

**University of D.C.**  
**Final Activity and Outcome Summary for the 2011-2014 State Program Project**  
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**Project Title:** Using sustainable agricultural techniques to produce food in the urban gardens of the District of Columbia (emphasis on ethnic and specialty crops)

**Performance Target**

- 20 urban growers from 38 community gardens in the District will participate in ethnic crops production training using the established demonstration plots at the UDC Muirkirk Research Farm in Beltsville, MD and learn sustainable production techniques.
- These urban growers will grow some of these high value niche crops in their community garden to support the local farmers markets and ethnic restaurants.

**Outcomes Reported**

- **1 Extension educator in WV**, located close to the UDC Muirkirk Research Farm, hosted a full-day site visit with the UDC SARE coordinator to consult with 4 producers who are interesting in learning more about how to produce ethnic crops for their farm markets.
- **An educator in Virginia** who coordinates a Burundian immigrants farming project is using information learned through the project to help the 10 farmers expand production. Farmers are planning to increase production next season from 2 to 5 acres and plant species from 5 to 15. **This participant summed up the value of the DC program to his constituents in this quote:**  
*The SARE Project at UDC is having a direct impact on the Burundian immigrant farmers as the technical assistance increases their understanding of the food production processes in general and ethnic and specialty crops in particular. To have access to the best practices and knowledge is one of the reasons why they plan to experiment with a variety of African plants to increase their share market of the African and Caribbean demand for this specialty foods. The program looks very promising, thanks to SARE Project and UDC.*
- **A Masters candidate in Nutrition and Dietetics** who learned how to grow and harvest African crops through the DC state program is identifying the phytochemical and nutrient composition of the vegetables for her thesis.
- **A trainee with an ethnic crops distribution company** called HAM is working with the DC state program to identify ethnic crops growers to supply produce for their market channels, which the company plans to increase from 15 to 30 stores in 2015.
- Collaborations have begun with additional educators and farmers in nearby states (MD, WV and VA).
- Began a Sustainable Agriculture Certificate program; 12 individuals have completed program, to date.
- Coordinated ethnic food tasting events in conjunction with a USDA Federal, State Market Improvement Programs grant project at UDC.

Project Milestone Activities Conducted	Participants
Demonstration plots at UDC Muirkirk Research Farm	70 Ag service providers including Extension, USDA personnel, non-profit and industry reps. 16 farmers/gardeners 500 other individuals
10 Workshops/field days	
2 Presentations	
2 Field trips/tours	
Ethnic foods tastings	
Fact sheet on African ethnic crops	

**Trainings have been conducted in the following topics:**

- Best practices for producing African Ethnic crops
- Benefits of value chain in production of African ethnic crops
- Business aspects of farming African Ethnic Crops, i.e., the value chain, benefits of high quality compost, considerations of increased in area of production.
- Strategies for getting nutritional value information for the African Ethnic Crops.