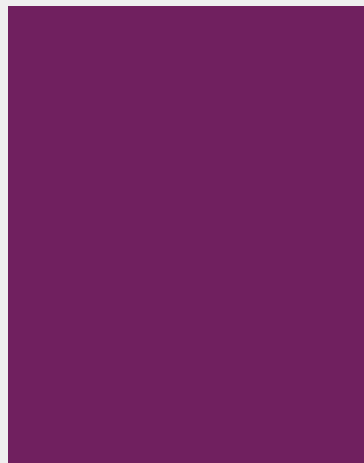


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# Mission

Crabtree Farms of Chattanooga is a community-driven organization whose mission is to expand access to locally grown food, provide farm-based educational opportunities, and cultivate community.

# History

Nestled in the heart of Clifton Hills, just outside of downtown Chattanooga, this 22-acre urban farm has been a beacon of sustainable farming practices and a hub for community since its inception. Crabtree's approach to urban farming and community connection was seeded in 1998 through partnership between local visionaries—the landowners and the City of Chattanooga. Over the years, the farm has evolved, but the core values of being a place for all to Grow, Learn and Connect have remained steadfast.

The land on which the farm exists was historically stewarded by the Ani'-Yun'Wiya or Cherokee people who were forcefully removed throughout the 1800s and later a plantation where enslaved people were forced to work. We acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory on which Crabtree Farms resides.

**We believe that acknowledgement is but a first step in beginning to heal the wounds of our past. Moving forward means that we must be intentional in our efforts as a community organization to help grow a healthier, stronger, and more equitable Chattanooga.**

Working towards food justice for all, especially those disproportionately affected by systemic oppression, colonization, and racism, must be a guiding force in carrying out our mission.



# From the Interim Executive Director...

Dear Friends of Crabtree Farms,

It has been an honor to have worked with Crabtree Farms in one capacity or another for the past four and a half years....Moving to a new city in the middle of the pandemic and getting started in a new field showed me even more that organizations like Crabtree Farms are crucially important. I saw this as a space where folks can safely gather—a place where anyone is welcome to come and learn, no matter their background or previous experiences. I see this as a place of opportunity, grace, and healing.

Those who have been in the local food scene of Chattanooga have probably witnessed the procession of ideas, programs, projects, initiatives, partnerships, classes, and functions that have flowed through Crabtree Farms over the last 26 years. There are many times I have heard, "what exactly does Crabtree Farms do?" As I think about the whole history of this place and of all the many stories that intersect here, I would say, "a lot."

Crabtree Farms is an important part of this city, and I know we have helped shape the local and regional food system of this area....Crabtree continues to open its gates wider as a place to gather, to share, and to learn. With each new person who comes here and interacts with us, Crabtree Farms continues to evolve. We are an urban farm and we sure do grow food, but we also exist to foster community connections and provide education in sustainable urban agriculture.

I hope that in my time here as the Interim Executive Director, I too will continue to evolve. I am assuming leadership during a time when the organization is working through a deep transformation in an attempt to root out and heal some of the issues that have stood in the way of its effectiveness over the years.

...I am grateful to all of the hands who have shaped this land, have been held by this land, and continue to support Crabtree Farms. I am grateful to be given the opportunity to grow, learn, and connect with all of you.

Lena Banks  
Interim Executive Director, Crabtree Farms





# Programs

Your support of Crabtree Farms provides nutritious options for those who need it most. It seeds food security and education across Chattanooga. You've inspired volunteers, interns, and workshare participants to grow alongside us and they've inspired us with their dedication and shared wisdom.

Your generosity is guiding four aspiring farmers through seed-to-market production with access to free land, tools, and expert support here on our farm. Most importantly, your support cultivates connection to food systems, our environment, and to each other...ensuring Crabtree Farms remains a hub for community connection.

## Crabtree Community Garden

**40+**

households

&

**6**

partner  
orgs

utilized our community garden beds and connected with other community members growing flowers, vegetables, herbs, & more.

**\$38K**

of free growing spaces, supplies, food, and bilingual education were provided to the farm's most immediate neighbors.

## Mary Navarre Moore Emerging Farmer Mentorship Program

**4**

aspiring farmers joined our first ever cohort in our new program engaging in seed-to-market production with access to free land, tools, and expert on-farm support.

## Educational Offerings

**856**

local youth participated in farm-based education, introducing them to the wonders of food production, the conditions necessary for food to grow, and the insects, and the soil and compost required for urban food to flourish.

**1.4K**

volunteers (including one-time and returning) and workshare participants worked alongside our staff members in the Greenhouse & Urban Farm.

**667**

adults joined Crabtree Farms in exploration of land connection practices, food and herbs as medicine, gardening/land management basics, and homesteading activities in on-site workshops.

**Educational Offerings, continued****7K+****hours** of hands-on farm and gardening education with volunteers and workshare participants inspired to grow alongside us.**Greenhouse****2K+****plant starts** were donated to neighbors, schools, and other community garden programs, seeding food security and education across Chattanooga.**43K****plant starts** were grown for our spring and fall plant sales, urban farm, and community gardeners.**Urban Farm****1K**  
LBS**fresh, organic produce** donated to local community fridges and other food distribution centers—providing nutritious options to those who need it most.**6K+**  
LBS**fresh, organic produce** brought to market, including the weekly Main Street Farmers Market and our on-site seasonal farm stand.

## Special Events

We brought together over **3,500 members of our community** through free events, potlucks, and creative projects, reinforcing Crabtree Farms as a hub for community connection.

🌱 **Spring Plant Sale & Festival** - the 24th Annual Spring Plant Sale & Festival, a much loved annual event on the farm, continued to grow. This three day event fostered new and continued enthusiasm to home gardeners and farmers with a selection of over 150 plant varieties selected to thrive in our region.

🌱 **Annual 100 Dinner & Auction** - Bringing together over a dozen food and beverage partners, 45 auction and event sponsors, over 50 volunteers and 200 guests, this farm to table dinner showcased the best of the best in local culinary and beverage service talent while raising essential funds to support the programming happening through Crabtree Farms. As a celebration of local food, prepared by local talent, we claim this as the most delicious fundraiser of the year!

🌱 **Fall Plant Sale and Festival** - the 22nd Annual Fall Plant Sale & Festival, a continued tradition on the farm was the most successful to date. Spanning two days full of cold-hardy plant starts, diverse craft and food vendors and family friendly activities, we are excited to continue the expansion of this annual fall-favorite day on the farm.

## Land Stewardship

- We have expanded cover crop methods and this winter there is **43,000 square feet of farm field space under cover crop**, nurturing and preparing the soil for future production needs.
- We are excited to share that **75% of the MNM Emerging Farmer Participants have embraced utilizing cover crop systems for the first time** in their 30 x 90 feet plots of land over this winter.
- With the exception of our high tunnels, our crops are on a **2-3 year crop rotation cycle** with seasonal field use as follows — two seasons under production, 1-2 seasons field under cover crop (or sitting fallow).
- **The farm continues to use drip irrigation**, sourced from the well on the property, as its primary watering method.
- In the spring of 2024, we **reduced tillage and tractor field preparation by 50%** for approximately 3,000 square feet of row crop space. In the fall of 2024, we continued on this trajectory and prepared 30,000 square feet with cover crop to prepare the land for the spring and summer 2025 seasons.
- In 2024 we saw the fruits of our labor as the permaculture garden installed last year has begun to take root. **Twenty-one of the twenty-six varieties making up the installation survived their first full season**, amidst significant drought. The raspberries produced their first fruit allowing the community gardeners to enjoy their first harvest from this space in which they played a key role in bringing forth.
- We have successfully made the shift to staff-led compost management on the farm and manage two static and windrow piles. One Johnson-Su Reactor has been built and after **harvesting over 160 pounds of self-produced worm castings**, we discontinued the program because of time limitations and challenges with the worm castings bin.



# Community

Our urban farm is not just about growing food, it's about growing community, connecting people to the land, and building a healthier, more sustainable city.



Nothing in nature lives for itself.  
Rivers don't drink their own water.  
Trees don't eat their own fruit.  
The sun doesn't shine for itself.  
Living for each other is the rule of nature.

- Hindu proverb







# Challenges & Needs


We appreciate and need you. Donor support is crucial for nonprofits like Crabtree Farms because those resources provide the flexibility to allocate money where it's needed most, allowing us to adapt to changing circumstances, respond to emergencies, invest in organizational development, and maintain operational stability. Running an urban farm with a ratio of 10 volunteers for every 1 staff person effectively and efficiently requires cooperation from staff, volunteers, and the environment. We do what we can to predict and prepare, but unconventional times and Mother Nature insist on their own timing.


**We can't do what we do without your support, and we are grateful for each of you who show up through supporting the initiatives below.**

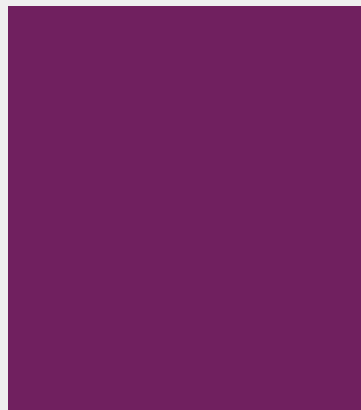
 **Sustainer Program** - For Crabtree Farms to become self-sustaining through individual donations, we need to continue to grow a strong base of recurring donors. Sustainer supporters donate monthly, and in exchange, are offered engaging donor experiences several times during the year, helping us build strong relationships within our community.

 **Staff Recruitment and Retention** - Crabtree Farms has fallen behind national averages surrounding personnel wages, which puts us out of alignment with our value of supporting our workforce. We need unrestricted funds to provide our team with competitive wages to attract and retain qualified talent, reduce turnover costs, ensure quality service delivery, and ultimately achieve our mission effectively.

 **Volunteer Labor** - Crabtree's programs rely upon a 10:1 volunteer to staff ratio. Our most basic, core programs and functions are not possible without intense dependence upon outside labor. Looking for ways to get your hands in the dirt or assist in bringing an event to life? We need you!

 **Aging Infrastructure/Equipment** - Current operations are challenged by frequent stops to fix, work around, or abandon tools, equipment, and infrastructure-level resources that have failed or broken in some way. Crabtree staff and volunteers are exceptionally good at problem solving and adapting on the fly, however, being able to quickly pivot to ensure continuity of operations is imperative to our mission.

 **Untapped Development Resources** - We need your help in finding untapped funding resources to ensure sustainable funding and growth at Crabtree Farms, allowing us to access new sources of income beyond traditional donors, which are limited and/or competitive, and to expand our reach and impact.

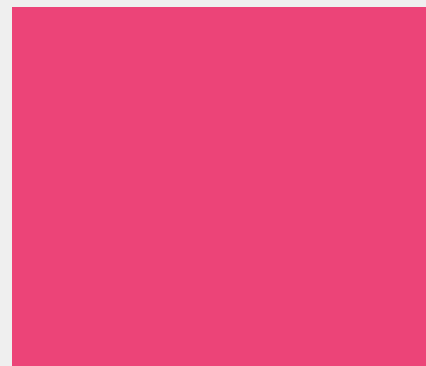


### Areas You Can Help!

- **Corporate partnerships:** Connect us with businesses that share similar values for collaborative partnerships and sponsorships.
- **Foundations with niche interests:** Create linkages to foundations that focus on the specific areas aligned with the Crabtree Farm's mission.
- **Peer-to-peer fundraising:** Leverage your personal networks to join you in supporting the meaningful work happening through Crabtree Farms.
- **Online giving platforms:** Utilize crowdfunding websites to create your own movement and fundraise for the farm.
- **Community engagement initiatives:** Consider Crabtree Farms for your next gathering – rent the Evelyn Center space or join us for a team building service activity.

Thank you for sharing your resources. Your contributions of time and money are vital to our efforts toward creating a healthier, more vibrant urban environment for everyone in our neighborhood. We invite you to visit our farm to see firsthand how your support is making a difference in our community.





# Partnerships



**La Paz Chattanooga, Clifton Hills, and East Lake Elementary Schools** play a crucial role in connecting our neighboring communities to Crabtree Farms through bookbag campaigns, farm-hosted meet-and-greets, media campaigns, and other engaging activities.



The **Chattanooga Area Food Bank (CAFB) and Met Min** have been key partners in addressing food access, with a shared focus on food production and distribution. Their collaboration enhances Crabtree Farms' efforts, utilizing CAFB volunteers alongside our team to harvest, package, and deliver produce to Met Min, where neighbors can freely select fresh food.



The southern regional **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program and the Southeast Tennessee Chapter of the National Young Farmer's Coalition (SETNYF)** are helping Crabtree Farms bring the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) program to Southeast Tennessee, offering a 10-part educational series for farmers starting in 2025.



Thanks to **Trust for Public Land's** flow funding initiative, we partnered with **Clifton Hills Elementary, Ella Library, Net Resources Foundation, and the Food Forest Coalition** to support community gardens and food access in Alton Park and Clifton Hills, involving over 30 families in planning, planting, and harvesting.





**Nature Kin Farm and Forest School** has grown into a strong on-farm partnership, providing outdoor learning experiences for school-age children.



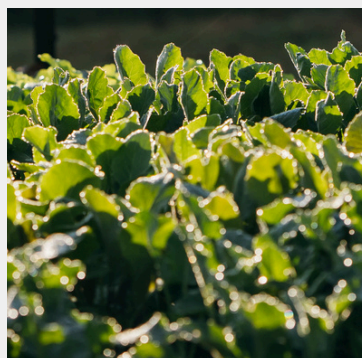
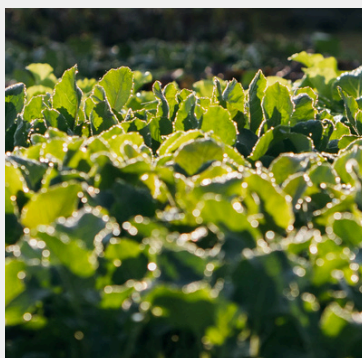
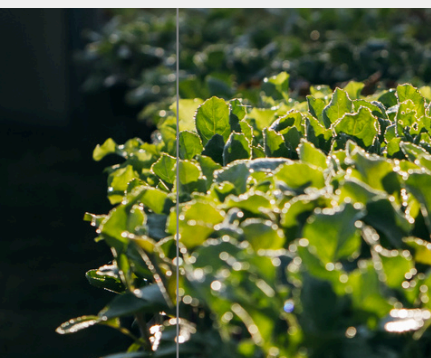
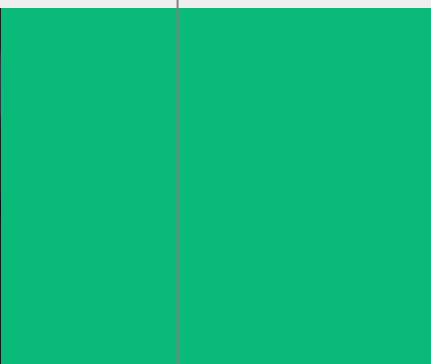
Our partnership with the **University of Tennessee Extension** is valuable for exchanging information, providing technical assistance to the farm, offering educational opportunities for our MVM Emerging Farmers, and helping shape their future work through listening sessions.



The **Master Gardeners Program** continues to blossom as their program participants learn and earn their certification credentials while bringing many much needed hands to assist on a daily basis around the farm.

### Other Partners:

BLVD Action Committee  
 Chattanooga Food Policy Coalition  
 City of Chattanooga Parks & Rec Department, National Park City Initiative  
 Pop Up Project  
 TN Aquarium  
 Tivoli Theater  
 Reflection Riding  
 Thrive Regional, Natural Treasures  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)



# 2024 Corporate Sponsors

EPB

HHM

Kubota of Chattanooga

Landrace Bioscience, Inc.

Lupi's Pizza

Merchant Land Holdings

Southeastern Trust

The Barn Nursery

T.T. Wilson Co.

Wholefoods Market

# Other Funding Partners

Bobby Stone Foundation

Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga

Southern Regional SARE Program

Trust for Public Land

United Way of Greater Chattanooga

USDA/NRCS Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Program

Weldon F. Osborne Foundation





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Chloe Dente, Youth Education Coordinator

Annemarie Gero, Greenhouse Manager

Christiana Key, Volunteer and Adult Education Coordinator

Meghan Lewis, Administrative and Event Coordinator

Lauren Russek, Farm Facilities and Land Stewardship Coordinator

Sarah Wiatrek, Greenhouse Assistant

Jocelyn Zapato Ruiz, Community Food and Land Access Coordinator



## Get Involved

We would love to have you experience the farm soon! Become a sustaining member, check out our website for volunteer opportunities & group volunteer days, experience a workshop, come to one of our plant sales, or book our Evelyn Center for your next event.



[\(423\) 493-9155](tel:(423)493-9155)



1000 E 30th St, Chattanooga, TN 37407



[www.crabtreefarms.org](http://www.crabtreefarms.org)

CRABTREE FARMS



GROW • EDUCATE • CONNECT