

2025

# THE PILOT GARDEN: CAIRO'S FOOD DONATION GARDEN

Annual Report



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# ABOUT US



The Pilot Garden: Cairo's Food Donation Garden is a partnership between University of Illinois Extension, Daystar Community Program, and Southern 7 Health Department. Established in 2021, the garden has received over \$77,000 in donations, grant funding, and volunteer time. Community volunteers have given over 1,800 hours of time to planting, tending, and harvesting produce. To date we've grown over 5,600 pounds of produce, all donated to Daystar Community Program.

## 2025 Highlights

Pounds grown: 1,347

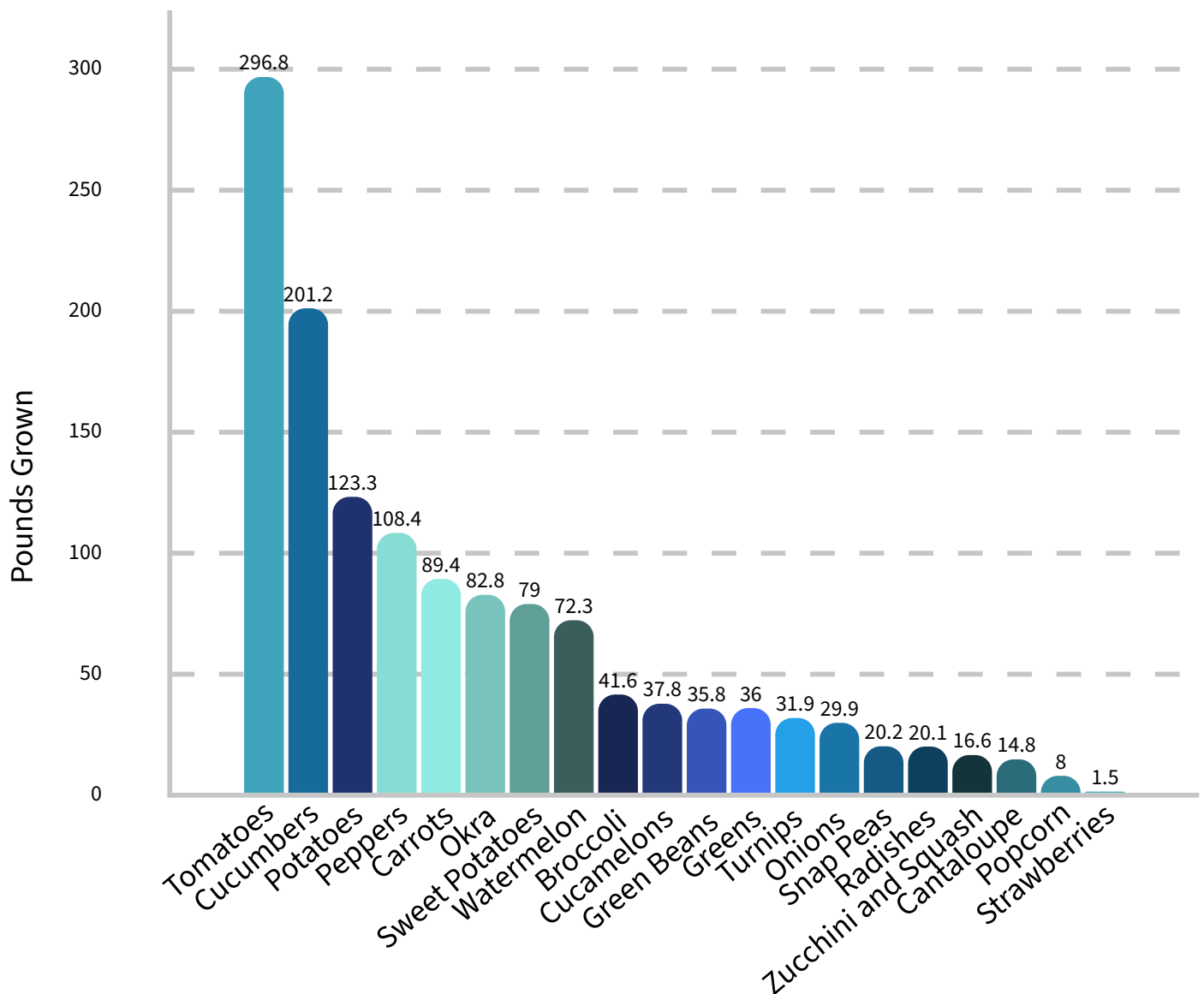
Volunteer hours given: 440

The Pilot Garden: Cairo's Food Donation Garden entered its fifth year of growing. Master Gardener Tammy Horn joined the volunteer team this year, along with returning volunteers Deb Davis, Derek Eurales, and Retha Eurales. Several volunteer groups, including Loyola Academy, Shawnee Development, and NAACP, participated in workdays at the garden. Jordi Oliver, a summer intern, and Kara Nichols, extra help, both with Illinois Extension, joined our garden team this year.



# BY THE NUMBERS

This year, the garden produced 1347 pounds of produce, all of which was donated to Daystar Community Program. See the breakdown of what we grew below.



# GARDEN TALES

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The NREE team continued to offer Garden Tales to Cairo Elementary students during select months of the school year. Between 50 and 150 students attended each month. This year classes voted to plant different themed beds, like miniature gardens and rainbow gardens.

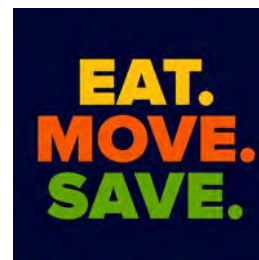
Master Gardeners Patti Powell and Tammy Horn assisted with program delivery. SNAP-Ed staff offered youth different dips and seasonings to try on fruits and vegetables during tasting days.



# SNAP ED

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Nutrition education provided by SNAP Ed staff was delivered at both garden and pantry sites, teaching our neighbors new and easy ways to prepare and store the harvested produce. Participants were provided take home recipes and had opportunities to taste test a recipe featuring ingredients from the garden.



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