Green Infrastructure

Mosaic’s ‘permaculture’ garden (year later)

The Mosaic Community Land Trust, which created two community gardens on Chestnut Street, is marking the first anniversary of its third garden, at Charlotte and Walnut streets, based on a sustainable agricultural system called “permaculture.”

The garden was planted last spring by Feed the Burbs, a Norristown company founded to promote landscapes that rely on natural processes to thrive—and require minimal maintenance. Volunteers provided most of the labor.

Among the plants planted were fruit trees; edible flowers like eastern redbud, hawthorne, and roses; berries like currants and blackberries; nut trees and shrubs. Plants were arranged to attract birds and pollinators and to maximize the capture of rainwater. The original grass lot was replaced with clover.

The garden was designed to enhance the neighborhood and help promote community pride, says Judy Memberg of Genesis Housing, which funded the project with a $20,000 grant from National Penn Bank (now BB&T Bank).

Community gardens are a vital element to “green infrastructure,” which a growing number of communities are using nationwide to absorb stormwater where it falls to prevent flooding and water pollution.