



## CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

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**For Immediate Release**

### **Garden Receives Grant from Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education**

**GLENCOE, Ill. (April XX, 2011)** – The North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Institute of Food and Agriculture, recently awarded the Chicago Botanic Garden with a grant to educate its visitors about how to integrate sustainable agriculture techniques into their own backyards. The Regenstein Fruit & Vegetable Garden (RFVG) will be one of the main locations where visitors can learn about sustainable agriculture, with additional events, programs and classes offered throughout the Chicago Botanic Garden. The grant funding will make possible the installation of a solar-powered irrigation system and water collection tank for irrigating a portion of the 4-acre RFVG, a demonstration garden for organic vegetable gardening techniques. This irrigation system will be designed to be replicable in home gardens to serve as an educational demonstration for visitors.

Events and programs that will educate visitors about sustainable gardening and sustainably-farmed products include the Farmers' Markets on the first and third Sundays of each month from June 4 through Oct. 16. This year will feature a larger more open marketplace as well as free 15-minute demonstrations on a variety of sustainable agriculture topics at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Visit [www.chicagobotanic.org/calendar/farmers\\_market](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/calendar/farmers_market) for a schedule of topics.

Two Farm Dinners will be held on July 13 and August 17, bringing together local farmers, winemakers, breweries and our own Green Youth Farm for a spectacular multi-

course meal. These dinners explore the relationship between the earth and the food on the table. Guests will meet the chef, farmers, winemakers, brewers and more during dinner. Cost is \$200 per person. Tickets will be available online or at the Visitor Center information desk starting on Monday, May 2. Price includes cocktails, appetizers, dinner and dessert. Hours are from 5 to 8 p.m. For more information visit [www.chicagobotanic.org/farmdinners](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/farmdinners) or call (847) 835-5440.

Family Drop-in Activities on Saturdays and Sundays from June 4 through Sept. 25 allow visitors to get close to nature and discover where food comes from with fun, free activities each weekend from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Activities vary from week to week, allowing children to explore a variety of gardening topics such as the role of a bees and other pollinators, growing organic fruits and vegetables at home, worm composting and more. Visit <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/forfamilies> for more information.

Classes through the Joseph Regenstein, Jr. School of the Chicago Botanic Garden include a family tour of a four season, certified naturally grown farm in northern Illinois as well as a class that meets multiple times throughout the growing season to teach families to grow vegetables together. The Heritage Prairie Farm Trip is from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 21 and takes participants through the farm including the honey apiary followed by a seasonal snack and drink as well as time to play in the open fields. Let's Grow Together encourages families to learn about and grow vegetables at home and compare them to the ones growing at the Chicago Botanic Garden. It meets Feb. 26, May 21, July 23 and Sept. 24. Visit <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/school/symposia/> for more information and registration.

Classes through the Windy City Harvest Program include short courses in urban agriculture held at the West Side Technical Institute. Classes include Seed Starting on Feb. 26, Season Extension Part 1 on March 26, Window Box or Container Gardens on April 23, Building Healthy Soil on May 21, Organic Pest and Disease Control on June 25, Seed Starting: Cool Season Crop Planning on July 30, Cover Cropping on Aug. 27, Tools for the Small Farm and Harvesting Techniques on Sept. 24, Season Extension Part 2 on Oct. 15, and Fruit Tree Pruning on Nov. 19. Visit <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/windycityharvest/courses.php> for more information and registration.

Interact with the Garden for this and other Garden events and programs:

- Blog: <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/grow>
- E-news: <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/enews>
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/chicagobotanicgarden>
- Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/chicagobotanicgarden>
- RSS: <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/feeds.php>
- Strategic Plan: <http://strategicplan.chicagobotanic.org/>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/chicagobotanic>
- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/chicagobotanicgarden>

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**Editors, please note:** The Chicago Botanic Garden's newsroom is online at [www.chicagobotanic.org/pr](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/pr). For digital images, contact Melissa Schuler at (847) 835-6829 or at [mschuler@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:mschuler@chicagobotanic.org).

*The Chicago Botanic Garden, one of the treasures of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, is a 385-acre living plant museum featuring 24 distinct display gardens and four natural areas. With events, programs and activities for all ages, the Garden is open every day of the year. Admission is free; select event fees apply. Parking is \$20 per car; free for Garden members. Located at 1000 Lake Cook Road in Glencoe, Ill., the Garden is smoke free. Visit [www.chicagobotanic.org](http://www.chicagobotanic.org), or call (847) 835-5440 for seasonal hours, images of the Garden and commuter transportation information.*

*The Chicago Botanic Garden is managed by the Chicago Horticultural Society. It opened to the public in 1972 and is home to the Joseph Regenstein, Jr. School of the Chicago Botanic Garden, offering a broad array of adult classes in plant science, landscape design and gardening arts. Through the Division of Plant Science and Conservation, Garden scientists work on plant conservation, research and environmental initiatives that have global impact. The Center for Teaching and Learning brings the wonder of nature and plants to children, teens and teachers. The Garden's Horticultural Therapy and Community Gardening programs provide nationally recognized community outreach and service programs. A program of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Windy City Harvest is an organic vegetable and plant production enterprise that provides instruction in sustainable horticulture and urban agriculture to residents of Chicago's North Lawndale and West Side neighborhoods.*

*The Chicago Botanic Garden is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is a member of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). The Chicago Botanic Garden is also host to Botanic Gardens Conservation International-U.S., and a member of the Center for Plant Conservation. In 2006, the Chicago Botanic Garden received the Award for Garden Excellence, given yearly by the APGA and Horticulture magazine to a public garden that exemplifies the highest standards of horticultural practices and has shown a commitment to supporting and demonstrating best gardening practices.*