



https://www.trentonian.com/news/first-time-gardener-freeman-enjoys-vegetables-of-her-labor-l/article_5f1feede-a960-11e9-86e2-1bc63b362090.html

FEATURED

First time gardener Freeman enjoys vegetables of her labor (L.A. PARKER COLUMN)

By L.A. PARKER laparker@trentonian.com @laparker6 on Twitter 6 hrs ago



Micah Freeman shows off cucumber and first garden at Isles' Tucker St. agricultural site in Trenton.

L.A. Parker - The Trentonian

Micah Freeman sounded like a proud parent as she showed off her garden on Tucker St.

ADVERTISING



"I have green peppers, cucumbers, string beans and hot peppers. It's my first garden and it's been special to watch seeds grow into plants. And then to see them produce all these vegetables," Freeman, who grew up on Houghton Ave. but never enjoyed the gardening experience, said.

Freeman, a registered nurse and supervisor of all nurses for Trenton public schools, joined other gardeners and plant lovers for the annual Isles, Inc. Garden Social which features harvests from local gardens and vegetarian dishes.

Freeman segued for a discussion about Johann Friedrich Oberlin and Louise Scheppler and their 1779 initiative that cared and educated children whose parents worked during the day. "So, yes, growing plants is a lot like raising children. You have to nurture and take care of plants and flowers just like with children. Schools should be like gardens for children," Freeman reasoned.

Freeman said she made a mistake for her first garden.

"Planted the seed to close together. But that's okay, you try and you learn. Next year I will spread the plants out," she promised, still proud about her small box garden.

Freeman said her garden is a hot topic with friends and family. "Sure, I take photos of my plants and put them on Facebook. I mean, this is exciting stuff," she said. Freeman moved her excitement needle upward as she lifted several leaves to find about six string beans ready for harvest.

Jim Simon, deputy director of Community Planning & Development, notes that the Tucker Street Garden is a valuable resource for the community to gain access to fresh food and learn about gardening and environmental stewardship. The half-acre garden serves as a demonstration, production, and training site for gardeners of all skill levels. Isles also offers hands-on gardening instruction through its Incubator Garden program. This Incubator provides workshops, leadership training, planting space and one-on-one assistance. Many of the crops harvested at Tucker Street are then sold at affordable rates at the Greenwood Avenue Farmers Market.

Isles' urban agriculture work addresses hunger, food access, and community disinvestment in Trenton by sharing tools, networks, and resources that empower residents and stakeholders to take action and make healthy choices. We support over 70 community and school gardens by providing technical assistance to local residents, teachers and students, and community-based organizations. Isles, also offers garden-based environmental education to schools and summer programs. Direct beneficiaries of this work include more than 200 community gardeners and family members, 45 teachers, and 1,100 students.

The Isles Garden Social delivered numerous dishes including vegetable stromboli, honey, from a bevy of bees living in the Tucker St. garden, cucumber and herb flavored water, chick pea and avocado dip, kale, carrot, parsley and scallion salad and homemade ice cream..

Residents can learn to garden by joining the Incubator Garden. Call (609) 341-4700 or access UrbanAg@Isles.org.

L.A. Parker is a Trentonian columnist whose son holds a part-time job at the Tucker St. Garden. Find him on Twitter [@LAParker6](https://twitter.com/LAParker6) or email him at LAParker@Trentonian.com.

Want local news?

Sign up for our newsletter and stay informed

LA Parker

[@LAParker6](https://twitter.com/LAParker6) on Twitter

Weather

