



## Weeding Out Class

Students are growing gardens for grades in a horticulture class that allows them to eat their homework.

•Photos by Rony Angkriwan•

Lindsey Inman, a junior horticulture major, works with the tomato plant she is growing at the Horticulture Farm for her vegetable crop class.

BY SHEA WIGGIN  
THE BATTALION

Broccoli, lettuce, carrots, beets and many other vitamin-rich foods that should be consumed six to eight times a day are being cultivated and harvested by a Texas A&M horticulture class.

The vegetable crop class takes its lab time to the Horticulture Farm across from the Veterinary Medical Center to learn how to plant, weed, and use different forms of pesticides, and how to grow their own vegetables.

The class displayed its gardens to the public on Friday, offering participants a variety of dips, breads and breads cooked with homemade vegetable oils.

The tour guides said each student is responsible for the growth and supervision of a 100-foot row of vegetables.

Rebecca Kemp, a junior horticultural development major, said the instructor, Dr. Joseph Novak, senior lecturer in horticulture, tells the class what to plant.

"Some students produce their vegetables organically, using chemicals as pesticides," Kemp said. "Others use natural products, like manure, to grow their vegetables organically."

Kemp said there is a lot of work involved in growing the crops.

"I like the class because at the end you have something besides a grade to keep," Kemp said.

Rachel Zammit, a sophomore horticulture major, said the class teaches how vegetable crops

have productive, nutritive and commercial values.

"We learn something new every week," Zammit said. "For example, we learned that in Europe people desire white celery, while here we eat green celery because it is higher in nutritive values."

Zammit said the first week the students who grew their vegetables organically had to use a wheelbarrow of manure to start their fertilization. The acid in the manure helps prevent weeds from taking over the vegetables.

The organic matter also creates a higher quality of soil, which produces a higher quality crop.

"Organically grown vegetables look better, taste better and are much bigger than inorganic vegetables," Zammit said.

Zammit said she has learned how to identify pests and will use her gardening experience when she has her own garden.

Melanie Tipton, a junior horticulture major, said a majority of the class members are growing their vegetables organically.

"I like to do things environmentally sound — that is why I grow mine organically," Tipton said.

"There are interesting alternatives to pesticides," Tipton said the class taught her how easy it is for seeds to grow into huge plants.

"You put it in the ground, and the

ground does the rest," she said.

Novak said the class donates vegetables to the Brazos Food Bank in Bryan.

Lindsey Inman, a junior horticulture major, said the students are graded by the success of their row of vegetables.

Novak said students have been growing vegetables on the same field for 17 years.

Students use the front sections of the plots to grow identical varieties of vegetables from seed to harvest, and the back sections of the plots to grow different crops so the students can learn from each other.

Novak said people do not realize that the fall gardening season is the best season for crops.

"Why not educate the public?" Novak said. "Students are interested in gardening, and these students can tell others we are graded by the success of their row of vegetables."

"You get counted off a half-point per weed," Inman said. "You need to have a minimum number of each vegetable growing in your row and label everything correctly."

Inman said she spent 16 hours last week weeding and taking care of her row of vegetables.

She said she is planning to create her own garden next spring.

"I know there is more to it than just throwing seeds in the ground," Inman said. "I like to see what we get out of our work. I have 10 heads of lettuce on my row that are prettier than the ones in the store."

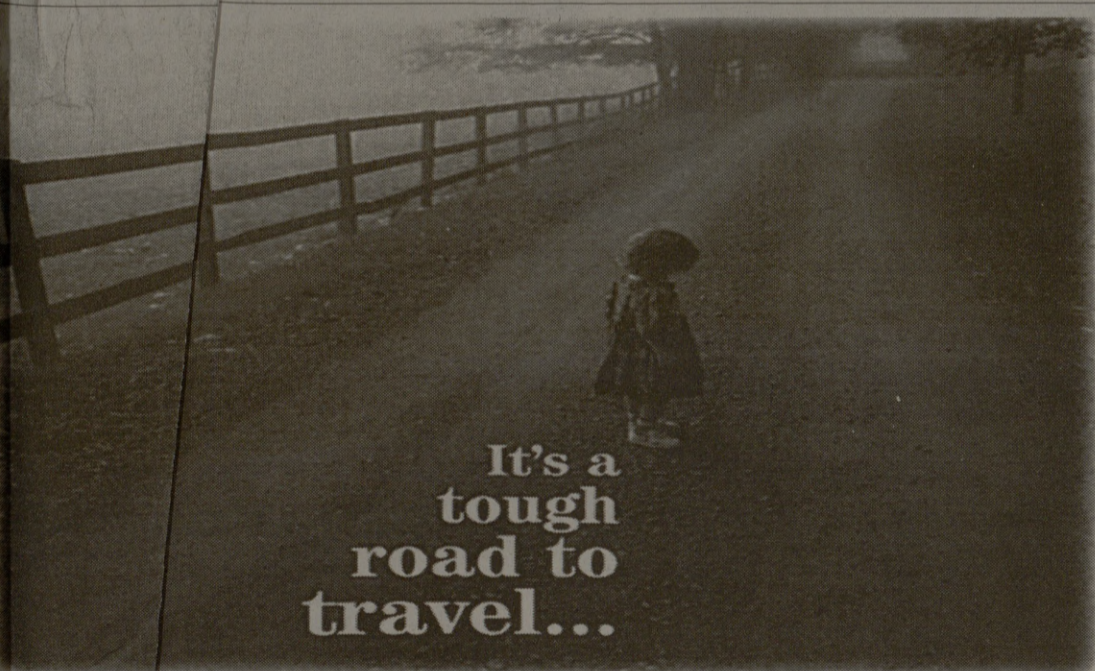
The class has visited the Crestview Methodist Retirement Community in Bryan to help with its gardens and planted vegetables and helped revitalize soil at the Martin Luther King Gardens in Bryan.

**"I like the class because at the end you have something besides a grade to keep."**

Rebecca Kemp  
Crop class student



Chris Thompson, a junior horticulture major, harvests zucchini from his 100-foot garden plot.



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