EKU’s Red Barn Garden and Orchard - a Hands-on Learning Laboratory for Horticulture Students

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Background Information

- Red Barn Garden and Orchard (RBGO) is a five-acre fruit and vegetable garden on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in Richmond, Kentucky.
- The project began as an outdoor laboratory for students to apply classroom knowledge gained in the fruit and vegetable courses taught in the horticulture program.
- In 2015 a kitchen garden (Fig. 1), gourd tunnel (Fig. 2) and one acre of tomatoes, pumpkins, beans, peppers, zucchini, cucumbers, onions, corn, and several cole crops (Fig. 3) were established.
- By the end of 2016, an additional two acres were planted including a small fruit orchard consisting of apples, pears, peaches, plums, brambles, and blueberries (Fig. 4) and two high tunnels were built (Fig. 5).

Hands-on Learning

- Students in the OHO 373 (Fruit Production), OHO 374 (Vegetable Production), and OHO 375 (Post-Harvest Handling) courses within the fruit and vegetable production program at EKU use RBGO for lab activities to gain practical experience (Fig. 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8).
- Lab activities include:
  - Fruit and vegetable variety selection
  - Irrigation design and installation (Fig. 8)
  - Ground preparation and planting fruits and vegetables (Fig. 4, 5, & 7)
  - Crop management - including fertilizer applications and pest monitoring
  - Vegetable harvesting, post-harvest handling, and marketing (Fig. 6)

Product Marketing

- Products from the garden are promoted through the RBGO Facebook page and in the campus daily e-newsletter.
- Students market and sell produce from the garden through a variety of venues on campus and in the community.
  - A roadside stand situated by the Horticulture facilities is open on Thursday afternoons (Fig. 9).
  - Produce is delivered to EKU’s Café Burrier for their weekly lunches.
  - Students maintain a booth at the Madison County Farmers’ Market on EKU’s campus.
  - RBGO staff and students developed and facilitate a “Farm to Office” program allowing faculty and staff on campus to order produce online and have it delivered directly to their office.

For More Information
Visit the EKU Red Barn Garden Facebook page