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# THE INTERNATIONAL HARVEST GARDEN

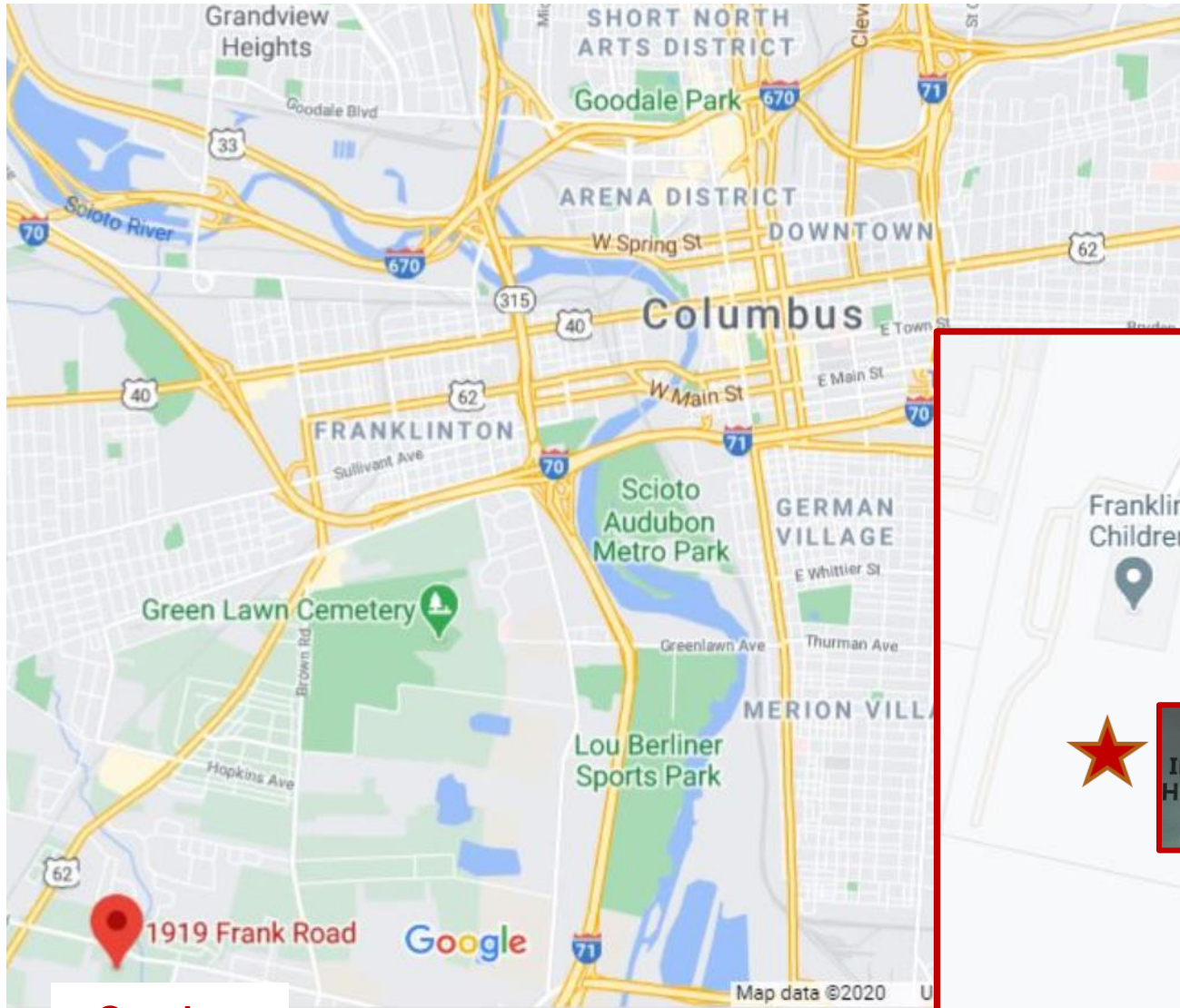
THE PEOPLE,  
PLANTS &  
PRACTICES

# HISTORY



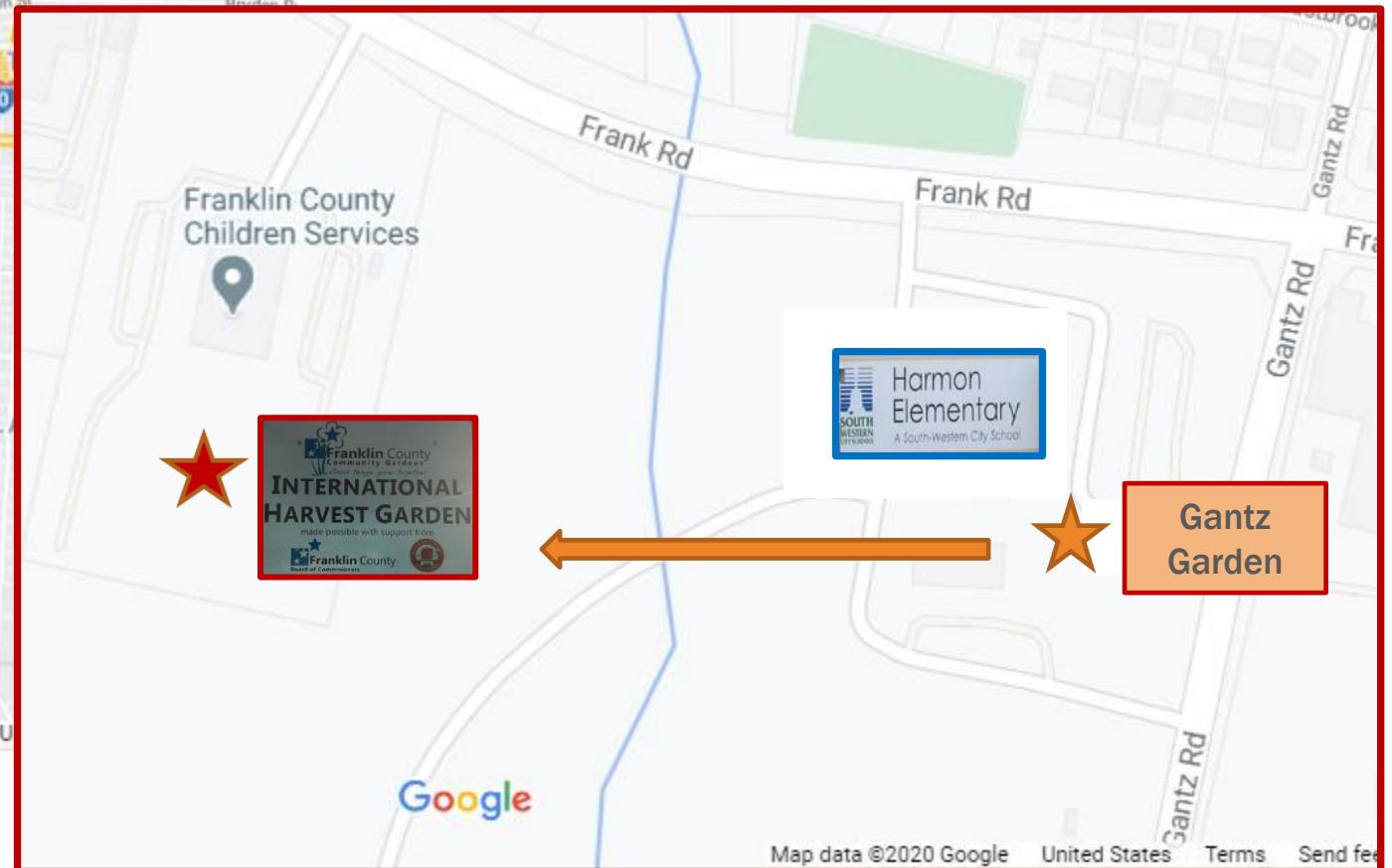
John O'Grady  
Franklin County  
Commissioner

- Instrumental in the creation of the first international garden
- Priority: bolster the local foods system to improve the health and well-being of residents and encourage sustainability through community gardening
- 2009: Somali Community Center Meeting
  - ✓ Met Ja'far Matan - discussed obtaining land so the Somali community could provide for themselves



Garden

## LOCATION



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## WHY A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

- Goals
  - ✓ Preserving green space
  - ✓ Supporting local food banks
  - ✓ Helping those in need
- Benefits
  - ✓ Inexpensive fresh produce
  - ✓ Exercise and fresh air
  - ✓ Opportunities to make new friends and to build a stronger sense of community



## WHY AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY GARDEN?



*"The garden brings great happiness and joy. Most of my community comes from a rural and farming background. Sometimes there is a disconnect from the new life and the old life and the community gardens help bridge the gap and it makes it feel like home again. When people work all day, they will still work in the garden because working the land is nourishing. The garden allows them to grow and eat cultural foods."*

*Hai Vung Lian, representative for the Burmese garden*

*"My community garden helps 400 low income families. We grow a number of vegetables in my community garden. We started with 15 people and now have up to 65 people. I am thankful for the water for the community garden. People that were on medicine before the community garden and working in the garden, they no longer need medicine. Everything we grow is healthy. There are 75-year old people that work in my community garden."*

*Ja'far Matan, representative for the Somali garden*



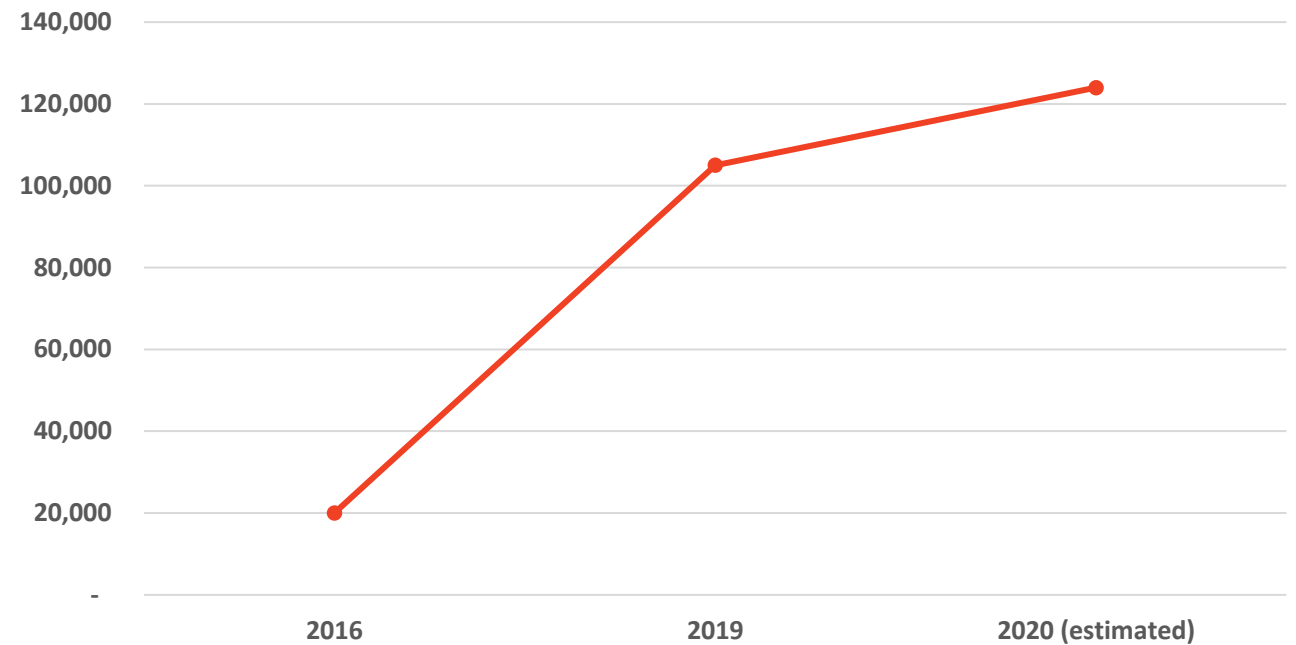


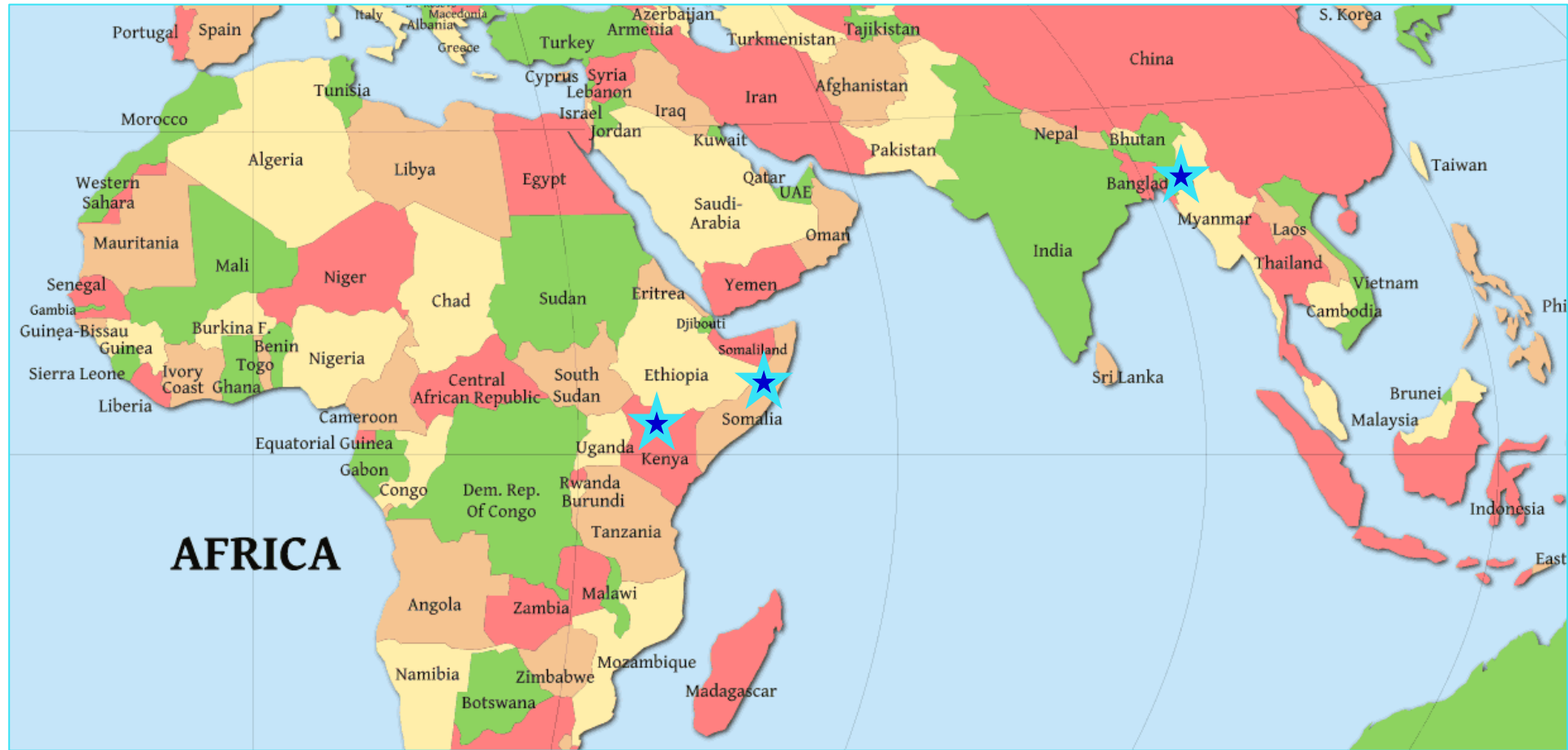


## POUNDS OF PRODUCE

- **2016:** entire garden produced ~20,000 lbs
- In recent years,
  - ✓ the number of square feet in the garden that has been cultivated to produce food has increased
  - ✓ all groups have increased succession planting efforts
- **2020:** entire garden produced ~123,710 lbs (~3,188 lbs of this grown and donated to food pantries by FCMGVs)

Pounds of Produce Harvested (approximate)

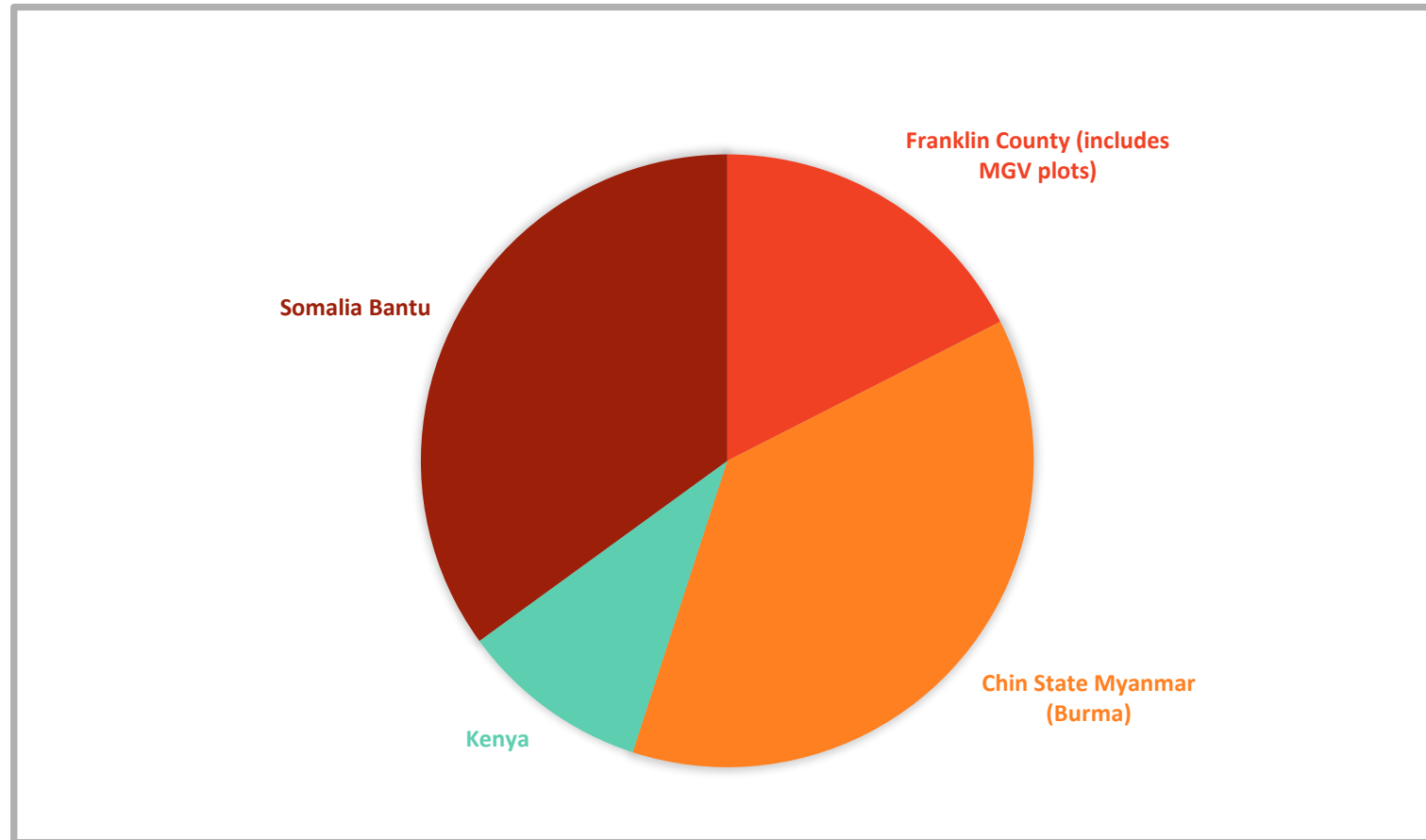




*“The families work hard, and then they go to the garden. For these people, many of them political refugees who left family and professional careers behind, it is all about being in and on the land – restoring a piece of the lives that they left behind.” Hai Vung Lian*  
*Excerpt from **Rooted** A celebration of central Ohio’s community gardens, and the people who make them grow.*



# GROUP SHARE OF THE 2-ACRE INTERNATIONAL HARVEST GARDEN



## HAI VUNG LIAN, BURMESE CHIN GROUP

- Native land
  - Mountainous, rocky and shallow soil
  - Very little rainfall
  - Summers hot (compared to OH)
- Farm family
  - Moved to different locations from year to year - hillside cultivation
  - Planted rice, corn, beans and soybeans (different types than available in US)
  - Father would dig holes and store produce in the ground for winter
- Attended University, a 4 year program, graduated in 7 years
- Offered a scholarship and a visa to attend the Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH (1997)



Hai Vung Lian

## HAI VUNG LIAN (CONTINUED)

- Impressed with Columbus (far westside)
- Encouraged Chin families living in refugee settlements (Myanmar) to come to Columbus (2007)
- Part-time interpreter at the Southwestern City Schools, hospitals and clinics
- Pastor of Emmanuel Chin Baptist Church (2012), built a sanctuary in 2017 and last year completed a gym for the children
- Building a future for their children



Hai Vung Lian



# CHIN GARDEN

- Started at the Gantz Garden and moved to the International Harvest Garden –  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre
- Started with 180 gardeners but now have 120
- Covid-19 effect in 2020 gardens
- Planting techniques
  - Acquires seeds from their country (mail), Asian store in Indianapolis, collect seed from existing plants
  - Plants 3 seeds in each hole to maximize yield
  - Use home-grown methods for trellising (provides more fruit)



## CHIN GARDEN – THE PRODUCE

- Food produced will be eaten Fall, Winter and Spring
- Diet consists of homegrown vegetables, pork, chicken, beef and fish
- Produce planted is mostly Asian food
  - 4-5 kinds of peppers
  - Eggplant
  - 4 different types of beans (LOVE their beans)





## CHIN GARDEN: ROSELLE

- Native to Asia and Africa, grown worldwide
- Relative of Hibiscus and okra
- Started from seed or cuttings
- Planted in April or May
- Grows to 7' and hardy zones 9–10
- OH growing season not long enough to harvest the fruit or seeds
- Rich in vitamin C and antioxidants
- Leaves used as a cooked green and in soups or raw in salad
- Peel back the bark to make rope – very strong





## CHIN GARDEN: GARCINIA CAMBOGIA (AKA MALABAR TAMARIND)

- Native to India and Southeast Asia
- Small pumpkin-shaped fruit
- Rind is used to flavor fish curries and preserve food
- Made into tea and lotion
- Used as a dietary supplement for rheumatism and studied for its effect on weight loss



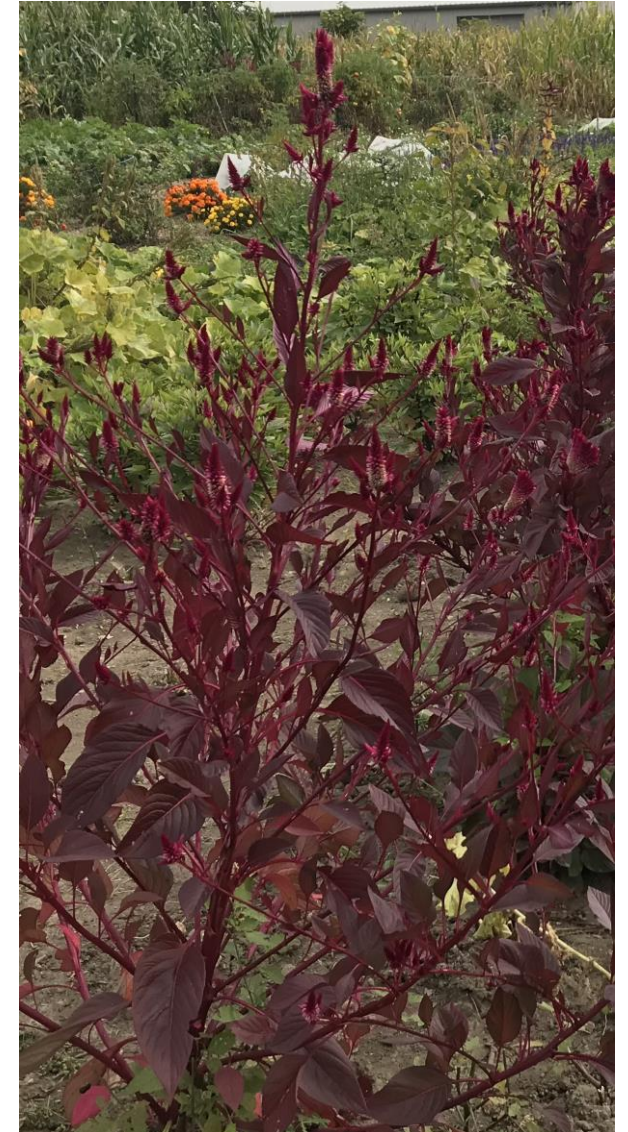
## CHIN GARDEN: KARELA (HINDI)

- Grown mostly in Asia and Africa
- Bitter gourd, bitter melon, bitter squash, balsam pear
- Fruit is considered a vegetable
- Good source of Vitamin C and K, magnesium, calcium, iron, potassium, fiber
- Rich in antioxidants
- Used in Indian cuisine but first soaked in salt water to reduce bitterness; sautéed with onions and tomatoes
- Helps fight skin diseases, maintain blood sugar, lower bad cholesterol levels, boosts immunity



## CHIN GARDEN: AMARANTH

- Pseudo cereal (not technically a cereal grain but shares comparable nutrients)
- Group of 60 different species of grains that have been cultivated for ~8,000 years
- Gluten-free and rich in protein, fiber, micronutrients, antioxidants
- Associated with reducing inflammation and lowering cholesterol
- Combine with water (3:1 ratio), heat until boiling, simmer for 20 minutes
- Use in place of pasta or rice; add to soups or stews; use as a breakfast cereal





## CHIN GARDEN: RICINUS COMMUNIS (CASTOR BEAN)

- Native to tropical east Africa (present worldwide and considered a weed in many places – including the southwest US)
- Evergreen herbaceous or semi-woody large shrub
- Can grow to 40' tall within a few years in frost-free climates (killed below 32 degrees F)
- Produces ½" long seeds in large numbers (where the growing season is long enough)
  - Contains yellowish oil
    - Used for industrial applications
    - Paints and varnishes
    - High performance motor oil and oil production
  - Seeds extremely poisonous



## JA'FAR MATAN, SOMALI BANTU GROUP

- Matan is an Agronomist by training (improves the quality of farms and crops)
  - Attended the Agricultural University in Somali
  - Further training in Italy and West Germany and came to the U.S. (2004)
- Native country: Somalia
  - Known for widespread poverty, civil wars, territorial conflicts, unstable government
  - 85% of country is made up of ethnic Somalis
  - Has the longest coastline in mainland Africa – very beautiful country
  - 65% of the workforce is in agriculture
  - Root cause of conflicts in Somalia is the competition over access to and control of natural resources (fertile land and water)
  - Rainfall is low and variable
    - Major crops are sorghum and maize (requires irrigation) – local consumption
    - Sugar cane, bananas, grapefruit and rice grown in the south along the rivers – sold to other countries
    - Imports most of the food that people consume



Ja'far Matan



## SOMALI BANTU GARDEN

- Started at the Gantz Garden and moved to the International Harvest Garden - ~7/10 of an acre
- Supports 15 families
- Plant banana peppers, yellow squash, sweet corn, Somali corn, maize, okra
- Planting techniques
  - Plant 3-4 seeds in each hole (how they learned to plant)
  - Conserve water
  - Companion planting
- Eat the food fresh and store the corn (by the ear and kernels cut off and stored) as we do by freezing it





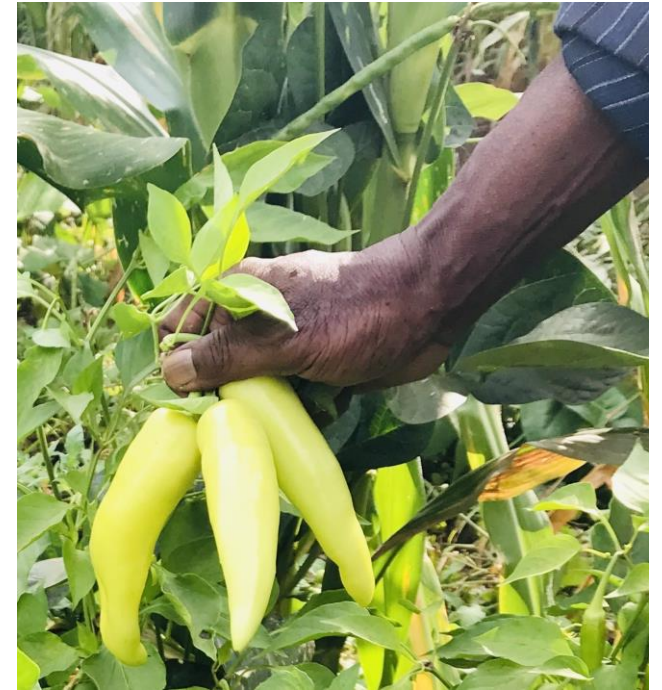
## SOMALI GARDEN – THE PRODUCE

- Yellow squash
  - One of the oldest known crops, from Mexico
  - “Squash” comes from the Native American word askutasquash which means “eaten raw or uncooked”
  - Due to their shape, most likely used as containers
  - Seeds and flesh became a part of the Indian diet in North & South America
  - High in vitamins A, B6 and C, folate, magnesium, fiber, riboflavin, phosphorus, potassium and manganese (for strengthening bones and helps the body process fats and carbohydrates)



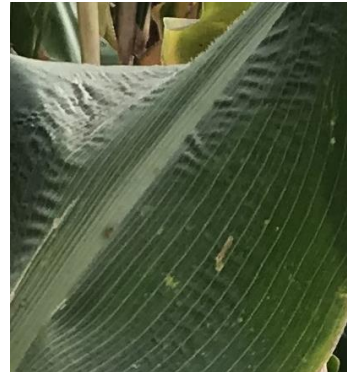
## SOMALI GARDEN – THE PRODUCE

- Banana peppers
  - Originated in the Americas and are grown worldwide
  - Are used in salads, eaten fresh as a snack, sandwiches
  - Good sources of Vitamins A, B6, C, K, Potassium, Calcium, Folate
  - Thought to help control blood pressure, improve brain function (B6 helps produce dopamine and serotonin), increases metabolism



## SOMALI GARDEN – MAIZE AND CORN

- Maize – primary crop
  - Grind it into cornmeal and flour
  - Cook and eat as thick porridge (Sadza Mieliepap or Pap). Add water and boil for 20 minutes – 1/2c of corn meal (dried) and steam
- Somali corn – sweet light yellow green kernels, beautiful tassels (very small percentage of the corn they plant)
- Sweet corn to eat fresh





## SOMALI GARDEN: OKRA

- Grown in Somalia, Kenya as well as areas in western Africa, Southeast Asia and in the southwestern US
- Also called lady's fingers and is consumed as a vegetable (but is actually a fruit)
- Eaten raw, cooked or fried. It's also used in soups (gumbo) and sauces.
- Should be rotated with maize, peas, onions, potatoes
- In same family as cotton
- Rich in folic acid, vitamins B, C, A, and K, calcium, fiber, potassium, and antioxidants



## MARY KIRUI, KENYAN GROUP

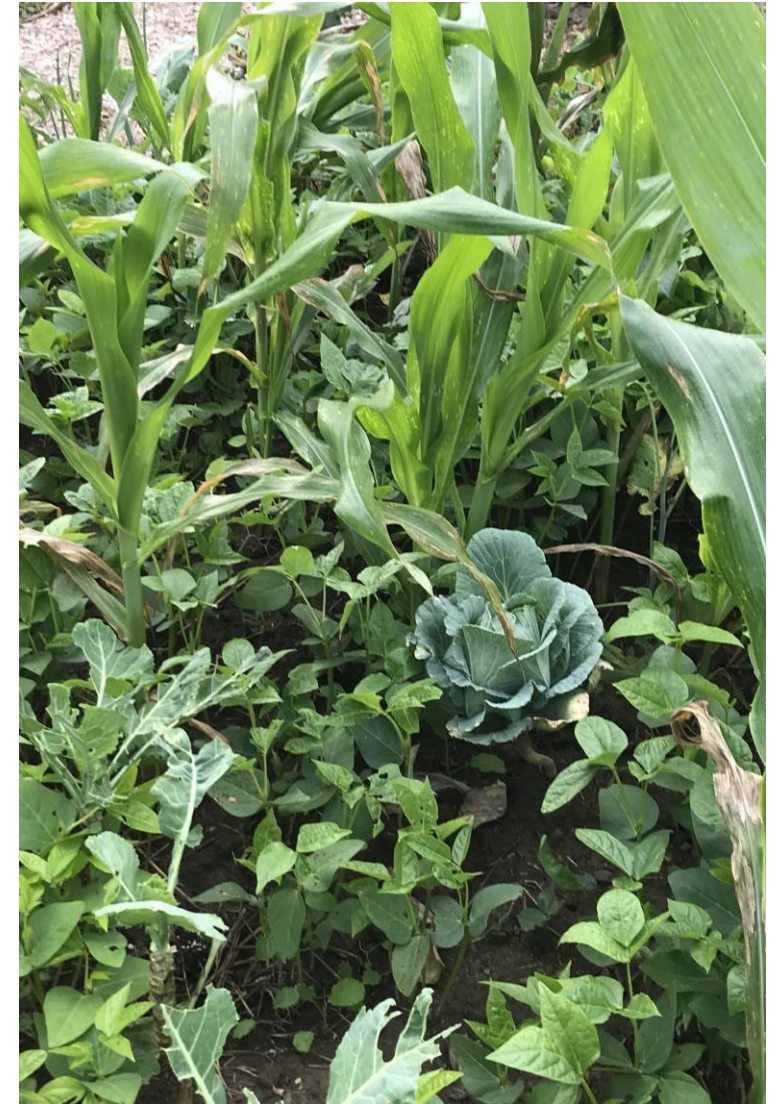
- Native land
  - May through August rainy; September through January, no rain
  - Planting in April and continued planting in the winter
- Farm family
  - Produce planted: corn, coffee, tea
  - Raised chickens and cows (zero-grazing in sheds for 20 years)
- Mary is multi-lingual and worked at the post office and participated in sports (long-distance runner)
- Attended St. Mary's College in Maryland (1989)
- Came to Columbus in 2000





# KENYAN GARDEN

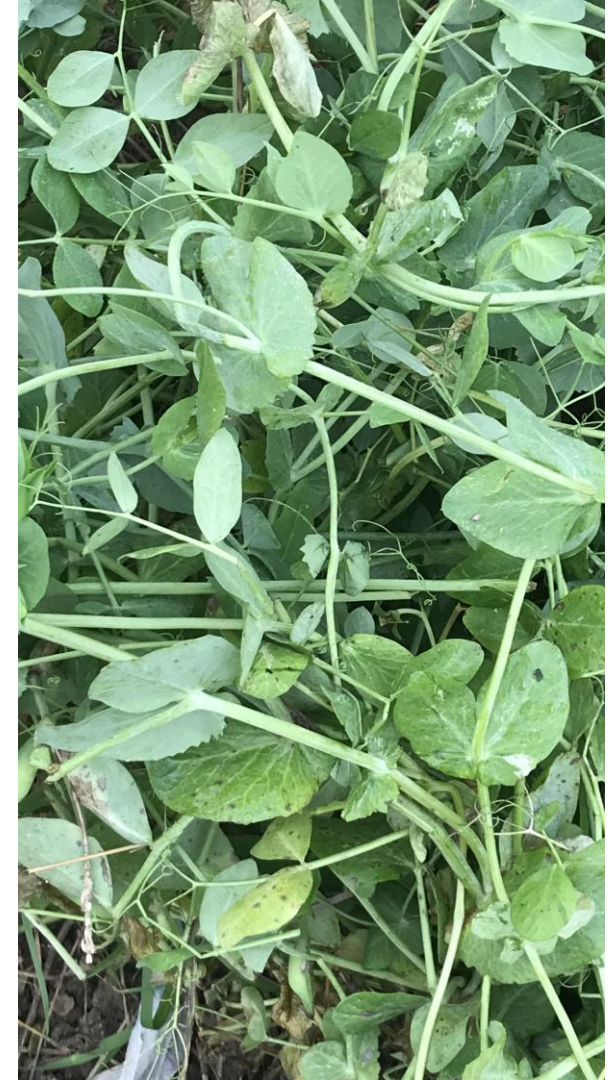
- International Harvest Garden – 2 years and 1/5 of an acre
- Supports 20 gardeners
- Planting and gardening practices
  - Acquire seeds from Asian grocery stores, Amazon
  - Plant seeds
    - Scattering seeds
    - Companion planting
  - Keep the garden tidy
  - Organic gardening





# KENYAN GROUP - THE PRODUCE

- Produce planted
  - Onions, peas, kale, collard greens, corn, beans, black-eyed peas
  - Watermelon, squash
  - Amaranth





## KENYAN GARDEN – INDIGENOUS SPIDER PLANT

- Originated in Africa and tropical Asia and is now available worldwide
- Leafy vegetable, consumed by a majority of the rural and urban population in Kenya
- Rich in proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates, minerals
- Has medicinal benefits – contains compounds to aid in curing cancer, asthma, diabetes
- Leaves are eaten as a cooked green vegetable – boiled with butter added, and cooked with other vegetables such as cowpeas and amaranth
- Can be dried in the sun and stored in a clay pot for up to 2 years



## KENYAN GARDEN – BLACK NIGHTSHADE (SOLANUM NIGRUM)

- Common weed in many areas around the world
- Ripe berries that grow in bunches
- Africa and Asia – steam or boil the green leaves
- Taste is slightly bitter and typically served with rice
- Contains minerals, calcium, phosphorous and iron



## KENYAN GARDEN – ROYCO (SPICES)

- Combination of popular spices: garlic powder, paprika, turmeric, cumin, coriander, salt, fennel, vegetable oil and corn flour
- Helpful if you want to make traditional Kenyan dishes
- Made from sundried ingredients - adds color and flavoring





# AT THE INTERNATIONAL HARVEST GARDEN

## RAINBOWS



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## RESOURCES

John O'Grady, Franklin County Commissioner, Biography

<https://commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners/john-ogrady#more>

Franklin County Commissioners, Briefing Minutes, February 2, 2017: Matters re programs of agencies and resolutions for General Session.pdf

From First Americans to New Americans – Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens Growing to Green Program <https://www.publicgardens.org/file/40435/download?token=uMGXwEtW>

Study on the Evolution of the Farming systems and Livelihoods Dynamics in Northern Chin State

[https://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/Evolution\\_of\\_Farming\\_Systems-Chin\\_State.pdf](https://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/Evolution_of_Farming_Systems-Chin_State.pdf)

The Columbus Dispatch, November 12, 2012, Chin Refugees Nestle in Columbus Area

<https://www.dispatch.com/article/20121112/NEWS/311129739#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20United%20Nation s,Myanmar%20refugees%20is%20in%20Indianapolis.>

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## RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

The Columbus Dispatch, February 9, 2013 by Josh Jarman, Land Swap Between County, Southwestern Schools Eases Way for New Elementary <https://www.dispatch.com/article/20130208/news/302089684>

The Columbus Dispatch, April 7, 2016, Community Garden in Franklin Township Lets Immigrants Put Down Roots Together <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20170322/community-garden-in-franklin-township-lets-immigrants-put-down-roots-together>

The Columbus Dispatch, March 24, 2017 Editorial: Community Blooms in Rich Garden Soil <https://www.dispatch.com/opinion/20170324/editorial-community-blooms-in-rich-garden-soil>

Rooted: A collection of Central Ohio's community gardens, and the people who make them grow, Published by Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Columbus, OH, copyright 2018.

Facebook: International Harvest Garden, <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalHarvestGarden/>

Resources for vegetable descriptions are included in the Notes with the pertinent vegetable slide, where applicable.