NOVEMBER 17, 2026, COMMITTEE REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

STONE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY GARDEN AT VFW PARK



Fall Brunch on November 7, 2026

Committee Members:

COLUMBUS BROWN, CHAIR
CHAKIRA JOHNSON, VICE CHAIR
JULIANA TAYLOR, SECRETARY
JACKIE MARSHALL, MEMBER
TOM ZIMMERMAN, MEMBER

OVERVIEW

Stone Mountain Community Garden at VFW Park (SMCG) is an all volunteer effort and has been operating continuously since March 2011, as a partnership between the City of Stone Mountain and the Dekalb County/University of Georgia Extension Service (Extension Service). **"We Grow Community."** The SMCG is vibrant and continues to grow.

So far, the SMCG has donated over 18,180 pounds of fresh produce to the Stone Mountain Ecumenical Food Pantry (Food Pantry) for distribution to local families with food insufficiencies — providing healthy and nutritious food for over 4,560 families to date. Thus far this year, we have delivered over 1,138 pounds of fresh produce to the Food Pantry. We should easily meet our goal of 1,200 pounds this year. Current crops include: basil, beets, bok choy, cabbages, carrots, chives, collard greens, eggplant, garlic chives, ginger, green onions, kale, lemongrass, lettuces, mint, mustard greens, oregano, parsley, peppers (sweet and hot), radishes, rosemary, sage, sorrel, thyme, tomatoes and turnip greens.

The SMCG provides 54 spaces for individuals in the community to grow their choices of vegetables, fruits and flowers throughout the year without harmful pesticides. We maintain an apiary with two of our three honeybee hives still active, a butterfly/pollinator garden, four composting systems, herb garden, children's garden, grape arbor, two vertical gardens, co-planting demonstration area and a newly operational greenhouse.

Master Gardeners continue to support the Community Garden through the Extension Service. They play an important role in the community by providing gardening and environmental education — through workshops, classes and technical assistance onsite. At least one Master Gardener is on duty every Saturday morning and there is a Community Workday on the second Saturday of each month.

RECENT SMCG EVENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

October 31, 2026 Hive Inspections of Honey Bees with Participation of Volunteers



Journeyman Beekeeper Moreen Rebeira Assists Volunteers Schâryl and Melanie during Hive Inspection

November 7, 2026 SMCG Fall - Native Garden Brunch (See Cover Photo)

The SMCG hosted a Fall Brunch that was attended by 48 gardeners, volunteers and other members of the community. Many of the dishes were prepared from produce grown at the garden (e.g., sorrel, sweet potato muffins, carrot leaf pesto, basil pesto, African greens and hot pepper cornbread). Other foods, prepared with seasonal produce and dishes reflective of native cultures, were also shared by participants at the Brunch. Flowers from the garden and pumpkins from Atlanta Botanical Gardens were used to



Mayor and Wife, Food Table, Brunch Attendees, Gardeners in Overalls

decorate entryway and tables. All of the food and materials for the brunch were donated

by the participants. It was organized by volunteers: Crystal Emelife, Crystal Harris, Jackie Marshall, Juliana Taylor, Teresa Jones, Funmi Nonye-John and Victoria Hall

November 10, 2026 Quarterly Meeting of the SMCG Committee

- Committee Requests that all revenues collected and/or donated to the community garden be held in a separate account and added to funds budgeted for SMCG. Presently, all fees and donations collected for renting plots and donations are added to the general fund and are not made available for use at the SMCG. Currently, only $3,000 is available for expenditures at the SMCG regardless of any donations or fees collected by the City.
- Committee approved allocation for the proposed funding by the City for 2027. The SMCG has needs that far exceed this amount.
- Committee approved dates for the next Quarterly Meeting and the next Annual Garden Kickoff.
- Committee is fully supportive of the City's proposal for Grant from Food Well Alliance to Develop a Local Food System Plan
- Approved Date for Spring Brunch on May 8, 2027

November 14, 2026 Workday

UPCOMING EVENTS AT SMCG

December 12, 2026	Workday and Mini Talk
January 9, 2027	Workday andMini Talk
February 13, 2027	Workday and Mini Talk
February 18, 2027	Quarterly SMCG Committee Meeting
March 13, 2027	Annual Garden Kickoff and Workday

IMMEDIATE NEEDS FROM CITY

1. Accessibility to Garden and Bathrooms—Problems Persist
2. Remedy Drainage Problem Along Gordon Street and Entrance to Community Garden
3. Storage Shed for Equipment

MEDIA EVENTS

Canopy Atlanta - ***Taste Makers*** by Jack Rose, May 5, 2026 - https://canopyatlanta.org/2026/05/21/stone-mountain-community-garden/

Rough Draft Atlanta - ***Role of Gardens Helping People in Need***, April 30, 2026 - https://roughdraftatlanta.com/2026/04/30/community-gardens-donate-produce/

Atlantic Bee Company, January 19, 2026 - https://atlanticbeecompany.substack.com/p/healing-land

Food Well Alliance - ***What Growers Have to Say*** June 18, 2025 - https://us9.campaign-archive.com/?u=a0e6e9dd6a052a57e2be9f86e&id=9e92df56bd

Food Well Alliance ***Summer Campaign***, June 18, 2025 https://mailchi.mp/foodwellalliance/june-2025-newsletter-updates-8346492?e=7cfe561612

Third Annual Faith and Blue Event at SMCG on City Of Stone Mountain Website
https://www.stonemountaincity.org/news_detail_T3_R356.php

Faith and Blue Event at SMCG on FOX News, October 12, 2024
https://www.facebook.com/share/v/CGsdZKhqoGVzRYtb/?mibextid=K35XfP

Caston's Blog Dekalb County Extension 2024 - https://site.extension.uga.edu/dekalb/2024/07/master-gardener-site-spotlight-stone-mountain-community-garden/

Food Well Alliance April 2024 Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5USbu7uiS0/?igsh=MWJ4d3M1cnV5MHQ1cw==

Stone Mountain Community Garden - Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/StnMtnCommunityGarden/

AIB TV 2024 Documentary on SMCG https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeVQI5Q-l34&t=1s

11 Alive TV 2024 Documentary on SMCG
https://www.11alive.com/video/news/local/gardeners-grow-for-the-hungry-in-stone-mountain/85-2bd50dc4-d5f6-42b0-8af8-14bc12bed901

FOX 5 ATL 2024 Documentary on SMCG - https://www.fox5atlanta.com/video/1435657

Food Well Alliance ***Just Picked!*** Blog - https://www.foodwellalliance.org/blog/columbus-brown-stone-mountain-community-garden

Georgia Grown 2022 Article, Page 32 -
https://editions.mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?i=759283

Georgia Bulletin Article 2021 Re: SMCG -
https://georgiabulletin.org/news/2021/04/corpus-christi-parishioners-join-community-effort-to-garden-with-love/

Dekalb County Extension ***How to Build a Raised Bed***
https://www.facebook.com/UGAExtensionDeKalbCounty/videos/build-a-raised-bed/1117166168664185/

Georgia Bulletin Article 2016 re SMCG
https://georgiabulletin.org/news/2016/12/community-garden-grows-tons-good/

Georgia Bulletin Article 2013 re SMCG parishes-find-vitality-in-caring-for-creation