

Diane Voss

From: David Martin
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 12:59 PM
To: Diane Voss
Subject: FW: Food Forests in Ames: Solving Hunger with Ecology

Hi Diane,

Could you please include this in the non-agenda packet?

Thanks,
David

David Martin
Ames City Council, Ward 3
he/him 515.450.1130

From: Hector Arbuckle <arbucklehg@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 12:46 PM
To: City Council and Mayor <mayorcouncil@amescitycouncil.org>
Subject: Food Forests in Ames: Solving Hunger with Ecology

[External Email]

Dear Mayor and City Council,

My name is Hector Arbuckle and I'm a longtime Ames resident studying biology at ISU. Recently, I've been studying agroforestry and ways to sustainably produce food within our community. I think that the City of Ames has an opportunity to promote "food forests" to fulfill this need.

A "food forest" is a balanced, multilayered perennial ecosystem that combines the concept of an orchard and a community garden to produce a diversity of produce with minimal inputs.

Though we are blessed with fertile soil, Iowa imports 90% of our produce from other states and we have a large amount of food insecurity, especially during this pandemic. If we grew healthy food here in Ames, we could help meet this need.

I propose that the City do a study to see whether there are any plots of public land that would be suitable to designate as "food forest" plots for planting. I estimate that there are a number of volunteers who would be interested in helping plant the forest, and a community-led "food forest cooperative" could manage and maintain the plot.

A well-designed food forest could produce lots of fresh, nutritious produce: pears, persimmons, chestnuts, chives, ramps, junberries, currants, strawberries, raspberries, asparagus - and more esoteric foods like Turkish rocket, hablitzia spinach, chicory, camas, kiwis, and hopeniss tubers! Depending on the management strategy chosen, this could be harvested by individuals or collected and distributed by the cooperative. A large portion could go toward food banks, helping to solve food insecurity in Ames.

I think this is an exciting opportunity to integrate agriculture and ecology to solve social problems. I hope the City will look into this possibility!

Sincerely,
Hector Arbuckle

P.S. (1) The main difference between a "food forest" and an orchard: Orchards tend to focus on a single tree crop and keep the understory mowed or mulched, while "food forests" have a greater variety of trees planted farther apart, and use the extra sun to embrace a diverse edible understory. (2) The main difference between a "food forest" and a community garden: Food forests focus on perennial plants rather than annuals.