

“What starts from seed in the spring grows the best tasting food.”

Maggie Goeglein, Youth Program
Edna Martin Christian Center, Indianapolis

Soil Health Advocate



The Edna Martin Christian Center serves youth, teens, and senior citizens in the garden program, providing access to fresh produce, intergenerational teamwork, and life-skills building in the gardens. This 76-year-old non-profit organization provides

wrap-around services to near eastside residents, and acquired the 12-acre site in 2016 to begin the Leadership and Legacy program for youth and seniors. For the community, this once lead-contaminated property has been brought back to productive use through the gardens, bee hives, and more, thanks to clean-up efforts by the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). The large land area allows EMCC to try many soil health and gardening techniques, from raised beds to pollinator plantings, working with a wide variety of community members and exposing them to own food.



Above: Students planting seeds in raised beds; Left: Garden Club member shows off cucumbers grown in the garden.

The EMCC garden has been possible because of the extensive cleanup of soil by the US EPA, after decades of contamination from a nearby lead smelter. It was excavated and two feet of contaminated soil removed with clean soil brought in. Soils that test positive for high lead contamination require clean up, or gardeners should take other precautions, like a barrier layer and raised beds or container gardening, to avoid lead exposure from the produce grown.

EMCC Leadership & Legacy Program

Size: 12 acres, 8 4'x8' raised beds, 5 planter benches, and two standing height beds.

Type: Urban garden

Operations: 1 part-time employee, and 1 part-time intern

Practices: Mulch, trap plants and pollinators

Benefits: Reduction in weeds and pests, moisture retention, bee and butterfly pollination.

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