Introduction
Founded as a Green Fund project by a group of undergraduates in 2009, the garden serves as a shared educational space for the Penn and West Philadelphia communities. Participants learn about and explore organic agriculture, sustainable food production, and the botany of urban ecosystems. Open workdays are held every week during the summer months, and a variety of events, workshops, and gatherings are hosted during the Fall, Winter, and Spring.

Project Goals
The original goal when we first took on this project was to promote the Penn Community Garden in hopes of helping the Penn community at large engage more with the conversation of environmental sustainability. We hoped to accomplish this through
- Increased participation in garden events such as cleanup dates

However, as the gardening season does not follow a time frame as the academic year this was especially hard to accomplish. Generally, gardening takes place during the later half of the spring season and harvesting begins when the fall semester begins. Additionally, since the garden did not fall under any specific parts of the university, it was hard to find contacts in accomplishing tasks. By the second semester our goal had changed from promoting the Penn Community Garden to being able to maintain the garden. To accomplish this we wanted to:
- Develop mentorship opportunities between ourselves and garden experts
- Learn about basic gardening skills such as planting transplants and correct watering techniques

Methodology
1. Research information needed about the Penn Community Garden
   a. Learn about garden’s past and events that worked
      i. One of the best events that worked when Sarah McFarlane was in charge of the garden included those that had Arts and Crafts.
2. Launch our first pilot: Testing different communication mechanisms to reach out for the garden.
3. Research on how community gardens worked on other campuses
   a. Obtained data on numerous schools and found Bryn Mawr was the most similar to our garden
   b. Visit Bryn Mawr and learn about what works/obtain contacts
4. Research on how to plant transplants and harvest seedlings of crops: including youtube videos and online databases
5. Administer a garden survey
6. Launch second pilot (Scavenger Treasure Hunt) to determine if themed events worked better than garden clean up dates
7. Begin implementing beautification: including signage
** Met with mentor (Sarah McFarlane throughout)

Results and Evaluations

**Pilot 1: Penn Community Garden Clean-Up**

In our first pilot, our goal was to obtain participants that would engage with the garden and hopefully return. Since the harvesting season was near its peak and there was a lot to do for the garden, we did not have an opportunity to run a clear survey that would give us guidance. Our mentor Sarah McFarlane at the time proposed that we set up a cleanup day and promote this to our peers to determine the general population’s interest for the garden. To promote the event we reached out via Facebook and invited members of the Penn community to our event. Additionally, we reached out to different environmental groups such as SSAP and Ep Eta to help us on our cleanup date. Through this method of promoting, we found that an overwhelming number of students were interested in working in the garden and working to make it a green hub on campus. Unfortunately while the forecasts seemed favorable in the days before, a few hours before the event the forecasts shifted and it began to pour. Therefore, our event did not have any participants. Still, after the storm had cleared we had a number of our interested parties reach out to inquire about working in the garden. Thus, we still found that there was an overall interest in working on the Penn Community Garden.

**Research Findings**

After our first pilot, we made sure to engage in research to get a better idea about what the Penn community knows about the garden. We obtained 37 responses to our survey. We were looking to understand how the Penn community currently engages (if at all with the garden). Our questions also looked to seek what events would interest students in the future. In this survey we asked the following questions:

- Are you aware of the Penn Community Garden?
- Do you know where the Penn Community Garden is located?
- Have you participated in the Penn Community Garden?
  - If yes, how did you participate/what did you do?
- Would you be open to participating?
- Select which of the following you would be interested in:
  - Party at the Garden (lights and all)
  - Lecture on Edible Weeds
  - Harvesting and taking home produce
  - Having a Chop competition at the Garden
  - Plant N Learn
  - Clean-ups

In our findings, we were most interested in the first two questions. In terms of awareness, we found that 45.9% of respondents were aware that the Penn Community Garden existed.
However, only 35.1% could name the location of the garden. This signifies two things. First, there is a need for a sign at the garden, which is currently being worked on. Secondly, we noticed the need for promoting the exact location of the garden. Since the garden is hidden behind bike racks and trees, it can be difficult to find.

*Please look to the appendix for graphics on findings.*

**Pilot 2: Scavenger Treasure Hunt**

After our first pilot for the cleanup, we conducted a survey that found that students in the Penn Community did not enjoy cleanup activities as much as other themed events relatively. For this reason, in our second pilot we wanted to make an event that was entertaining while also accomplishing the goal of cleaning up the garden. We hoped to see that themed events would help get more people to the garden. At the time one of the vegetables that needed to be harvested were Jerusalem Artichokes. After some time we thought that a Scavenger Treasure Hunt for the artichokes would help to both entertain students while also finishing our harvest. Sadly, only two people attended the event. Through Facebook we created events and shared it on multiple Penn groups including class pages and other personal pages. We learned that it seemed that word of mouth that we found through our first pilot was still really important to getting participants to the garden. Additionally, scavenger treasure hunts may not be seen as a “fun” activity on a college campus.

**Main Findings from Bryn Mawr**

- Make sure to have different positions for garden maintenance and social awareness of the garden. Bryn Mawr has garden coordinators whose job is to specifically care for the space. However there is a different department that works to make sure there is active participation.
- Themed events have the best turn out.
- Hire summer coordinators. Most of the gardening occurs during this time and it does not match with the academic year!
- Create a folder at the beginning of the year with a list of plans and dates of events. This will make sure that as the year progresses you always have ideas and expectations. It also helps when trying to prioritize!
- Creating workdays can help create consistency for continuous participation.

**Recommendations**

*Create Relationships with Other Penn Organizations*

Before hosting our events, we had a number of individuals reach out about getting engaged with the Penn Community Garden. However, when it came time to having events it was hard to attract
people to the garden to help with clean ups. We think that by partnering with other Penn organizations we can minimize the chances that students will not show for clean-up events. Particularly, we found that Epsilon Eta, the only environmental fraternity on campus, was interested in working with the garden. In working with them, we were able to create a committee for the garden. Moving forward, they would be a group to invite to work days.

Create a Garden Club

If partnerships with other Penn organizations are not successful, we would recommend creating a Penn Community Garden Club. This club would have a President, VP, and Treasurer, among other positions; this would give a core group of people responsibility over the maintenance of the garden. We find this to be the #1 priority in order for the garden to remain active.

Appendix

Key Stakeholders & Contact

- **Partners**

  - *Gabrielle LeBlanc*: Gabi is the summer coordinator for the Penn Community Garden for the summer of 2017. She is working through the months of April until August to help plant in the garden as well as create events.
    - Contact: gabrielle.c.leblanc@gmail.COM

  - *Chuck Lazarus*: Chuck is a senior in the College that works with the Farm at Bartram’s Garden. He is looking to build a relationship with the garden. Particularly, he has mentioned donating the Farm’s compost to the garden.
    - Contact: ericlaz@sas.upenn.edu

  - *Joshua Darfler*: After Sarah McFarlane left as our coordinator, we reached out to Josh to help us learn more about gardening. He currently works at the Biopond and has access to a greenhouse that is used to store plants used for experiments. He agreed to help mentor us on restoring the garden and even helped us obtain a soil test!
    - Contact: jdarfler@sas.upenn.edu

  - *Ankitha Kannad*: Ankitha is a current student at Bryn Mawr. During our research learning about gardens we contacted her to help us understand how to build a community at Penn. We had the opportunity to meet her at the garden and learn about the ways that they engaged the community including cultural events and
themed clean-ups. She is willing to also come help work on the garden in the future and is excited to continue working with us!

Contact: akannad@brynmawr.edu

Graphs & Findings

Are you aware of the Penn Community Garden? (37 responses)
Have you participated in the Penn Community Garden? (37 responses)

Would you be open to participating? (22 responses)

I would be interested in the following events (34 responses)