

# Keeping it Green

Notes from the SUNY Cortland Sustainability Office

November 2021

## Planning a Food Forest

Madison Chandler,  
Sustainability Office Intern

In April of 2021, SUNY Cortland Sustainability Office and Campus Artist and Lecture Series invited educator and food forest gardener, Johnathan Bates, to present his concepts of a food forest. Blurring the lines of organic farming, permaculture, master gardening, and resilience homestead principles, Bates shared benefits of enhanced biodiversity, reduction in maintenance, increased nutrition, and increased carbon dioxide sequestration. All beneficial aspects of growing a community of diverse plants together.



This year, SUNY Cortland has a unique opportunity to plan food forest landscapes around campus. We would like to build off of this core concept of growing a community of diverse plants together which echoes our campus commitment to diversity and community building. Coming to SUNY Cortland as a transfer student, I have felt an overwhelming sense of community between the students and staff, working together to improve our campus community. This semester, I have the great opportunity to work as an intern for the Sustainability Office, with a large part of my focus researching edible food forest gardens in

preparation for the construction of our own here on campus.

A forest garden encapsulates connection human with nature as well as with others using the garden. A forest garden is essentially an edible ecosystem that can be home to anything from your typical garden foods like tomatoes and squash to fruit and nut trees. And not everything needs to be edible to us; flowers and berries may encourage pollination and bird presence. They are usually of low maintenance and a sustainable way of food production. Agroforestry, agriculture incorporating the cultivation and conservation of trees/shrubs, will be used as a management system among the edible foods. Most of the plants in edible forest gardens are perennial, meaning they regrow every year. During the construction process everything should be well thought out in order to maximize the garden's success/production and the pieces should work together to build a strong whole multipurpose polyculture. It is important to mimic natural forest ecosystems and environment that these plants normally grow in to allow them to grow optimally. Despite forest being in the name, the garden must have access to sun and the tree canopy should not be too thick. It is possible to grow a food forest garden almost anywhere in the Eastern US in any type of location (urban, suburban, rural) if you have the proper vegetation.

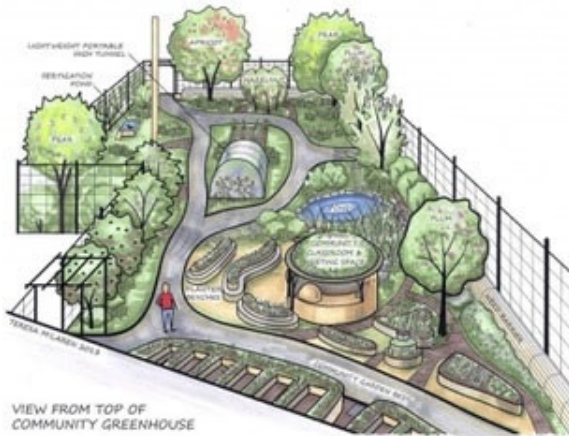
This unique way of way of gardening expands our horizons into a new and "home grown" food source for our campus. It is a type of permaculture, meaning a science and problem-solving methodology including ethics, principles, and decision making. One intent of building a forest garden

*continued*

**If you have a question or comment about sustainability at SUNY Cortland, an idea for a story, or a sustainability-related event you want to share, connect with us at [Sustainability@Cortland.Edu](mailto:Sustainability@Cortland.Edu)**

## ***Planning a food forest, continued***

is resilient food production in the midst of a changing Climate. Another can be as a source for renewable energy generation. You can also cultivate a forest garden in a greenhouse, a more controlled environment. Gardens are for people of all ages and all backgrounds. If you are interested in getting involved with the construction of ours on campus, stop by or contact the Sustainability office. We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas.



## **Campus Re-Use**

Myia Tyler, All-Campus Green Representative

One of the main items to focus on for the Campus Green Representatives this semester, was reuse. But what exactly is reuse? Reuse is the action or practice of taking a used item, and then using it again for its original or an altered purpose. Without even knowing it, the majority of us have items we are reusing. As we wrap up the fall semester, we should consider what items we or others could reuse for various purposes. The main benefit of being able to reuse and extend the life of an item is that we keep that item from filling up our landfills and it keeps a new item from being created, which would only further consume more natural resources. If you, your peers, fellow students, have items to donate to a reuse program, this is a perfect time to donate items you no longer want as you are moving out of your dorms or leaving off-campus housing! The Green Reps will be encouraging reuse and donation collection in each residence hall as we

get closer to the end of the semester.

This year, Cortland Reuse, will be the local not for profit that will be collecting item for off-campus students. Cortland Reuse has been around for a few years, but they have only had a physical location for about 6-months. Cortland Reuse is located at 245 McLean Rd in Cortland. Their phone number is 607-543-4010 and website: <https://cortlandreuse.org/> Items may be dropped off for donation during their regular hours: Hours Mon: Closed, Tue-Sat: 10am - 4pm. Sun: Noon-5pm



We are excited to have a brick and mortar location for our local reuse economy to grow. You may want to consider Cortland Reuse as an alternative to your holiday shopping, who knows what gems may be found!

## **Greenhouse Open House**



As the days grow shorter, and the cool evenings come earlier, wouldn't it be nice to have the opportunity to see and connect with growing plants that haven't gone dormant for the winter again? On Thursday, December 2, 2021, join Dr. Steve Broyles and Sustainability Office Intern Madison Chandler for a Greenhouse Open House. This event is open to all students, faculty, and staff, at the on-campus green house, outside of Bowers Hall, December 2 between 2:30 pm and 3:30 pm. Come check out which plants we are growing, how they are able to grow in the greenhouse climate, learn about the purpose of our greenhouse, and maybe even get some tips to care for some of your own plants!

**RED IS GREEN**