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One WorldCafe gets some help from friends

Organic garden: A fan volunteers to grow and donate produce; One WorldCafe gets help from its friends

Jillian Doria The Salt Lake Tribune

Some just say "reap what you sow." Others, such as Steve Scott, put the words into practice. In his case, a restaurant's vision of assisting the poor inspired Scott to sow a community garden in downtown Salt Lake City to help the endeavor.

Scott and the owner of **One World Cafe**, Denise Cerreta, transformed a vacant lot at 613 E. 100 South into a garden filled with organic-grown crops, ranging from tomatoes and lettuce to okra, which is usually grown in the South, said Cerreta.

The garden helps supply organic produce to the **One World Cafe**, located nearby at 41 S. 300 East, and for other people who need food.

Cerreta's restaurant has gained national attention for its unorthodox format: There are no menus or prices. Diners fill their plates with as much or as little as they like of what Cerreta has decided to make from organic ingredients on hand, and then pay what they think the meal is worth or what they can afford.

"The garden is a result of the concept here [at the restaurant]," Cerreta said. "Everyone wanted to do something good to help support the business."

A few months ago, Cerreta realized she needed another way to supply more food for her restaurant. She had always dreamed of leasing an organic farm in Woodland, but the deal fell through.

Then three perfect strangers all happened into the cafe the same day. Within hours, one offered a vacant lot, the other offered to pay to install a water system, and Scott, a master gardener who works for a nonprofit health organization, offered to plant it.

"I just feel this is the right thing to happen," Cerreta said, describing the events leading to the garden's creation as "magical." "This cafe isn't just about feeding a community; it's about building a community."

In May, Cerreta and Scott started preparing the lot for the garden, but tilling the ground proved more difficult than they had anticipated. The lot, which has been vacant for almost 100 years, had huge rocks from an old house foundation.

All the plants, most of which were donated by an area nursery, are grown organically. Scott, who manages the garden, uses organic compost, which functions as a slow-releasing fertilizer that naturally

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replenishes nitrogen in the soil.

Scott also installed a "trickle" irrigation system, in which slow, steady drops of water drip on plants for at least two hours every four days. The main benefit of trickle irrigation is that it saves water by directly putting water on the plant, Scott said.

Among the more unusual crops in the garden, about 70 feet wide and 100 feet long, are cardone, which is a fresh salad grain, and lemon basil, a chef's delicacy, said Cerreta.

"The garden freshness adds a dimension to the cafe," Cerreta said.

But the garden isn't just about feeding people. It is also there to be enjoyed by people such as residents of a nearby assisted living center who take regular strolls, commenting on how much they love the plants and miss their own gardens, Scott said.

"It reaffirms our humanity to work in the garden," he said.

The garden has also affected Kristina Allred of Olympia, Wash. She was planning to pass through Salt Lake City, but the **One World Cafe** and the garden kept her here. Cerreta hired her to work as a chef and waitress, and in return, Allred helps in the garden.

"It was a labor of love," Allred recalled. "It use to be an ugly lot, now it is beautiful."

Caption: Steve Scott checks out some fine basil plants among the many vegetables he has planted as a labor of love in what was once just a weedy, rocky lot along 100 South. He gives the vegetables away to **One World Cafe**, where patrons take what they like and pay what they can afford.

Al Hartmann/The Salt Lake Tribune

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