



Harney Garden of Eatin' Invites Community Back for 2025 Growing Season

By Tara Thissell
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Just off Highway 78, two blocks from the Harney Hub, sits a special opportunity for Harney County residents: the Harney Garden of Eatin'—a welcoming, no-cost community garden where you can grow your own food, meet fellow gardeners, and enjoy the satisfaction of harvesting something you planted yourself.



The Harney Garden of Eatin' is a community project offering nearly 30 raised beds available on a first-come, first-served basis, with returning gardeners from previous years given priority. The garden is one of several initiatives led by Harney County Food Systems, an initiative of the Biz Harney Opportunity Collaborative—one of six collaboratives convened by the High Desert Partnership. Formed about two years ago, Harney County Food Systems is actively involved in a range of efforts to strengthen local food systems.

“This is such a great opportunity for Harney County,” said Kellie Frank, Food Systems Coordinator. “Anyone in the community can take part. Whether you’ve never gardened before or you’re ready to grow more than your backyard allows, we have a space where people can dig in,

learn, and grow together.”

The garden was originally started by longtime gardener Pat Brewster, who transformed a bare patch of land into a productive space that once supplied fresh vegetables to the Senior Center. She had lots of help along the way, and today it continues to reflect the original vision: a garden built by and for the community.

“I just wanted it to benefit the people here,” said Brewster. “Seeing others take it on and make it thrive – that’s what it was always about.”

At Harney Garden of Eatin', each gardener is responsible for planting and maintaining their bed(s). That includes weeding, watering (with the help of a drip irrigation system), fertilizing as needed, protecting crops from frost or sun damage, harvesting, and end of season clean-up. Gardeners can plant whatever they want—vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruit, etc. – and utilize free on-site resources like the greenhouse, communal tools, seeds, soil, compost and disposal areas, water, and hoses.

Corinne Schroeder, a community gardener since last season, encourages others to give it a try. “Even with just one bed, I was able to grow fresh food and a variety of flowers. I chose the layout of my plants and set my own watering and tending schedule, but help is available if you aren’t sure what to do,” she said.

Outside of personal use, the garden also supports local food security efforts. Since mid-2024, Harney County Food Systems has distributed thousands of dollars' worth of donated produce through weekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes at the Harney Hub food bank. The boxes feature contributions from multiple local growers, the Burns Paiute Tribe, and nearly 250 pounds of produce specifically from the Harney Garden of Eatin' community garden.

"There's something really empowering about knowing where your food comes from," added Frank. "When you grow it yourself—even just a tomato or a handful of herbs—it builds confidence and connection. This garden has become a great contributor to residents who want to eat healthier, try something new, or simply be part of something positive in our community."

Interested in a garden bed for the 2025 season? Email harneygarden@gmail.com or come to our first prep day, May 10, at 3 p.m. Participants will receive information on garden expectations and support throughout the season, including mentoring, demonstrations, and available resources.

Not a gardener but still wanting to help? The garden is always in need of donations like yard tools, hoses, and other supplies – anything that might be collecting dust in your garage or shed. The garden would not be possible without generous support from your donations and local partners like Harney Soil and Water Conservation District, High Desert Partnership, Harney Hub, Grocery Outlet, and Burns High School's Science Club. Thank you, partners!

Follow Harney Garden of Eatin' on Facebook for more information.

This article is provided by High Desert Partnership; a Harney County nonprofit convening and supporting six collaboratives including the Biz Harney Opportunity Collaborative.

