

Muirkirk Research Farm The University of the District of Columbia



As part of its research facilities, the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) has a 144-acre research farm. The overall goal of the Muirkirk Agricultural Experiment Station is to research sustainable and organic agriculture techniques and apply them to an urban agricultural setting. The station's Sustainable Agriculture Program teaches gardeners how to use these techniques to increase productivity in their urban gardens despite the smaller land areas available. Muirkirk also seeks to limit the use of commercial chemical fertilizers and toxic chemicals for pest control which can have harmful effects on the environment and human health.

The Sustainable Agriculture program trains gardeners in the use of techniques to obtain maximum productivity in urban gardens without the use of excessive amounts of commercial chemical fertilizers for plants nutrients and toxic chemicals and to control insects and diseases. The station uses composted waste for supplying land nutrients, ways to increase plant resistance to reduce diseases and insect attacks.

Muirkirk Farm came into its own during 2013.
New construction and initiatives include:

- Aquaponic facility
- Hydroponic facility
- Solar well
- Micro-greens plot
- 4 Greenhouses
- Organic compost processing and production site





2013 also offered Muirkirk the chance to implement two important projects: the Specialty Crops and Ethnic Crops programs. The Specialty Crop project conducts research with the production of certain non-native crops and their various varieties, while the Ethnic Crops project focuses primarily on producing crops, herbs and spices native to West Africa and the Caribbean countries.

These programs were so successful that in 2013, Muirkirk Farm donated specialty greens including kale, Chinese cabbage and collards to programs across D.C. that helped to provide food to the underserved citizens of the District:

Program	Amount Donated (LBS)
Bread for the City	580 lbs
D.C. Central Kitchen	275 lbs
NBC Washington's Food 4 Families	113 lbs



Muirkirk Farm is located at 12001 Old Baltimore Pike Road in Beltsville, Maryland. The farm is managed by Che Axum, Director for the Center for Urban Agriculture & Gardening Education in the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) of the University of the District of Columbia. For more information on Muirkirk Farm, contact Che Axum at mchezaji.axum@udc.edu. For more information on CAUSES, visit www.udc.edu/causes or call (202) 274-7124.