



# Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden

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In 2006 Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB), College of Marin (COM), UC Cooperative Extension-Marin, and other partners embarked on a landmark project to establish the Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden—a 5.8-acre certified organic education farm and garden located at College of Marin's Indian Valley campus.

As the first education and training center of its kind in Marin, the Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden will be instrumental in:

- Providing skill-based, entrepreneurial education and green job training opportunities for sustainable agricultural, landscaping, and horticulture professionals.
- Teaching middle, high school, and college students, CCNB corpsmembers, and local residents about the health and environmental benefits of eating local sustainably-produced food.
- Showcasing innovative sustainable growing and living practices for the people of Marin.
- Transforming the lives of underserved youth by providing hands-on green job training and work study opportunities.
- Improving community health by providing underserved families with affordable organic produce.
- Fostering collaboration between Marin nonprofits, local government agencies, and farmers working in sustainable agriculture/food systems, community health, and youth development.

After years of planning and preparation, CCNB and our project partners opened this valuable community resource to the public in spring 2009. Through its many educational offerings, community projects, and public demonstration gardens, the Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden will provide valuable educational opportunities for an estimated 2,000–3,000 people per year once operating at full capacity.

The Farm & Garden's main programs will include:

## **Hands-on Agriculture & Food Systems Education for Middle & High School Students**

The Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden aims to provide 2,000 middle and high school students annually with hands-on garden projects and food systems/sustainability lessons designed to teach them about the interconnectedness of healthy food, environmental sustainability, public health, and related career opportunities. Students will take part through CCNB's Project ReGeneration summer youth program, after-school Cesar Chavez Service Clubs serving Title I schools, our Youth in Environmental Service program, school field trips, and community service days. Student garden projects and food systems/sustainability lessons will be led by CCNB's AmeriCorps members, UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, local farmers, and other community partners. Studies show that youth who participate in garden-based nutrition education and school garden programs double their overall fruit and vegetable consumption, among other environmental, academic, and personal benefits.

## **Training the Next Generation of Sustainable Agriculture and Horticulture Professionals**

The Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden will also serve as the cornerstone for College of Marin's (COM) Sustainable Horticulture program, which offers college courses and hands-on training for young people in sustainable agriculture and horticulture. Course offerings will include topics such as:

- Horticultural Science & Systems
- Permaculture
- Healthy Food Systems
- Vegetable & Fruit Production
- Organic Disease & Pest Management
- Soil & Water Management
- Environmental Landscaping
- Pesticides
- Environment and Human Health
- Plants, Genes, & Global Food Production
- Composting
- Farm Management

Enrolled students will be able to earn an Associate's Degree or Career Certificate.

## **Green Jobs Training for Young People**

The Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden will provide CCNB's corpsmembers with valuable year-round work study, job training, and education opportunities designed to help them obtain jobs in some of Marin's fastest growing green jobs sectors. CCNB's corpsmembers are young adults primarily from underserved communities. As part of their work-study experience at the Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden, corpsmembers will be responsible for maintaining the garden infrastructure and completing local watershed and creek restoration projects in the southern part of the garden site.

## **Community Learning Opportunities**

Additionally, the site will host a variety of public workshops in sustainable horticulture and healthy food systems, which will be taught by COM, UC Cooperative Extension-Marine Master Gardeners, local farmers, and other guest lecturers. CCNB's AmeriCorps members will also publicize and lead hands-on community volunteer days at the site. The general public will also have the opportunity to participate in docent-led and self-guided tours of the Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden's many demonstration gardens and sustainability exhibits.

## **Affordable Organic Produce for Low-Income Communities**

As part of the learning process, students will explore models of food marketing including Community Supported Agriculture and Farmers Markets. The local Farmers Markets in low-income communities, such as Marin City, San Rafael's Canal District, and parts of Novato may offer the organically grown produce at affordable prices.

*For more information on the Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden project, please contact Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden Manager Bethallyn Black at (415) 454-4554 ext. 163 or at [bblack@conservationcorpsnorthbay.org](mailto:bblack@conservationcorpsnorthbay.org).  
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