

A photograph of an elderly Black man with grey hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a blue and white striped sweater over a dark shirt and a light blue apron. He is crouching in a raised garden bed made of wooden planks, using a green-handled trowel to work the soil. The garden bed is filled with various green leafy plants. In the background, there are more garden beds, some with orange flowers, and a wooden fence. The scene is set outdoors in a sunny, bright environment.

# Eden's Farm

COOPERATIVE

# Farm Team



## Dena Corbin

A Certified Horticultural Therapist, certified in the Utilization of Therapeutic Grade Essential Oils for Holistic Transformation, a Master Gardener, and holds an Environmental Steward Certification from Rutgers University.

NATURALGROUND1.360@GMAIL.COM

## Amarilys Olivo

A workforce development leader with deep roots in urban agriculture and culinary entrepreneurship. I am committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in workforce development while advocating for sustainable farming and equitable food access.

AMARILYS.OLIVO.BEE@GMAIL.COM

## Bilal Walker

Bilal Walker is a dynamic leader in urban education, youth development, and philanthropy, with a focus on creating sustainable, community-driven solutions for marginalized populations. CEO of Al-Munir LLC, Bilal has transformed neglected urban spaces into thriving ethnobotanical farms.

ALMUNIRCONSULTING@GMAIL.COM

## Hashim Bennett

Carpenter, urban farming activist, educator and entrepreneur with experience in launching grassroots initiatives in schools and community-based organizations. A skilled & passionate educator with a proven ability to take projects from ideation through to development and execution.

PLANTSANDPONDS@GMAIL.COM

# Urban Agriculture Basics

## 1 Land Access in Dense Cities

In a city with limited open space, Newark's Adopt-A-Lot program gives community-based organizations temporary access to vacant city-owned lots for gardening and farming. While this initiative has supported grassroots green projects, most leases are renewed annually—making it difficult to attract investment or secure infrastructure grants that require long-term land control. Al-Munir has worked through this challenge for nearly five years at Eden's Farm.

## 2 The Fight for Long Term Land Tenure

Urban Seeds Grow is actively working to purchase and redevelop Eden's Farm, a 4,500 sq ft parcel currently licensed under the Adopt-A-Lot program. This acquisition would allow permanent infrastructure improvements and open the door for USDA-backed programs, commercial food production, and cooperative employment models. Ownership is critical to unlocking the farm's full potential and ensuring that the surrounding community benefits from a sustained hub for food, wellness, and workforce development.

## 3 Soil Quality and Raised Bed Solutions

Much of Newark's urban soil is compromised due to industrial legacies. To address this, Eden's Farm Cooperative relies on raised beds and imported, tested soil to grow food safely. Support from partners like NRCS and Greater Newark Conservancy has helped implement safe growing systems—but permanent solutions require greater infrastructure and long-term land security.

## 4 Land Access in Dense Cities

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# Urban Agriculture Basics

## 5 Water Access in a Utility-Controlled City

Urban farms in Newark rely on city-controlled water lines, with limited access and high fees. Eden's Farm Cooperative is working to implement drip irrigation systems supported by NRCS to manage water costs and reduce runoff. However, scaling water-smart farming requires both infrastructure and policy adjustments

## 6 Invest Newark A Growing Opportunity

Invest Newark, the city's economic development agency, offers tools like technical assistance and loan funds for small businesses. Urban Seeds Grow seeks to tap these resources to expand farm-to-market operations, including a food processing container and seasonal farm stand. These business ventures would create jobs, promote entrepreneurship, and circulate capital within the neighborhood.

## 7 Community Impact More Than Growing Food

Eden's Farm is more than a garden—it's a model for community resilience. Once redeveloped, the site will house container farms, a pollinator garden, a community teaching space, and a food production station for plant-based juices and body care. The farm will serve as a workforce development site for youth and returning residents, and a healing space where wellness, nutrition, and environmental justice converge.

## 8 Prioritize a Multidisciplinary Farm Team

To maximize the success and sustainability of any urban agriculture initiative, we recommend investing in a multidisciplinary team. At Eden's Farm, Urban Seeds Grow is modeling this approach by bringing together professionals with expertise in organizational leadership, environmental science, carpentry and irrigation, community engagement, and applied research. This team structure not only supports efficient farm operations and infrastructure development, but also ensures that programming is inclusive, data-informed, and culturally grounded. For urban farms to thrive as community assets, this kind of integrated, cross-sector leadership is essential.

# Photos



## Crop List

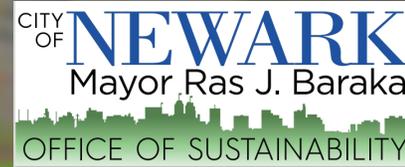
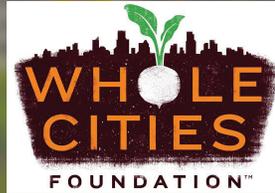
- Red Russian Kale
- Salad Bowl Lettuce
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard
- Cucumber
- Potatoes -early-
- San Marzano Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Cucumber
- Native NJ wildflowers
- Native NJ flowering shrubs
- Native NJ perennials
- Native NJ grasses and sedges
- Strawberries
- Red Russian Kale
- Potatoes -early-
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# Partners and Sponsors



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42 Elizabeth Ave  
Newark, NJ 07108