

BEN FRANKLIN COMMUNITY GARDEN

Ben Franklin Community Garden

Be a part of this nurturing culture! Gardening at Ben Franklin offers multiple health benefits in a convenient, urban retreat, a way to connect with nature and a special community, volunteer opportunities, and of course, fresh vegetables!

To apply for a plot call 216-446-5155, or email grow@benfranklincommunitygarden.org.

Find the Garden
1905 Spring Rd, Cleveland 44109
behind Ben Franklin School, between
Broadview Rd and the Jennings Fwy (176).

Find the Garden online
benfranklincommunitygarden.org
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Ben Franklin
A Cleveland Landmark

Ben Franklin Community Garden is a jewel in the crown of Cleveland's Old Brooklyn neighborhood. Established as a community garden in 1981, through an agreement between the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) and the Cleveland Board of Education, it is one of the largest and most productive garden sites in the city.



Today the garden has more than 200 individual plots, covering 500 square feet each. The garden is enrolled in Cleveland's Community Gardening Program, Summer Sprout, a partnership between the City and Ohio State University. Every effort is made to promote an environment where local gardeners work together to grow needed food, support each other, and continue a tradition that roots and supports the surrounding community. Each season residents from across the county, who come to Benji to garden, share the bounty by donating as much as or more than 5,000 pounds to local hunger centers and food pantries.

The Ben Franklin Garden, or *Benji*, as it's known, has a long history and a notable tradition. It was in 1919 that the land that would become the school and gardens was purchased by the Cleveland Board of Education. The school was built in 1923 and the 5 acres in the rear were dedicated to garden use, originally as a nursery. In 1924 the first horticulture classes were taught to students. Part of the grounds became a tract garden in the Cleveland Public Schools garden program, which author Joel Mader describes as "the most successful, innovative, and copied program in the United States." After the schools ended the program in the wake of financial difficulties in the late 1970s, the tradition of growing in this serene, eco-friendly urban site was taken up by the community garden. Now, the Garden has received Urban Garden District zoning.



Besides the tilled 3 acres, the grounds include a wooded area with a distinctive variety of trees and a small orchard. Master Gardeners from the OSU Extension maintain a student horticulture program garden, a Perennial Garden, an Herb Garden and a Demonstration Vegetable Garden. A charming garden classroom has been renovated and is still in use.



The community garden now has a small garden plot of perennial native flowers beside an enclosed area for beekeeping. Ben Franklin school and garden have been designated as a Cleveland Landmark. The grounds are a Monarch (butterfly) Waystation and a Certified Wildlife Habitat®.



Become part of the legacy of the generations who have gardened at Ben Franklin! Discover the pride and spirit of the gardening community and the joy and satisfaction of stewardship and preservation of this remarkable eco-friendly urban space.