



The Organic Garden is only one of the Ecology Center's activities. The Center's work ranges from environmental curriculum development and community education to review of city planning actions. The Center also operates the Recycling Station located on South Industrial Highway. Stop in and learn more about us at our office located at 417 Detroit Street. Or stop in and browse through our library. We would enjoy the visit.

for Ecology Center by J. J. Schmitt 4/20/74

## The Ecology Center's Community Organic Garden

In Ann Arbor, we have two ways in which people without home garden space can grow vegetables: at the Community Organic Garden or through Project GROW. The Organic Garden is run by the Ecology Center, while Project GROW is an independent non-profit organization that coordinates the neighborhood gardening areas in Ann Arbor. Through these two projects people can learn about gardening and the joy of using new skills.

The idea for the Organic Garden came from a similar project at the University of California in Santa Cruz. In 1970 a community-wide meeting was held in Ann Arbor which revealed wide interest in the project. Planning and advisory meetings were then set up to get things started, and, after more community meetings, the goals were set. We wanted to demonstrate and practice organic, ecologically sound methods of agriculture, and to give people a chance to take part in the work involved.

Permission was obtained from the University of Michigan to use 7 acres of University property located at the crossing of Beal and Glacier Way. However, because of subsequent construction, this area is now only 3½ acres.

Support from the University's Institute for Environmental Quality helped to initiate our program and a grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare helped continue development of educational materials and started a "neighborhood satellite gardens" project. These smaller gardens are now coordinated by Project GROW while the Organic Garden is supported by the Ecology Center.

The Organic Garden is managed by an Ecology Center staff-member who, in addition to coordinating garden activities, serves as a source of information for our more than 100 gardeners. Those who do the work share the harvest, which includes nearly all vegetables that can be grown in this region. Although we cannot accommodate crops requiring large areas of land, there are demonstration plots of grapes, berries, and buckwheat, as well as several beehives and 'home-sized' plots where gardeners learn not only skills but more about man's relation to his environment.

~~In addition to outdoor gardening, the Center is building a solar heated greenhouse for seedlings. And, in keeping with the theme of the time, a solar still is planned to provide clean energy to help heat the greenhouse and light plants area.~~

For more information call the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor: 761-3186. Tours of the garden can be arranged.