

Student Gardens and Food Service



No race can prosper until it learns there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.
- Booker T. Washington

BON APPÉTIT
MANAGEMENT COMPANY
food services for a sustainable future®

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Introduction

A college or university is a truly unique place for intellectual growth and personal discovery. Amidst countless lectures, exams, and essays, a revolution is quietly taking form as students are cultivating student-run gardens. Maybe you are one of these individuals who is hoping to increase the availability of local and sustainable food on campus through the development of a student garden plot. You are systematically reinventing the stereotype of the college student as subsisting on ramen noodles and mac 'n cheese. Instead, you are demonstrating that students can improve their personal health, the health of their environment, and their sense of self-sufficiency by going back to the land. Through learning to sustainably cultivate any size of land, you are showing the world that you choose to take on the challenge of becoming part of the next generation of sustainable agrarians. Bravo!

How to Use This Guide

This guide was written by Bon Appétit Management Company, a leader in sustainable food service, to help student gardeners establish a successful relationship between your campus food service team and your student garden. We hope that through this relationship, you will gain a significant new market to which you can sell your produce. In the following pages, you will be offered suggestions and stories from fellow student gardeners who have worked with staff members of Bon Appétit, and found unique ways to create a thriving partnership. Please keep in mind that no single school has implemented *all* of these ideas on its campus. This is a collection of best practices that could be applicable to your college campus even if you don't have Bon Appétit Management Company as your campus food service provider.

We have decided not to discuss gardening logistics in this guide, but have instead provided a comprehensive reference list that offers many great resources that delve into these essential pieces of the gardening puzzle. We hope that the diversity of concepts offered here encourages and inspires you.

The guide is broken down somewhat chronologically into five sections. We hope you are all revved up and ready to go, and we look forward to tasting the delicious partnership as it begins to unfold!



Section One: Plan It

We tend to agree with the all-knowing Mr. Rogers who once said, “What this country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds.” However, before you put on your overalls and plant some heirlooms, you must sit down and talk to a food service representative about the relationship you are hoping to develop. (If you learn one thing from this guide, it is that successful communication is key!) So, single out the food service manager at your school and ask to set up a meeting with him or her.

Throughout the guide this food service representative will be referred to as your “go-to” person. If you are having trouble deciding who would be best to speak to, ask one of your school administrators or another student who has worked with the food service department in the past. This was the strategy taken by Dayna Burtness of STOGROW, the St. Olaf Student Farm; she contacted people in the St. Olaf College administration who pointed her in the right direction (the general manager of Bon Appétit at St. Olaf).

Make sure your first meeting with your campus food service team takes place well before the beginning of the growing season so you can flesh out the specifics while still having ample time to change your plans. Go in with an open mind and a willingness to consider the needs of the food service’s operations.

Setting Clear Expectations

So, you are now sitting down for the first time with someone from food service. First things first, know that they have chosen to work for a company whose dream is to provide sustainable food service with priority going first and foremost to locally-grown products. For example, one of the main reasons Beth Gentry took the position as the general manager of the Bon Appétit account at Colorado College was because she wanted to work with a college garden. Previously, she was employed by a garden and took the Colorado College position with palpable excitement about helping to solidify the relationship between Bon Appétit and the campus student garden. Most food service managers you seek out will be thrilled that a student has shown passion about an issue that he or she too thinks is incredibly important.

Consider beginning the conversation with an explanation of your goals for this project and be receptive to feedback. Don't be afraid of showing the passion you undoubtedly have for the potential of your garden. Don't think of this as purely a business meeting, but also as a way to get to know the person you will probably become very connected to over the next few months.

After you have gotten to know each other a bit, you and your food service go-to person should discuss both of your roles in this partnership. It will be very helpful to know what you can expect from one another, right down to such details as whether the carrot tops will be cut off before delivery. Just to get you started, here are some logistical questions you should consider discussing in one of your first meetings.

- ✓ Washing and Processing
 - How will the produce be washed and processed before it arrives in the café? (see "Sanitation" in Section Two for more details)

- ✓ Delivery
 - How often and when will the produce be delivered to the café?
 - Who will be in charge of delivery (i.e. will students bring it to the café or will food service come pick it up from the garden)?
 - How will it be delivered? Who will arrange for its transportation?

- ✓ Pricing
 - Will a lump sum be offered or will the price be determined weekly based on the going rate?
 - Will the price be based on organic or conventional rates, or a combination of the two?

- ✓ Promotion
 - How will the garden be promoted? Will the garden be proactive in spreading the word that it is selling to campus dining?
 - How will this promotion be done?

Make sure that you document the answers to these questions so that everyone involved has a clear record of what was discussed and it can be shared with those who were not able to attend the meeting. Please see the worksheet provided in the Appendix section which should help you keep a record of what transpired in this vital conversation.

Yearly Calendar

During this first meeting, it would also be advisable to provide your food service go-to person with a realistic crop rotation calendar and yearly action plan. Remember to be open to changing it based on the needs of your customer, campus food service.

A calendar will be a useful tool for discussing the yearly breakdown of your potential harvest and it will also remind you to discuss the seasonal issues of having a garden on campus. For example, for most geographical areas in the US, the majority of produce is harvested in the summer—not exactly an ideal time for business on a college campus! In this case, ask your food service go-to person whether he or she wants to purchase food grown during the summer. Will campus food service want to use your summer fruit harvest to make jams and preserves for peak academic times? Could they use the summer harvest for special summer group catering? Or will you have to arrange for other buyers to purchase the bulk of your produce during the summer? You should apply these questions to other vacation times during the school year, such as Christmas. See Section Two: Summers and Holidays for more ideas about this calendar-related topic and for ideas about who will man the garden during these academic down times.



Budgetary Constraints and Café Requests

Just as your conversation should delineate the yearly calendar and expectations, it is important to discuss your budget well before the beginning of the season. Finances vary significantly from garden to garden and it is important for your food service partner to know where you stand in this sense. How much money and land you have will contribute significantly to the amount of produce you harvest for

use in the café. Having a clear understanding of this will help your campus food service team know how to effectively plan for the year.

This discussion will most likely lead to a conversation about seed choice and produce requests. One question to consider upfront is whether you will be paying for your own seeds (i.e., through grants or club budgets) or if food service will contribute to this start-up cost. Regardless of who is paying for the seeds, if food service is to be one of your primary customers, their produce needs should influence what you decide to grow.

Questions you should consider:

- ✓ Would food service prefer for you to focus on growing according to the “salad bar model” (i.e., cherry tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, broccoli) or are they looking to purchase a wider array of produce (i.e., kale, bok choy, parsnips, heirlooms)?
- ✓ Would they rather you grow a large quantity of a few items or a smaller amount of a wider variety of items?
- ✓ Are there a few products they wish they could obtain locally that they find difficult to come by? Might you be the new supplier of these items (i.e., herbs or a specific heirloom variety of vegetable)?

These are the kinds of questions you should be asking yourself, and your food service go-to person, right from day one.

Liability Insurance

The health and safety of café guests is a high priority for all food service companies and is for you, as well. Food safety starts with proper growing, harvesting and delivering processes and also includes safe handling, preparation and storage. There are, though, unfortunate cases when accidents do happen, so as a company policy, most food service companies require all growers and processors to have adequate levels of insurance. This applies to farmers and suppliers of fresh produce, raw or frozen proteins, cheese and dairy products. As an operation on campus, your garden may be covered under your school’s insurance plan, but check with your administration to be sure your general liability insurance coverage is adequate.



Section One Summary

- **Set up a meeting with your food service go-to person well before the growing season.**
- **Make sure to discuss the logistics so you both have a clear understanding of what your roles will be in this partnership; set clear expectations.**
- **Go over the yearly crop calendar and discuss the seasonal issues that could arise (summers, vacations, holidays, etc.).**
- **Discuss your budget and have a conversation about seed choice and quantity of each variety. What should be purchased and grown that year?**
- **Be sure to obtain adequate liability insurance coverage.**



Section Two: Grow It

Regular Communication

Now you have gotten past the initial planning stage and are elbow deep in soil. Though you are in the midst of the fun stage of your gardening venture, you cannot forget to keep in regular contact with your food service go-to person. The most successful garden/café partnerships on Bon Appétit campuses exist when students and Bon Appétit staff members speak at least weekly, if not daily. These conversations do not need to be comprehensive, like your sit-down at the beginning of the year, but should enable both parties to give a quick update about what's going on in their respective neck of the woods.

Whether done by e-mail, phone, or in person, these updates are vital! Your side of the conversation might go something like this: "Hey [insert name of food service contact]. You wouldn't believe how many tomatoes we're harvesting this week. I know we thought they were going to be coming in a little later, but would you be interested in switching things around and buying them now? Yes? Perfect! I'll send someone over with them soon."

The flexibility demonstrated in the "conversation" above is natural for our chefs and managers because Bon Appétit menus are always based on seasonality and availability of regional fresh produce. Without prepared recipes and set menus, we can usually adapt what we choose to prepare at each meal based on the quality and availability of local ingredients. Bon Appétit chefs have become accustomed to the importance of adaptability when it comes to cooking with local produce. Ask your food service go-to person about their menu flexibility.

Don't be afraid to come back to the drawing board every now and again and change things around as the partnership develops. Make sure that the wants and needs of both you and your campus food service are being met. There's no way you can foresee some of the issues that will undoubtedly arise until they come up (i.e., you encounter an unexpectedly low yield, you have trouble transporting the produce to the café, etc.). Be optimistic, flexible, and communicate so

that the relationship between your student garden and food service is constantly growing in positive ways.

Professionalism

Being a student is all about trying out different clubs, courses, and toying with ideas for your future. Though this garden venture may seem like just an activity to you now, once you enter into relationships with customers, it is a business with real commitments and people who count on you.

It would be easy to quickly clean off your vegetables, throw them in a bucket, hand them to your food service chef and discuss what you consider appropriate payment. Many students have gone this route and chances are, the food service team at your school would gladly accept your offerings. However, according to Debi Wright, Bon Appétit's director of operations at Carleton College, by treating this student garden as a professional venture, you will command more respect and learn significant logistical pieces about the agricultural industry. Because more professional young farmers are needed, she tries to help students at the Carleton College Student Garden develop the business sense they need to stay above water now and in future ventures.

Debi mentioned that there are many ways to be taken very seriously in your farming business. One of the easiest methods is to learn to write a proper invoice and keep an invoice book. Consider using the invoice template provided in the Appendix section of this guide.

Pricing

Just as an invoice will make your operation gain legitimacy in the eyes of your customers, Beth Gentry, the general manager at Colorado College, feels that treating pricing with a high degree of professionalism is equally as important. Many beginning farms set their prices based on online figures or what they think is legitimate. But one of the helpful parts of having a close relationship with your food service go-to person is that he or she can help you determine the best price to charge for individual types of produce. This will be based on the going rate of other local farmers your food service purchases from. In Colorado College's case, they buy a large percentage of their produce from a cooperative of local farms. Beth makes sure to help the Colorado College Student Garden by getting a list of prices through these farms and sending this list to the students in charge of the garden so they can model their rates on these prices. This is just one example of how you can consider using the local contacts of your food service account to advance your knowledge and professional exposure.

Sanitation and Packaging

The first discussion with your food service go-to person should include expectations surrounding food safety, as stated in Section One. However, it will be discussed in more depth here because it is such an important issue.

When the Bon Appétit account at Oberlin College first began purchasing from the George Jones Memorial Farm, they encountered problems because the produce came to them barely washed. Rick Panfil, the general manager at Oberlin, discussed his specific sanitary requirements with the

student gardeners and, consequently, students began using a wash bucket for most produce and a repurposed washing machine as a tumbler to get rid of excess water.

Each café will have different requirements and requests due to the individual desires of the chefs and managers. Below you will find a description of some of the best practices used by student farms at Bon Appétit schools. They should give you some ideas about practices you should consider, but again, communication with your food service go-to person is key!

Washing the produce...

- ✓ Most types of produce should be cleaned *before* the crop is cooled to remove the field heat; however, the order of washing and cooling varies from crop to crop.
 - Crops that should be cleaned *before* cooling: green beans, peppers, field greens, cucumbers, broccoli, and most others not listed below.
 - Crops that should be cleaned *after* cooling: potatoes and root vegetables.
- ✓ Keep wash water cold (below 50 F). The only exception to the cold water rule is tomatoes, which should be washed in 50 degree F water (though some gardeners prefer not to wash tomatoes at all because they are very fragile).
- ✓ Use sponges to expedite the washing process for more fragile vegetables (i.e. tomatoes and stone fruits).
- ✓ Another option: clean root vegetables with a hand-sprayer hose to remove all dirt from the roots and the leaves (student Katie Blanchard from the Carleton College Student Garden estimates that the cost for their washing buckets, hoses, and fixtures was about \$100).
- ✓ Dry brush melons, garlic, and onions; do not wash these crops with water.
- ✓ Cabbage, okra, berries, peas, summer squash, and tomatoes may not need to be washed or dry brushed at all while still on the farm. They are very fragile and your Bon Appétit chefs may prefer you to leave the washing up to them. Discuss this particular aspect of the washing process with your food service go-to person.
- ✓ Your campus food service team will most often rewash everything, but try to deliver produce as clean as possible. Note: many students double wash field greens to ensure that they are exceptionally clean upon delivery.
- ✓ All water used for washing must be sanitized to reduce possibility of bacterial growth (see “Sanitizing the produce...” on page 11 for more details).



Cooling the produce...

- ✓ Cooling takes field heat off the crops and extends their shelf life.

- ✓ For a small farm, hydro-cooling (cooling with water) is a common option; it is fast, effective and can be very inexpensive.
- ✓ Though there are many forms of hydro-cooling, the recommended method is to submerge vegetables in large plastic tubs of ice cold water.
- ✓ Ask food service if they will donate some of their ice to your operation or acquire an inexpensive source yourself. If you purchase your ice elsewhere, you will likely get it at a discounted rate because you will be buying in bulk.
- ✓ Water used for cooling must also be sanitized (see “Sanitizing the produce...” below for more details).

Sanitizing the produce...

- ✓ A water sanitizer, such as chlorine, should be used to guarantee that the water remains uncontaminated (this also applies to washing the produce). Water breeds pathogens, so sanitation is a vital component of any hydro-cooling or water washing system.
- ✓ Make sure the sanitizer remains within healthy limits (4mg/L for chlorine). If this kind of sanitary precaution is taken, ice water can be reused. Use good judgment in deciding when water needs to be tossed due to an increase in dirt and bacteria.
- ✓ Commercial test kits are readily available to monitor the total residual chlorine (TRC) in water. These can come as test strips, color wheels, titration kits, and digital colorimeters.
- ✓ See http://www.cdc.gov/safewater/publications_pages/chlorineresidual.pdf for more information about TRC and methods used for testing.

Drying and sifting through the produce...

- ✓ Use an oversized salad spinner, much like the ones usually found in commercial food service kitchens (see image below). Ask your food service go-to person to purchase this 5-gallon spinner from a restaurant supply company. It costs approximately \$110 and will help you dry off your salad greens in preparation for delivery. You want to make sure



the moisture is out of the greens before they are weighed because water will add a lot of weight to the produce and skew the pricing. You don't want to charge \$6 for \$3 worth of produce because there is the equivalent of \$3 worth of water still in the bag.

- ✓ Sift through the produce, getting rid of bad leaves, dirty stems, and such. Though your café will most likely not want you to do any of the food prep (chopping the onions, etc.), offering them an attractive bounty is always appreciated.

Trimming the produce...

- ✓ Usually food service doesn't require or expect any kind of trimming of produce, though again, this is something that you should

clearly discuss with your food service go-to person. Like washing, however, it is a great idea to make your harvest as presentable as possible.

- ✓ This might mean leaving on the carrot, beet, and turnip tops, but cutting the stems of Swiss chard and greens. Use your judgment and discuss expectations with food service as this will not only affect the visual presentation of the produce but also the pricing due to altered weight.

Packing the produce...

- ✓ Many student farms use large plastic food service crates to pack and deliver their produce. Some farms use waxed bushel boxes for delivery, which are made of cardboard with a protective coating, but cannot be reused indefinitely. You may also want to ask the chefs at your Bon Appétit café if they would donate the cardboard boxes they have left over from past deliveries from small local farms. These crates can also oftentimes be obtained from a local food co-op. Any crate (milk, bread, clear plastic, etc.) will do for this purpose.
- ✓ Though most of the crates are coated or made of plastic (see photo), you should definitely line the container with a material such as recycled paper grocery bags to keep the produce as clean as possible. Keep the crates clean by hosing them off before and after



- each use so they can be reused.
- ✓ Keep in mind that packaging some items together can result in an undesired transmission of odors. When packaging produce, do not package apples or pears with celery, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, or onions...[or] celery with onions or carrots.

For more information about sanitation and food safety, see the Resources section at the end of this guide. A particularly useful guide is “Wholesale Success” by familyfarmed.org, from where we obtained much of the information above.

Summer and Holidays

As was briefly discussed in Section One of this guide, it is vital to know who will man the garden during the summer and academic breaks. You will want to know whether food service will still want to purchase the same amount of produce from you during these “off times” as they do

during the regular academic year. In the case of schools that have summer sessions and/or special conferences that take place during the summer, campus food service may be willing to purchase even more of your harvest than usual. On the other hand, if the school is fairly quiet during vacation breaks and summer holiday, you may have to find other buyers.

During the summers and over extended holidays, you will probably have to arrange for students or part-time workers to man the garden. If you hire interns, you have to decide whether they will be paid or unpaid. If they will be compensated, where will their stipends come from? These decisions should be fleshed out so that everyone is on the same page.



Colorado College: A Summer Garden Partnership

Beth Gentry, the general manager of Bon Appétit at Colorado College, is energetic and passionate about sustainable food. She's also a great listener, according to Annie Bossange, a leader at the Colorado College Student Garden (Farm Club). Bon Appétit's first summer on the Colorado College campus (2008) corresponded with the first summer the garden was able to stay open; it was only able to continue through the summer because of the energy and perseverance of four student interns. However, over the course of many conversations, it became apparent that not as many interns had been hired to man the garden over the summer as was necessary. The reason for this was simple: money. The Farm Club does not receive any funding from the College, and instead relies on grants, scholarships, and outside funding.

Because Bon Appétit is so devoted to supporting the garden and enabling it to continue to grow and thrive, they decided to fund one more summer intern during the summer of 2009. Through effective communication, a fair deal was established: Bon Appétit would pay the intern's stipend in exchange for the financial equivalent of produce during the sixteen weeks of the growing season. The Bon Appétit team at Colorado College does a fair amount of catering during the summer because of special programs hosted by the College, so there was no doubt that they could use the extra produce. They modeled their agreement after a CSA with the garden agreeing to give a certain number of "shares" to Bon Appétit each week. In the end, the amount of produce would equate with the one intern's salary. Beth and Annie have demonstrated one example of how student gardens and Bon Appétit can come up with innovative solutions to the "summer problem" that will keep the garden (and Bon Appétit) thriving throughout the whole year.



Section Two Summary

- **Continue communicating with your food service go-to person regularly by phone, e-mail, and personal visits.**
- **Present an invoice with your produce deliveries and treat pricing with a high degree of professionalism. Consider using the invoice template in the Appendix section of this guide.**
- **Discuss sanitation and packaging with food service and know exactly what is expected of the student garden in terms of washing, cooling drying, trimming, and packing the produce.**
- **Consider a trading program with food service: give them produce from the garden in exchange for their financing an intern or two.**
- **Have a conversation with your food service go-to person about summers and holidays, especially regarding the amount of produce they will purchase.**



Section Three: Promote It

An important (and fun) aspect of selling produce to your campus food service provider will be getting the word out to your friends that the food they are eating was grown in your garden. You will feel incredible pride when you see your lettuce displayed beautifully at the salad bar, but will probably be deflated if no one is aware that students tirelessly tended to the soil to create the beautiful greens. You should consider discussing promotional options with your food service go-to person. Just as we would with other local farmers, we want to help you highlight the produce that has been grown in your garden.

Here are some ideas to get you thinking about ways to make your produce shine.

Promotion in the Café

- ✓ Ask your food service provider to use **a unique sticker or sign** to designate meals served with ingredients grown in your student garden or **include the student farm name in the menu item description**. Consider using pictures of student workers so that diners can acknowledge that they know some of the people who grew the food they are eating. Though meals created around produce grown in the student garden could be considered “Farm to Fork,” Colorado College found that creating a unique sticker that is used in the café denoting the student garden’s produce was very helpful in increasing the garden’s publicity. Note: you should make sure that both you and food service have an understanding of when these stickers/signage will be used and who will be paying for them. If an entrée encompasses only 10% or so of ingredients grown on the garden, will this be considered too small of a percentage of the overall meal to use the sticker? You get the idea; make sure the expectations are known.
- ✓ Discuss the idea of **creating a separate station** for entrées featuring food grown in the student garden with your food service go-to person. This is a suggestion that may be difficult to implement when your garden is still in its preliminary stages. However, it could be realistic to have one station converted for this purpose once a week or once every couple of weeks.

Promotion in the Classroom

- ✓ Consider **offering a one or two day seminar** for students to examine the multi-faceted topic of agriculture and sustainable food. Single out a professor who has an interest in this area and offer to assist him or her in creating the syllabus and teaching the course. Offer to hold the course in the garden, making it both academically driven and experientially based; this will automatically bring people to the garden and introduce them to all that is transpiring on the plot. Make sure that the seminar discusses the budding relationship between the garden and campus food service so the participants will know that they can find your produce at the cafés on campus.

Peer-to-Peer Promotion

- ✓ **Reach out to other student groups** that you think might have an interest in your new relationship with food service. You may want to start by talking to the leaders of environmental clubs or social activism organizations. Chances are, one of your fellow student gardeners will be involved in one of these organizations. If so, have him or her talk up all the great work you are doing to enhance the quality of food offered in your campus' cafés. Get the word out that you are interested in cross-promotional activities. Once you have put out your feelers and have found an organization that is interested in your efforts, consider going to one of their meetings to explain the relationship you have developed with food service. Tell them that if they want to try the delicious food you are harvesting, to look for it in the café.
- ✓ On your student garden's website, consider **posting some ways food service has used your produce in its meals**. Include pictures, menu names, and what kind of produce was used to create the dish.
- ✓ Create a **twitter account** and update it with "news from the farm", including when you see a meal in the café that utilizes some of your garden's harvest. Enable multiple student gardeners to have access to the account so that there are always "eyes and ears" in the café that can keep other students updated when there is a dish that uses some student farm fresh products.





Section Three Summary

- Consider promoting the student garden in your campus dining locations by using unique stickers and signs, or creating separate stations.
- Offer a class for students interested in sustainable agriculture at the garden and promote your developing relationship with food service throughout the course.
- Tell other students about your effort to work with food service by developing partnerships with other sustainable organizations, posting related entries and photos on your garden website, and/or creating a twitter account.



Section Four: Bond over It

One of the most important things you can do for your garden is to develop a great relationship with the employees of your campus dining team. Make sure that you take the time to get to know the people you are working with at campus dining, because these relationships could truly help your garden to thrive!

Cross-Promotion

Your campus food service provider may host special events focused on eating local throughout the year. This may overlap perfectly with ideas you are trying to promote through your student garden, offering a great way to show your support of each other. Consider donating food to these food service events, and sit down with your food service go-to person to think of ways to schedule cross-promotions.

Garden Tours

Another great idea is to invite all food service employees (i.e., cooks, servers, cashiers, dishwashers, etc) to a private tour of the garden. Making them feel appreciated and included will do wonders in terms of their promotion of the garden. Just picture the difference it would make if a student came up and asked for a plate of sautéed vegetables, but wasn't aware where they were grown. If the employee serving that student had been to the farm and had seen energy put into growing the vegetables, it might make the difference between them serving the food quietly with their usual pleasant demeanor and them raving about how the food had been grown by students at the garden.

In addition, Debi from Carleton College wants students to know that the more you can get the Bon Appétit chefs involved, the better! They are vital to the creation of delectable meals that will highlight the unique flavors and seasonal freshness of your harvest; if the chefs are some of your garden's biggest fans, it will show in the food they create using your ingredients. Consider inviting them down to the garden, separately from the other staff, so they can put their hands in the dirt, see what you are growing, and discuss ideas they are developing for how they can highlight the ingredients they purchase from you. Maybe you (and other student gardeners) could make dinner with the chefs at some point, creating a social way to develop camaraderie and break down barriers.



Connecting with Local Farmers

There is no guarantee that anyone on your food service team will be skilled as farmers or gardeners. However, they may have other connections to local farmers in the area. This can serve you and your fellow student gardeners well by linking you with local farmers who could potentially offer internships, externships, and mentorships to student gardeners. For example, Peter

Abrahamson, the general manager of Bon Appétit at St. Olaf College, drove STOGROW students to a farm and introduced them to a local farmer. This farmer assisted the students in getting to the next level with their gardening initiative by discussing some of the techniques he had developed over the years to combat the issues of planting on the local land.

Especially if you or other students are just learning about gardening, it will be indispensable to connect with a few skilled farmers in your geographical area to help you iron out the logistics of the soil, water quality, and other aspects of your plot. Local farmers can teach you and other students about these topics on their farm or perhaps even at your school's plot. Consider inviting them to your garden; they may be willing to teach a group of students some of the skills they have learned over time. Your food service provider can help you in the initial stages of forming these contacts.

Carleton College: Building A Successful Relationship

When Bon Appétit first came to Carleton College, Katie Blanchard, a leader at Carleton's Student Garden, wasted no time seeking out her Bon Appétit go-to person. She started off by showing up in the kitchen with bins of free produce from the garden, which quickly contributed to her getting a first meeting with Debi Wright, the director of operations at the account. Katie was thrilled to hear Debi say, in only their first meeting, that whatever the student garden grew, Bon Appétit would buy! Throughout the growing season, Katie had an in-person meeting with Debi or one of the Bon Appétit managers once every two weeks and they made sure to email and call each other regularly. Now, a year later, Katie and Debi have developed such a profound respect for each other that they see each other as good friends in addition to colleagues. Katie's advice? In addition to making sure that you are clear about your expectations of each other and keeping up communication, try building a relationship outside of work. Make it your business to invite Bon Appétit employees to the garden, offer suggestions for joint programming, and consider donating food for various Bon Appétit events as a way of showing support.



Section Four Summary

- Put a tremendous amount of effort into creating a positive relationship with the food service team at your school.
- Consider cross-promotional activities during special “eat local” events hosted by your food service provider.
- Invite food service employees for a tour of the garden.
- Ask your food service go-to person to connect you with local farmers who may be able to offer advice about local agriculture.



Section Five: Improve It

Like your student garden, the relationship you will establish with food service will always be growing. It is for that reason that it is important to sit down with your food service go-to person, managers, and chefs at the end of each growing season to discuss the successes and pitfalls encountered that year. Try to address topics like sanitation (washing, trimming, and packaging), dependability, produce quality, professionalism, timing, communication, etc. Try to address the overarching question of what could be done to improve the relationship and make for a more successful next season.

At the culmination of your first season selling to food service, discuss how you can improve the repertoire of available produce you are offering them for sale. Do you want to stick to the same growing model (i.e., the salad bar model discussed earlier) or switch things up (i.e., offering more herbs or exotic foods)? These are all questions you, other student gardeners, and the campus food service team should reflect on at the end of each season.

Potential Composting Partnerships

Lastly, after you have ironed out the issues encountered during the first year, consider broadening your partnership with food service to include a composting initiative. This is another way in which the proximity of the café and garden will be beneficial for both parties. By collecting leftover food scraps from the cafés and using them to develop rich soil, you would be creating a closed loop system on your campus.

To implement a successful composting program, the food service provider at your school will have to separate its food waste from other waste and create and maintain a temporary storage system onsite. This can be a complicated endeavor, so be patient and offer to help. You will

have to discuss issues of transportation: how will the food scraps be transported to the garden and how often will this occur? Who will be in charge of this part of the process? It is also important to note that your potentially small garden may be unable to handle the large quantity of food waste created in the cafés. It is easy to get caught up in the excitement, but try to be realistic about how much compost your student garden will be able to handle. If you can only take half, for example, perhaps food service will be able to give the other half to an offsite composting center. There are many ways of getting around potential roadblocks, and the benefits of composting are too significant to give up at the first sign of difficulty.

Washington University in St. Louis: Taking it to the Next Level with Camp Kumquat

Jen and Katie (or Dragonfly and Chestnut as they are known at the Burning Kumquat student farm at Washington University in St. Louis) both studied abroad at eco-villages in India and Scotland, respectively. When they returned to school, they sat down to discuss their experiences with one another. After a few minutes, they realized that, though they had been on completely different continents, their experiences resulted in the same thought: they wanted to create a free urban farm camp on the Burning Kumquat garden plot. According to Camp Kumquat's literature, it was created to invite "a diverse group of 10-12 year old St. Louis youth to journey back to the land, or in this case, the garden. We explore healthy eating, discover the origins of our food, and reconnect with nature through garden games, documentaries, special guests, and hands-on creative projects."



Prior to their experiences with Camp Kumquat, Jen and Katie had heard only good things about the relationship that had begun developing between the student garden and the Bon Appétit account at Washington University in St. Louis. They knew that the Burning Kumquat sold produce to Bon Appétit during the academic year, but they had no idea how much this developing relationship would benefit Camp Kumquat.

When Jen and Katie went to Bon Appétit to ask them if they would consider donating funds to the camp, instead, Nadeem Siddiqui, the resident district manager of the account, offered to donate free lunches to all of the students in the camp. The camp is now in full bloom and, upon the request of Jen and Katie, Bon Appétit writes down the origin of the food prepared for the campers' lunches so that these 10-12 year olds can really experience and appreciate the feeling of eating "farm to fork." Once a week, Nadeem and the chefs at this Bon Appétit account use the

produce grown by the campers themselves to make the lunches they donate right back to the camp, creating a truly closed-loop system.

And if this dynamic was not unique and amazing enough, Nadeem stops by Camp Kumquat often to interact with the campers and join in on the fun. Nadeem and Camp Kumquat offer a perfect example of how developing a relationship with Bon Appétit can truly take your student garden plot to the next level in social effectiveness and in the progression of your Farm to Fork program.



Section Five Summary

- **Set up an end of the year meeting with your food service go-to person. Discuss the successes of the year and the ways both of you can think of improving your relationship for the next growing season.**
- **Consider setting up a composting partnership to create a closed-loop system.**
- **What other ways can you think of to improve your relationship with food service and get to the next level in your garden to café partnership?**



Concluding Remarks

While all of the ideas and suggestions put forth in this guide may seem overwhelming right now, please remember that no school has implemented all of these “best practices.” You have an amazing opportunity to take from this guide what you think will be the most helpful to you and your student garden and even come up with innovative ideas that have never been used or even conceived by anyone else!

By establishing a successful relationship with food service, you will ensure that college students are not only eating what is good and sustainable, but they are also forming an important connection between the food they put in their mouths and the ground from where it was grown. Though your garden may start off small, or you may only sell a small portion of your produce to food service, we hope this guide has demonstrated how vital we believe your initiative is to the future of our environment and our society. We look forward to seeing all the good you can do to the earth by simply putting down your textbooks every once in a while and digging your hands in the dirt. Happy harvesting!

Appendix 1: Planning Worksheet

Date:

Individuals present at meeting:

Seasonality and Seed Selection

- ❖ What kind of produce would food service ideally like you to grow? How much will they purchase on average per week?

- ❖ Would they prefer you to grow according to the “salad bar method” or harvest more exotic items? If so, what?

- ❖ Will food service purchase the same amount of produce during the summer and over holidays as they do during the regular academic year?

Preparation and Sanitation

- ❖ How should the produce be washed and processed before it arrives in the café? Will this differ depending on the crop?

- ❖ Will food service provide the ice necessary for hydro-cooling?

- ❖ How much trimming is expected of produce upon its arrival in the café?

- ❖ Does food service have specific sanitation requirements of which you should be aware?

Delivery

- ❖ How often and when will the produce be delivered to the café?
- ❖ How will it be delivered? Who will arrange for its transportation?
- ❖ Will food service provide storage boxes for produce delivery or will you be purchasing or acquiring these items elsewhere?
- ❖ Who will be in charge of delivery (i.e. will you bring it to the café or will food service come pick it up from the garden)?

Pricing

- ❖ Will a lump sum be offered or will the price be determined weekly based on the going rate?
- ❖ Will the price be based on organic or conventional rates, or a combination of the two?

Promotion

- ❖ How will the garden's produce be promoted? Will you or other student gardeners be proactive in spreading the word that you are selling to the campus food service provider?
- ❖ What kind of cross-promotion is possible?
- ❖ Is food service interested in a trading system? Would they consider financing an intern or two in exchange for an agreed upon amount of produce?

Appendix 1: Invoice Template

 (Name of Garden)

 (Name of Contact Person)

 (Phone Number)

 (E-mail Address)

 (Mailing Address)

INVOICE

Date	Invoice #

Bill To

Description	Quantity	Rate	Amount

Notes	Subtotal
	Sales Tax
	Total
	Payments/Credits
	Balance Due

Resource List

Guides about the logistics of starting a student farm:

1. Real Food Challenge Garden Guide
http://realfoodchallenge.org/files/College_Garden_Guide.pdf
2. Greenhorns Guide for Beginning Farmers
www.thegreenhorns.net/resources/greeacres.pdf
3. Going Local: Paths to Success for Farm to School Programs
<http://www.farmtocollege.org/Resources/LinkingFarmstoColleges.pdf>
4. New Farm (Rodale Institute)
http://rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm
5. Rodale Institute Farming For Credit Directory
http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/ffc_directory
6. Oxfam America's Buy Local Food and Farm Toolkit: A Guide for Student Organizers
http://www.sustainabletable.org/schools/docs/food_farm_toolkit.pdf
7. The Community Food Security Coalition's (CFSC) page on Farm to College programs
http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_college.html
8. City Farmer
<http://www.cityfarmer.org/>
9. National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service
<http://attra.ncat.org/>
10. Teaching Organic Farming and Gardening: Resources for Instructors, Center for Agroecology and sustainable Systems, University of California, Santa Cruz
<http://casfs.ucsc.edu/education/instruction/tofg/index.html>
11. College Farm Guide from The New Farm
<http://www.newfarm.org/features/0104/studentfarms/directory.shtml>

Student Farms Mentioned in this Guide

1. STOGROW—St. Olaf Garden Research and Organic Works
<http://www.stolaf.edu/orgs/stogrow/>

2. Colorado College Student Farm
<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/bulletin/Dec2006/farm.asp>
3. Carleton College Farm
<http://orgs.carleton.edu/farm/home.html>
4. The Burning Kumquat—Washington University in St. Louis Student Farm
<http://theburningkumquat.wik.is/>
5. George Jones Memorial Farm—Owned by Oberlin College
<http://www.georgejonesfarm.org/>

Sanitation and Food Safety

1. Wholesale Success: A Farmer's Guide to Selling, Post-Harvest Handling, and Packing Produce
<http://www.familyfarmed.org/retail.html>
2. Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower's Guide
<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/Educationalmaterials/Samples/FSBFEngMED.pdf>
3. Chlorine Residual Fact Sheet
http://www.cdc.gov/safewater/publications_pages/chlorineresidual.pdf

Funding and Grant Writing

1. Proposal Writing Short Course (The Foundation Center):
<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html>
2. USDA on funding:
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/funding.shtml>
3. Grants.gov
<http://www07.grants.gov/search/basic.do>
4. Kellogg Foundation: Grant seeking
<http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=63&ItemID=6&NID=41&LanguageID=0>

General Information about Sustainable Food & Sustainable Food Activism

1. Circle of Responsibility
<http://www.circleofresponsibility.com/>

2. Sustainable Table
<http://www.sustainabletable.org/>
3. Local Harvest
<http://www.localharvest.org/>
4. Seed Savers
<http://www.seedsavers.org/>
5. Eat Well Guide's Seasonal Food Guide
<http://www.eatwellguide.org/i.php?id=Seasonalfoodguides>
6. Food Routes
<http://www.foodroutes.org/>
7. Organic on the Green
<http://www.organiconthegreen.wordpress.com>