



APRIL 2020

The Club RML Community Garden



Far to the west in the Bitterroot Valley, Club RML is leading an exciting new environmental program for the Rocky Mountain Labs campus in Montana. Club RML has introduced a community garden for employees to grow their own flowers and vegetables! The garden consists of six individual plots, each 4'x6'. The summer of 2019 was the first year for the community garden and all six plots were reserved. At the conclusion of the first year, the community garden has grown tomatoes, bell peppers, spicy peppers, onions, spinach, kale, zucchini, herbs, strawberries, artichokes and various flowers.

The idea for creating a community garden was first presented to Club RML by a post-baccalaureate named Josh Kirsch. He was living in an apartment and wanted a space to garden. Club RML, as a non-profit satellite of the NIH Recreation & Welfare Association, found the idea very appealing and began collecting donations for the garden. A local contracting company, Jackson Contractors, helped build the garden plots by donating wood, soil and labor. Lifeline Farms, a local farm in

the Bitterroot Valley, donated 20 starter plants that were divided evenly amongst the garden plots. Each plot was available for \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis for 2019. These funds were used solely for maintaining the garden and purchasing gardening tools, compost and seeds.

It was expected most of the community garden participants would be in similar situations as Josh – temporarily living in Hamilton without a yard space. However, after soliciting the plots to RML staff, it became clear the plots were being reserved for a variety of reasons. Most of the plots were reserved by full-time Hamilton residents with varying levels of gardening expertise. One gardener has her own garden at home, but it doesn't receive enough sunlight to grow peppers. Another gardener had problems with deer eating her plants at home. One staff member reserved a plot primarily for the relaxation of tending the garden during her lunch break. There was also a postdoctoral fellow who, like Josh, did not have access to a yard for gardening.

The Club RML community garden was a great success in its inaugural year! These plots gave people an avenue to grow their own plants, regardless of their motivation. Club RML is very excited to see the community garden progress through its second year in 2020! If you would like to inquire about reserving a space in the community garden, please contact [Taylor Robinson](#). Additionally, if you are interested in learning more about Club RML activities, please consider subscribing to the [Club RML Listserv \(CLUB_RML-L\)](#) for regular updates.



TAKE ACTION



50 Years of Earth Day

The NIH is proud to support Earth Day and promote environmental awareness! Even though the COVID-19 virus outbreak has made it unsafe to gather in person, we have some ideas for supporting Earth Day individually at our homes!

[LEARN MORE](#)

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



2020 HHS Kid's Earth Day Poster Contest

HHS holds an annual Earth Day poster contest for the children of employees within its operating divisions. Read our full article to see the amazing creativity of these young artists!

[LEARN MORE](#)

NEMS TRAINING

Did you know? Growing your own food in a garden or buying local produce is a great way to decrease your carbon footprint. Doing this eliminates emissions from shipping and waste from packaging. To learn more about sustainability at the NIH, please visit the [NEMS Training webpage](#) to view a short (20 minute) NIH environmental awareness training video.