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Springs community garden to be expanded



From left, Dave Johnson and Howard Ehrlich, both of Coral Springs, talk about expanding the Rotary Club Community Garden of Coral Springs. staff photo/eric bojanowski (Eric Bojanowski, FPG / April 17, 2010)

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The Rotary Community Garden of Coral Springs is to be expanded next year; the decision comes in the wake of the enthusiastic response from residents to the project.

"We plan to double the size of the garden," said Howard Ehrlich, Coral Springs Rotary Club member and a key member of the garden committee. "We are also thinking about building a fruit orchard [since] practically every fruit grows in Florida."

"There is plenty of interest in gardening these days," Ehrlich said. "People are looking to eat what they grow; self-sustainability and going green have become important to people. The garden is a perfect fit for a community like Coral Springs."

The original idea was to have 20, 8-foot by 4-foot garden plots, with individuals or organizations paying \$32 per year for a plot. "We now have 21 plots [and] people are growing everything from peas, tomatoes, herbs, carrots and radishes," Ehrlich said. "We have men, women and children involved. I'm sure people will love our decision to have a fruit orchard."

There is currently a waiting list of 12 for plots, Coral Springs Parks and Recreation Director Rick Engle said. "The original plots sold out real quick; there are some groups, but it is

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mostly individuals."

"It is not an organic garden, but the garden committee encourages use of organic materials," Engle said. "People who have bought plots cannot spray chemicals that hurt the environment. The city has provided the land [but] the garden committee comes up with the funds needed for maintaining the garden."

Dave Johnson, garden committee president and Rotary Club member, said efforts were on to set up a formal committee that would take charge of the planning for next year. "The garden does more than just promote environmental awareness. It provides a great opportunity for people who don't have garden space."

"The city has been fabulous; it has given us some of the raw materials that we needed for the garden," Johnson said. "Sawgrass Springs Middle School is also helping people who have plots."

"We are looking for more sponsors," Ehrlich said. "We also want more people to get involved with the garden committee. The more ideas we get, the better."

The Rotary Club of Coral Springs is spearheading the project and ARC Building Generations and Whole Foods Market are the title sponsors. To become a garden committee member, call Dave Johnson at 954-796-0031.

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