)
[Help Desk](#)

Utah News

MORE UTAH NEWS HEADLINES

- [Teen steals two group home vans in bid for freedom](#)
- [Downturn helps Granite School District save millions](#)
- [Father, kids escape W. Jordan house fire](#)
- [Dem banking chairman Dodd says he'll miss Bennett](#)
- [Two dead in I-15 crash near Lindon](#)
- [Missing boy: Layton police looking for 4-year-old](#)
- [Man in critical condition after Salt Lake City robbery, shooting](#)
- [Is Hatch next in line for a pink slip?](#)
- [Hopes dashed: Jazz swept away by Lakers](#)
- [Inmates better themselves one page at a time](#)
- [Storm, cold weather expected to hit northern Utah on Tuesday](#)
- [Judge orders release of some search warrants in sheriff's shooting](#)
- [Mormon who defied Hitler dies in Utah](#)
- [Salt Lake County reaches out for young voters](#)
- [State: Risk of developing disease expands with waist line](#)
- [Utah cold spot ties another monthly low record](#)
- [Layton teacher arrested on suspicion of sex with student](#)
- [Traffic moving again after wreck on Highway 6](#)
- [Nevada man who killed Utah runner sentenced for DUI](#)
- [Thief who posed as Cubs rookie goes to jail](#)
- [GOP results in other contested races](#)
- [West Jordan woman killed in head-on collision Monday](#)
- [Police identify Ogden toddler killed at Mother's Day party](#)

[BOOKMARK](#)
[Print](#)
[Email](#)
[Font Resize](#)

Gardening: Backyard bonding

Wasatch Community Gardens is unveiling a new program called Sharing Backyards.

By **Katie Drake**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Updated: 05/03/2010 07:58:48 AM MDT

Elaine Christensen loves growing backyard vegetables, but her large backyard garden produces far more than the Avenues grandmother could ever consume on her own.

A few blocks away near the University of Utah, Brian Watanabe was having trouble growing tomatoes in his small yard, which is shaded by several trees.

The two decided their gardening needs were a perfect match, and began working Elaine's garden together last year.

Now Wasatch Community Gardens (WCG) is hoping to do some matchmaking between homeowners who have space and neighbors who need a bit of earth. The program, called Sharing Backyards, aims to promote sustainable living while building bonds between neighbors.

Acting like an Internet matchmaker,



Brian Watanabe builds a trellis for green beans. Wasatch Community Gardens is unveiling a new program called Sharing Backyards. (Leah Hogsten / The Salt Lake Tribune)

gardeners post their extra space, or lack thereof, on the organization's website, said Allison Parks, WCG's outreach coordinator. The "ads" fit into an interactive locator map and searchers can click on those in their neighborhood to see what is available.

Gardening space is getting harder to come by as Utah's population increases, said Julie Peck-Dabbling, Salt Lake County's urban farming manager. The county has around 350 people on its gardening mailing list, and the wait for plots at one of Wasatch's gardens can be years long.

"People are just keenly aware of the need to participate in growing their own food and being good stewards of the earth," Peck-Dabbling said.

That principle is important to gardeners like Christensen and Watanabe, who share their plot with two other gardeners. They are trying to use organic methods, and test new varieties each year. This year they built trellises for yard-long beans and installed raised planter beds for their tomatoes.

The garden produces more than enough to share, Christensen said. So for this year's dinner to kick off the planting season, she took home-grown tomatoes out of her freezer and made enchiladas.

The program does have one caveat. There is no screening system or background check in place, Parks said, and gardeners who sign up are asked to abide by a good faith agreement. The onus is on gardeners to find a good fit, which has an upside.

"It can bring people together who haven't met or talked before," said Peck-Dabbling. "It's really at the core of community building."

For many, the benefits outweigh the risks. The Avenues gardeners all travel regularly, and it's nice to have someone to water and weed while they are away. It's also more enjoyable with a group.

"It doesn't feel like work," Watanabe said. "Working alone is tedious."

Interest in urban farming will likely continue to grow, Peck-Dabbling said. The county is looking at options to increase space, including designating plots in parks and rooftop gardens. She believes people are looking for an earth-friendly, and cheaper, way to put food on the table.

Gardener Christensen also expects demand to rise as baby boomers like herself retire. The self-described former hippy loves taking a political stance, but lacks the time and energy of youth. Gardening has become a form of free speech.

"It's making a political statement in the way you live every day," she said.

kdrake@sltrib.com

Share your backyard

Wasatch Community Gardens' Sharing Backyards program is available in Salt Lake, Weber, Summit, Cache

Click photo to enlarge



Gardeners Steve Rush and home owner Elaine Christensen... (Leah Hogsten / The Salt Lake Tribune)

- [Kagan to Senate foes: Ask me tough questions](#)
- [Motorcyclist dies in Summit County](#)
- [West Valley man dies in crash Sunday](#)
- [A political dynasty goes down; Bennett's loss end of era](#)
- [1-year-old girl dies after mom drove over her in Ogden](#)
- [After Utah, Kentucky next GOP test](#)
- [Golden Spike: A nation looked to Utah seven score years ago](#)

and Utah counties. For more information and to sign up, visit www.wasatchgardens.org and click on the "Garden" tab.

Gardening fairs and plant sales

Several community-sponsored plant sales and gardening fairs are taking place during May. These events are excellent places to purchase seedlings that grow well in Utah and to get free advice from experts on how to plant, water and grow a garden.

May 8 » Wasatch Community Gardens annual plant sale, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Rowland Hall Lower School, 720 S. Guardsman Way, Salt Lake City. Nearly four dozen varieties of heirloom tomatoes for sale as well as peppers, melons, cucumbers, eggplants, herbs, berries, flowers and drought tolerate grasses and landscape plants. Complete list of available plants at wasatchgardens.org.

May 8 » Gardening Fair from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Conservation Garden Park, 8215 S. 1300 West, West Jordan. Workshops and mini-classes throughout the day. Plant seedlings and garden products for sale. Children's activities and live entertainment. Free admission and parking. Complete schedule available at conservationgardenpark.org.

May 8 » Gardening Fair from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Sego Lily Gardens, 1472 E. Sego Lily Drive (10200 South), Sandy. Free water-wise plants to the first 100 families who visit this gardening fair. Free indoor and outdoor conservation kits while supplies last. Free classes on irrigation systems and native plants. Drawings for prizes held 10 a.m. to noon. Call 801-568-6087 or visit sandy.utah.gov.

May 8 » Red Butte Garden Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 300 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City. Sale takes place in the lower part of the garden, accessible from Red Butte Canyon Road. A variety of vegetable seedlings for the garden will be available, including many heirloom tomatoes and native plants. Those plants that suit Park City climate will have special tags. Members can shop May 7 from 1 to 8 p.m.

May 13 » Spring plant sale from noon to 6 p.m. at the Ogden Botanical Gardens, 1750 Monroe Blvd., Ogden. Purchase perennials, herbs, vegetables, annuals and water-wise native plants grown at the center and the Utah Botanical Center. Details at 801-451-3412 or utahbotanicalcenter.org.

May 15 » Spring plant sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Utah Botanical Center, 725 S. 50 West, Kaysville. Purchase perennials, herbs, vegetables, annuals and water-wise native plants grown at the center. Details at 801-451-3412 or utahbotanicalcenter.org.

May 15 » Seedling Swap and Sale from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Jordan Park (International Peace Gardens), 1000 S. 900 West, Salt Lake City. Gardeners can buy, sell and swap seedlings for their gardens. The event, sponsored by The Salt Lake City People's Market, takes place in front of the greenhouses. For details, visit slcpeoplesmarket.org.

Kathy Stephenson

[Return to Top](#)

RECENT COMMENTS:

5/3/2010 7:25:00 AM -- I love gardening. This is such a great idea, kudos to those who participate. [\[MORE\]](#)

5/3/2010 4:04:00 AM -- I like dirt. I can't seem to keep it out from under my nails. [\[MORE\]](#)

5/3/2010 3:48:00 AM -- Seems like you are either a gardner or not. Although I love to garden and eat and share the fruits of my labors, but many of my... [\[MORE\]](#)

[READ ALL 3 COMMENTS](#) | [POST A COMMENT](#) | [REGISTER](#) | [TRIBTALK.COM](#)

Was this article worthwhile?



+15
15 VOTES

[Test & Keep Free Gardening Products](#)

Join National Home Gardening Club. GardeningClub.com

[Salt Lake City Employment](#)

Local Job Openings Earn \$10.15-\$50.15 per hour www.localjobclassifieds.org

[Home Garden Grow Tips](#)

Do it yourself Garden help with Free design pictures & planting guides www.diyHomeGarden.net

Ads by Yahoo!

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [MNG Corporate Site Map](#) | [Copyright](#)

A MediaNews Group WEBSITE