



15 YEARS OF GROWING TOGETHER



PHILADELPHIA ORCHARD PROJECT
ANNUAL REPORT 2021



LETTER FROM THE CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Planting fruit and nut trees, and many of the other perennials POP favors, requires a sense of optimism and trust. Trust that the trees we plant will still be there in five, ten, or twenty years, cared for by community partners - not paved over for new development. Optimism that we will take the needed steps to halt the forward progress of climate change, so the plants can survive higher levels of heat and humidity, more intense rainstorms, and increasing pest and disease pressure. In reflecting on the first decade and a half of POP's existence as an organization, while not every single tree and orchard planted still survives today, the optimism and trust with which we've approached our work - coupled with the enthusiasm of our staff, board, volunteers and partners - has resulted in outcomes that positively impact our city in myriad ways. We hope these impacts are reflected in this report of the activities of the last year.

The pandemic continued for another year, but this didn't hold POP back from our core work of planting and supporting community orchards and sharing best practices in orchard care with our partners, volunteers and the general public. Two new people, Sharon Appiah and Corrie Spellman-Lopez, joined the team in early 2021, and now serve as Orchard Manager and Education Director respectively. Along with Orchard Assistant Simone Shemshedini and Fundraising and Communications Assistant Cortina Mallozzi, they have brought so much to POP's community-building and education efforts. We also welcomed three new board members who have helped to reinvigorate and inspire our already-engaged board: Gillian Golson, Ron Whyte and Brian Olszak (who returned to POP's board after a 5-year hiatus).

In 2021, we continued to examine how we can use POP's platform and voice to make our city more equitable. In September, we updated our land access policy for community partners, [described in detail in this blog post](#). In short, POP now considers applications from community groups that do not have land security, recognizing that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color) -led groups have historically lacked resources and opportunities in part due to systematic inequality, racially discriminatory practices and rising property costs. We made initial steps to live up to the values expressed in our [Land Acknowledgement](#) to honor and recognize the Lenape and Wingohocking people - past, present and future stewards of this land we now call Philadelphia - by providing plant materials to Indigenous food forest projects. In 2022 will see POP making additional considerations for advancing environmental justice and equity, as well as Indigenous recognition and support.

As part of POP's current strategic planning process, we were asked to imagine POP in 35 years. The responses from POP's current staff and board ranged from visions of our future selves gathered in the shade of trees, enjoying freshly picked fruit with friends and neighbors, to more apocalyptic descriptions of environmental and public health disasters. With that in mind, we end this letter by coming back to optimism and trust. This year, the City of Philadelphia will release two very important plans, both prepared with stakeholder support and rooted in equity and environmental justice: a Tree Canopy Plan and an Urban Agriculture Plan. We are optimistic for the ways in which people of all ages will be inspired and involved in creating a greener and more sustainable city, where access to fresh, culturally-relevant produce and the knowledge to grow it will be wide-spread. POP looks forward to actively engaging with both of these plans and to contributing to the realization of real impacts on health, diet and environment via community orchards. We trust that you, in reading this report, will be similarly inspired to engage in positive actions so that we can all flourish in the future!

PHIL FORSYTH & KIM JORDAN

YEAR IN REVIEW



In 2021 POP held

2028

orchard plantings,
trainings and work days

Planted
1,562nd
fruit tree.



Donated
2,355
pounds of
produce.



Partners harvested
6,264
pounds of fruit.

921
volunteers

Last year, we planted a total of **103** new fruit & nut trees, **327** berry bushes & vines and **1,182** perennials & groundcovers.



106

attendees
to online
POPCORE
workshops

744

visitors to
POP
Learning
Orchard



38
blog posts



2021 PARTNER STORIES

“As William Cramp Community School began reopening for students in September 2021, our POP Team could once again return to the North Courtyard Orchard and Gardens and care for the fruit trees, berry bushes, flowers and vegetables. Of the many plants that survived the year and a half of pandemic, none was thriving more than the magnificent Fig Tree that was planted by POP three years previously and now abundant with fruit. Then, as I entered the school and met with Principal Logan in her office, there on her desk was a bowl of figs, harvested earlier that morning to share with students.”

- CRAIG JOHNSON
William Cramp Community School

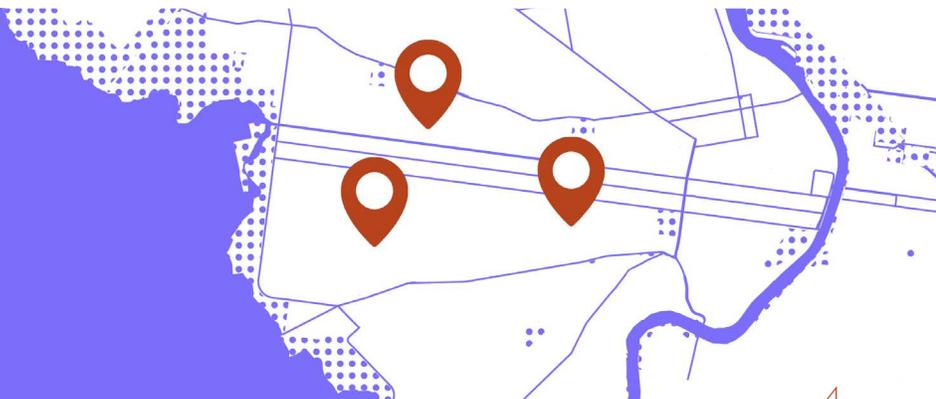


“Creating an opportunity for the community to directly change the landscape of their environment after being shut-in for a whole year. We really enjoyed working closely with PowerCorps young adults to accomplish the orchard rebuild. We held our annual harvest party in the orchard in October; PowerCorps used [it] as a hands-on learning site and community members used the orchard for their events. POP does a really good job at this. UTC thought the partnership was very beneficial to the success of the orchard and we appreciate the relationship with you all.”

- MIKE JONES
Pearl Street Orchard (Urban Tree Connection)

NEW ORCHARD PARTNERS:

Andrew Hamilton Elementary
Mercy LIFE West Philadelphia
Pearl St Orchard with Urban Tree Connection



PROGRA



Almost **7,000** people tasted something grown in a POP orchard in 2021 - the highest number ever

7,400 used a POP community orchard as a gathering space

A record breaking total orchard production of 6,264 lbs was reported by orchard partners in 2021.

Based on 2021 survey analysis of tree fruits, pawpaws and figs are the highest producers by far, followed by plums, peaches/nectarines, persimmons, Asian pears, sweet cherries, European pears and pie cherries.



A M S I

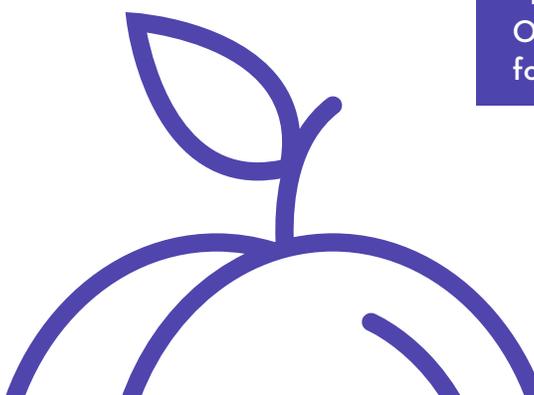


“One volunteer had never heard of persimmons before. I gave him one to try right off the tree and his world was turned upside down. When he came back the next time to volunteer, he told me he had gone to numerous grocery stores just to find persimmons. He also told his family all about this new fruit. These are the kind of experiences we want to provide the community. We want to educate about foods they may not even know exist in their region and also inspire awe!”

- ELLIE KAPLAN
Share's Nice Roots Farm

“This year we had an abundance of fruit. Most of our fruit trees are young and just starting to produce. There was a week when I picked about 300 lbs of plums and peaches. All of them were distributed to community food kitchens, apartment buildings and churches to be shared. Being able to share what we produce means so much to us as a community and hearing the positive feedback from those [who] received our fruit was amazing. As our orchard continues to grow we are looking forward to many more opportunities to help, share and grow with our community.”

- RICH MATTEO
Overbrook School
for the Blind





In addition to offering educational programs to volunteers, partners and the general public, POP provides learning opportunities for its staff. In June 2021, as the currants and gooseberries were setting heavy on the bushes, the POP team took a field trip to visit the New Jersey farmland stewarded by Nate Kleinman, POP board member and co-founder of the [Experimental Farm Network](#) (EFN). We learned about the crops EFN grows as a direct response to our broken food system: these plants are bred for climate mitigation, higher nutritional content and flavor and greater resiliency to pest, disease and stress pressure. More details on this visit and on some of the particularly special plants grown there, like the New Jersey Yucca, Ayote Squash, Beach Plum and Monkey Puzzle Tree can be found in this engrossing blog post by [Education Director Corrie Spellman-Lopez](#). A late fall field trip to the '[Hershey Food Forest](#)', led by Dale of Green Light Plants, was packed full of fascinating history and plenty of nuts and persimmons to be foraged.

At the POP Learning Orchard at The Woodlands, further improvements and expansions were made during the past year. Early in 2021, we engaged a team of volunteers to build a solar shed, a system that powers the irrigation to POP's nursery and operates completely off the power grid. In the fall, a shade structure, funded by the Pennsylvania Farm Bill, was erected to provide plants and volunteers protection from the sun as they work on potting up plants in POP's nursery. In the orchard, annual crops such as black-eyed peas, peppers, collards, eggplant and ground cherries were grown using alley cropping methods in between the rows of trees. In total, 2,335 pounds of produce was grown and distributed to the community through Food Not Bombs and [The People's Fridge on 52nd St](#). Produce was mainly grown for donation, but POP continued its partnership with TrueLove Seeds, growing and harvesting culturally important crops for seed including [Landreth Stringless Bushbeans](#), Clemson Spineless Okra and Palestinian Kusa Squash.





Thanks to hive and equipment donations from a retiring bee-keeper and with guidance and volunteer support from the [Philadelphia Beekeepers Guild](#), POP now hosts bee hives next to our edible plant nursery. Former Orchard Director Alkebu-Lan Marcus cared for the hives throughout 2021, harvesting nearly [one gallon of honey](#) at the end of the season and passed along what he learned to Orchard Manager Sharon Appiah who took over beekeeping duties in 2022.

Other Learning Orchard activities included the construction of a beautiful new arbor for growing grapes and kiwiberries and new trellises for berry beds, both completed by Orchard Director Michael Muehlbauer. A new shade garden featuring edible, medicinal and pollinator-friendly perennials was planted with support from the [Hardy Plant Society](#). The expansion of additional plantings included elderberries, hazelnuts, chokeberries, medlar, black currant, buffaloberries, grape hollies, rugosa roses and more. Finally, POP hosted a workshop series on topics including maple sugaring, [herbal salves](#), [mushroom inoculation](#) and [fire cider](#), providing opportunities for in-person knowledge sharing once again. [Read the Learning Orchard year in review here.](#)

The POP Learning Orchard served as a site for school and other groups to visit and learn, with tours offered to Camp Sojourner students, PowerCorps PHL members, Bartram's Youth Tree Crew, several University of Pennsylvania classes and elected officials including state representatives, city councilmembers and the State Secretary of Agriculture. POP staff also delivered online workshops and presentations to a variety of external groups, including AARP-PA, BioPhilly, Friends of The Wissahickon, Bloomington Community Orchard's board of directors and PA Master Naturalists.

WE LOVE (E)

OUR LEAD ORCHARD VOLUNTEERS!

POP's Lead Orchard Volunteer (LOV) Program expanded in its second year, with 27 volunteers active at 17 sites, including a tight-knit team who helped at weekly work days at The Woodlands. In 2021, the following new sites were added to the LOV Program: Historic Fair Hill, Union Baptist Church, Norris Square Neighborhood Project, Philly Earth at The Village, Saul High School, Share Food Program, Wissahickon Environmental Center and Awbury Arboretum.



- ELLA HERON

"I enjoy getting the chance to be taking care of trees every month and am grateful to have the opportunity to see the same piece of land change through the seasons, learning the landscape in every part of its yearly cycle. I am proud to have a part of the city that I feel like I have ownership and commitment to!"



"I deeply appreciate the opportunity to learn and be within the green sanctuaries that are the POP orchards, as well as connecting with other folks that find deep rooted-ness among the soil, all the while nourishing our communities. I am looking forward to spending more time supporting and learning in any way that I can, in the months to come."

- AINHOA WOODLEY

POP's workshop series on ecological orchard care was offered online in 2021 and is available on POP's YouTube channel in the playlist called [Virtual POPCORE Series](#). Aiming to reach people virtually during the ongoing pandemic, POP created additional video content featuring interesting plants ([Yucca](#), [hardy almond](#) and [beach plum](#)) and different methods for using them ([moss terrarium how-to](#), [chicory cold brew](#) and [experimenting with](#)

[natural dyes](#)). POP also published blog posts on a range of topics from thorough [monthly orchard task lists](#) and tips, to plant profiles on [blueberries](#) and [goumis](#), to partner spotlights of [Historic Fair Hill](#), [South Philly High](#) and [Overbrook Environmental Education Center](#). These blog posts feature stories the interview subjects wanted to share about their neighborhoods or the history and cultural context of plants and people, providing reader and writer alike new ways of connecting with the city.

In September 2021, POP held its annual event, which included an online [Orchard Celebration program](#) and an open house at The Woodlands. You can watch videos from the online program on the 2021 [Orchard Celebration playlist](#). POP honored its 2021 LOVs with the annual Golden Persimmon volunteer award in recognition of their dedication throughout the pandemic. Phil Forsyth presented the award to [Cobbs Creek LOV Trae Mohammed](#), who accepted it on behalf of the entire 27-member cohort. Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson and State Representative Rick Krajewski, who both visited POP at the Learning Orchard in 2021, [shared remarks on POP's impact](#) across the city. A number of [community partners](#) also shared updates from their year.



Meei Ling Ng, artist extraordinaire and garden and orchard tender at Union Baptist Church (UBC) Garden of Eden was presented with [POP's 2021 Purple Fig Award](#) by Phil Forsyth and Loretta Lewis, UBC Trustee and POP board member. POP and UBC first partnered in planting the orchard at UBC in the spring of 2018 and it's been an active site for two of POP's Lead Orchard Volunteers, Nafeesah and Corey. This award acknowledged the efforts of Meei Ling as well as church and community members in transforming this green space into a beautiful and productive food forest and garden that enhances UBC's connections with the neighborhood and its efforts to feed those in need.

CELEBRATE

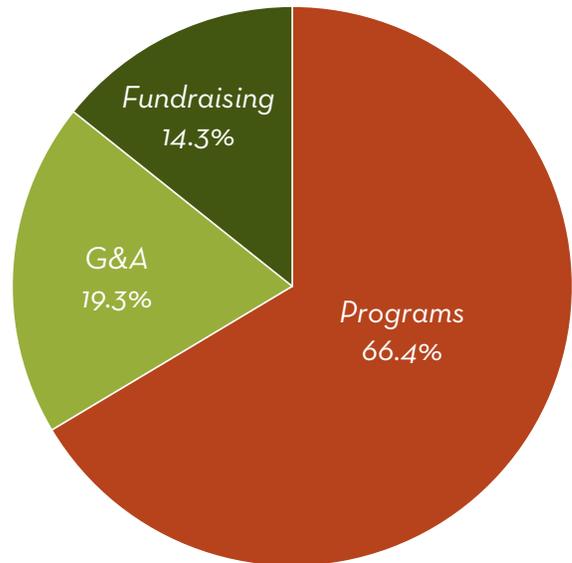
FINANCIALS

INCOME	2020-2021
Individual Contributions	60,743
Foundation Contributions	203,905
Corporate Contributions	22,792
Sales of Product/Earned (Net)	2,486
Program Fees	17,223
Special Event (Net)	4,304
Interest Income	212
In Kind Contributions	4,500
Total Income	313,382

CONSOLIDATED EXPENSES	
Programs	195,725
General & Administrative	56,872
Fundraising	42,078
Total Expenses	294,675

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	57,216
Total Net Assets, Start of FY	363,470
Total Net Assets, End of FY	420,687
Restricted Assets, Start of FY	125,293
Restricted Assets, End of FY	168,168

POP appreciates the support received during the fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Full financials are available on [POP's website](#).



Below:

POP staff and board members and Junior League of Philadelphia representatives, after a ceremonial planting of a chestnut tree at the POP Learning Orchard, Spring 2021



PEOPLE

BOARD

MICHELLE LAWSON
President

ANGELINA CONTI
VP/President-Elect

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MARCI GREEN
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ROSE CUOZZO

TONY DORMAN

GILLIAN GOLSON

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CRAIG JOHNSON

NATE KLEINMAN

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JULIE ULRICH

RON WHYTE

BERTINA WHYTEHEAD

STAFF

PHIL FORSYTH
Co-Executive Director

KIM JORDAN
Co-Executive Director

SHARON APPIAH
Orchard Manager

ERIKA D'ANDREA
Orchard Assistant

CORTINA MALLOZZI
Fundraising &
Communications Assistant

MICHAEL MUEHLBAUER
Special Projects Coordinator

SIMONE SHEMSHEDINI
Orchard Assistant

CORRIE SPELLMAN-LOPEZ
Education Director



2020-21 Selected Foundation and Corporate Supporters:

AARP-PA
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Foundation
Claneil Foundation
Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation
Hardy Plant Society, Mid-Atlantic
Henrietta Tower Wurts Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation
Junior League of Philadelphia

LL Charitable Foundation
MOM's Organic Market
Patagonia
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Philadelphia Activities Fund (1st & 3rd Districts)
PNC Charitable Trusts
Philadelphia Committee of the Garden Club of America
Rosenlund Family Foundation
William Penn Foundation

A full list of POP's current supporters can be viewed at phillyorchards.org/donate.

24
Sustaining Monthly Donors

215
Individual Donors

156
Tree Certificate Donors



Philadelphia Orchard Project
4000 Woodland Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19104
www.phillyorchards.org



Photography: POP Staff, Craig Johnson, Natalie Kolb/Commonwealth Media Services, Marc Steiner, Tirzah Vogels

We humbly acknowledge that POP works in the unceded indigenous territory of the Leni-Lenape and Wingohocking people, who were and continue to be active stewards of the land.



@phillyorchards