



# 2020 IMPACT REPORT





2020 was a year to remember for so many reasons. Despite the hardships and obstacles we faced as an organization and as a community, Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) also witnessed tremendous acts of resilience, solidarity, generosity, and support.

Early in the pandemic, we worked diligently to ensure DUG's 180+ gardens would stay open throughout the spring and summer, providing vital spaces for people to get outside and not only to grow food, but also enjoy fresh air and exercise and find opportunities to recharge both mentally and emotionally.

As the rate of hunger tripled in Colorado due to the pandemic, we sprang into action to execute our largest Grow a Garden food access program yet. We also worked quickly to adapt our educational programming by launching our new online network to ensure our community members could still connect with one another and with our DUG educational team to exchange knowledge and resources. We were blown away by the number of people who joined us, and we're looking forward to growing this network in 2021 with even more content!

In this pandemic year, we celebrated our 35th anniversary, reflecting on our humble beginnings and how our work has contributed to a vibrant, healthy metro Denver. **With the continued rise in obesity, depression, carbon levels in the atmosphere, and cultural division, we see firsthand how our work has played an important role in supporting conscious movement and healthy eating, mental and emotional wellness, building healthy soils and biodiverse urban ecosystems, all while in community.**

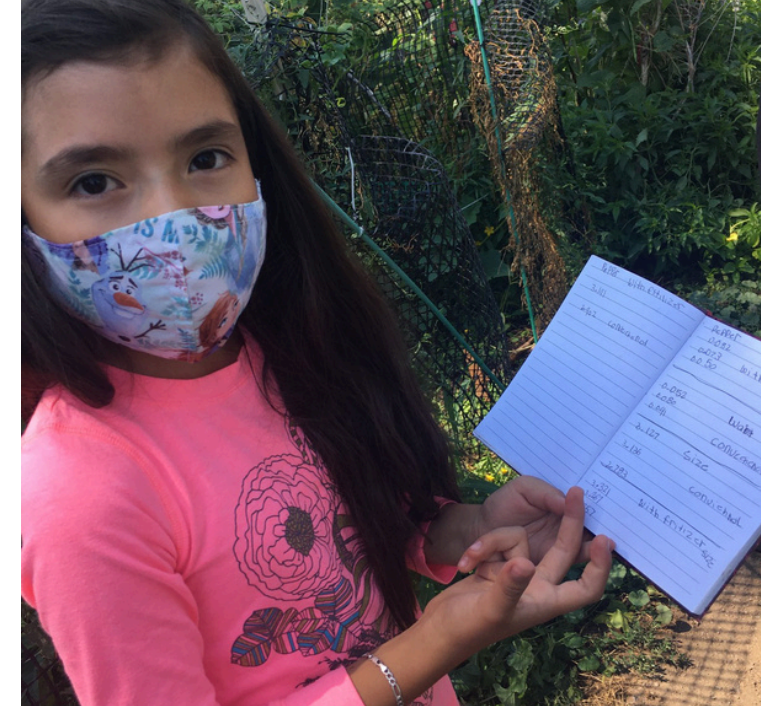
We remain deeply grateful for our gardeners, volunteers, partners, program participants, donors and extended network. We're heading into 2021 with optimism and excitement as we continue our work throughout metro Denver to promote resiliency and well being through the simple, elemental act of growing food. Come grow with us!

*Linda Appel Lipsius*

Linda Appel Lipsius  
Executive Director

*Ramonna Robinson*

Ramonna Robinson  
Board President





# WE'RE GREENING THIS CITY.

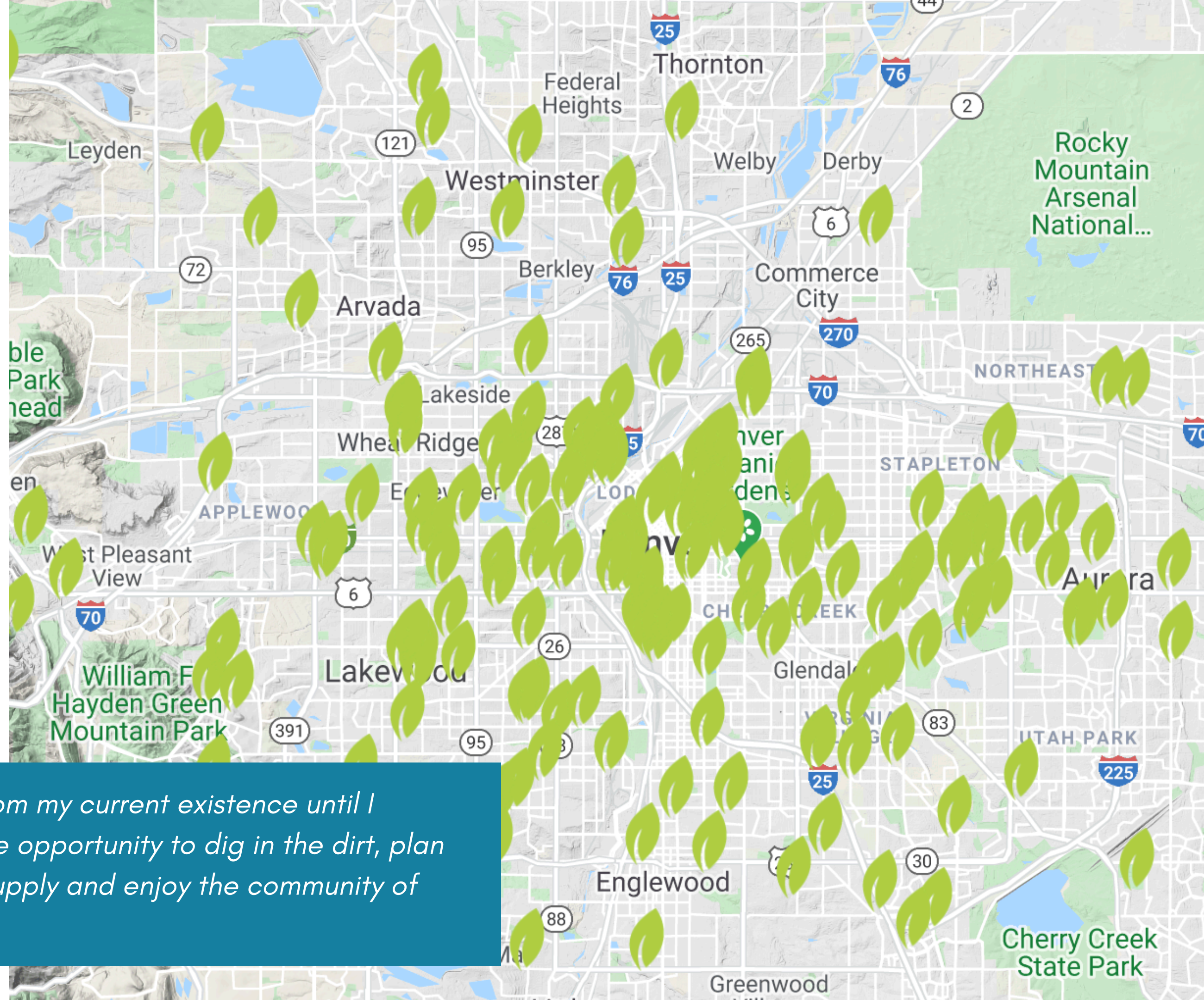
DUG currently oversees **188 community and school-based gardens** and preserves **32.5 acres of green space** across metro Denver.

**100** garden plots were added in new and existing gardens

**4,467** total DUG plots were utilized by community members

**17,868** people benefited from a DUG garden

*"I hadn't truly realized what was missing from my current existence until I connected with my community garden. The opportunity to dig in the dirt, plan and manage my plants, process my food supply and enjoy the community of other gardeners is invaluable."*







*"Being able to work in and volunteer for a community garden has made me feel like I'm contributing to the global future."*

Our work is made possible through our extensive and dedicated **volunteer** network.

**2,840+**

**Volunteer hours** were logged

**596**

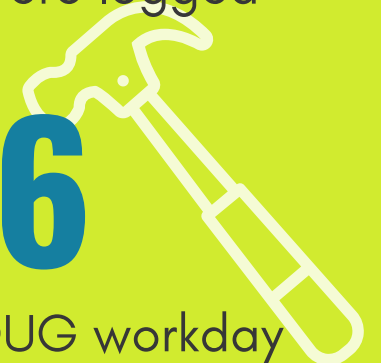
**Volunteers** joined a DUG workday

**10**

**Existing gardens** received infrastructure improvements

**4**

**New gardens** were built with the help of corporate volunteer groups







WORKDAY AT SANCTUARY GARDEN  
Aurora, CO





**DUG GARDENS  
GROW MORE  
THAN FOOD.**



# DUG GARDENS BUILD **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES** THAT SUPPORT THEMSELVES + THEIR NEIGHBORS.



**580+** 

**Volunteer Garden Leaders provided community leadership,** organization and accountability for each of our gardens

**600,000+**

**pounds of organic food were grown in** DUG gardens

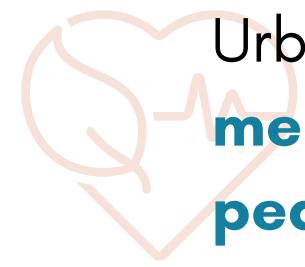
**10%** 

**of produce grown in DUG gardens was gifted** to local food banks, neighbors, and community members





# DUG GARDENS SUPPORT INCREASED WELLBEING FOR PEOPLE + PLANET.



Urban green spaces are shown to **boost mental and physical health, promote peace and relaxation,** and **reduce premature mortality.**



DUG gardens **reduce heat island effects, sequester carbon** in the soil, and **absorb traffic noise.**



DUG trains community members to **build healthy soil and preserve biodiverse ecosystems** through organic, regenerative horticulture practices.

*"What this means to me is an opportunity at creating a more sustainable life, providing fresh produce to family and friends, and being part of a collective that values nature and how it provides for us while also giving back to the earth."*







**PROJECT  
WORTHMORE**

# DUG NURTURES SUSTAINABLE SKILLS.

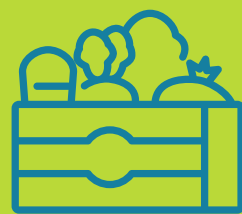
**DeLaney Community Farm is a partnership between DUG and Project Worthmore to support refugees in building skills in regenerative agriculture practices.** DeLaney Community Farm sits on a 158-acre historic property in Aurora. Established in 1997 in partnership with the City of Aurora, the farm grows organic food for local restaurants and public CSA members, families utilizing Women, Infants and Children (WIC), refugees, interns, and apprentice farmers.

## On the farm...



**5**

full-time  
farmers



**32**

CSA memberships  
serviced



**32,105**

Pounds of food  
produced



**250**

apprentice  
hours



**1,400**

Pounds of food sold  
to local restaurants



**2x**

The land was activated  
for farming during COVID







A DAY AT DELANEY COMMUNITY FARM  
Aurora, CO



# WE BELIEVE FOOD ACCESS IS FOR **EVERYONE.**

For the last 23 years, DUG's **Grow a Garden program** has connected individuals, families, and community groups with **free and low-cost seeds + seedlings**, as well as the **educational resources** to grow a thriving garden at home or in a DUG garden.

**22,563**

people  
served



**28,907**

seed packets  
distributed

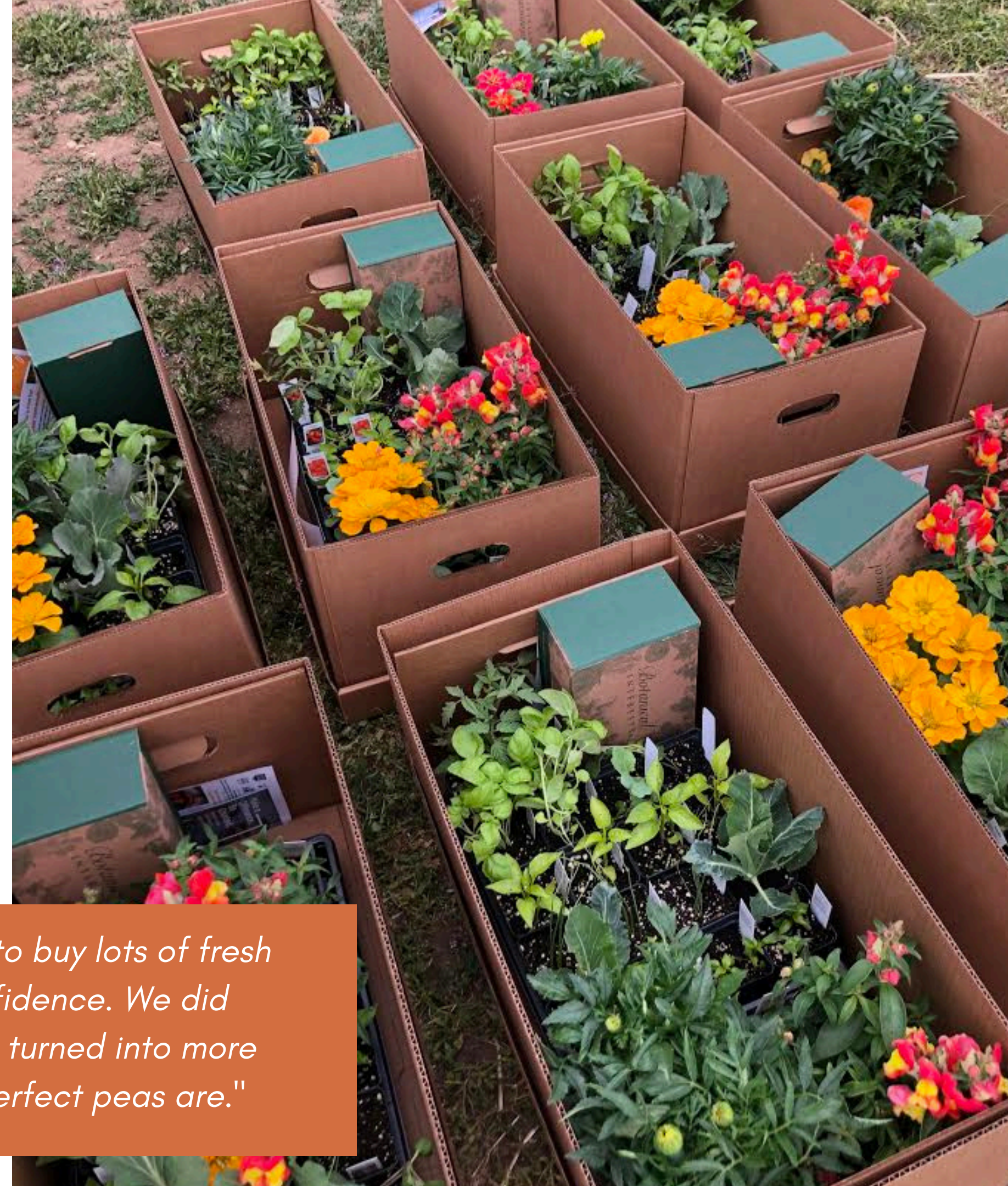


**47,974**

seedlings  
distributed



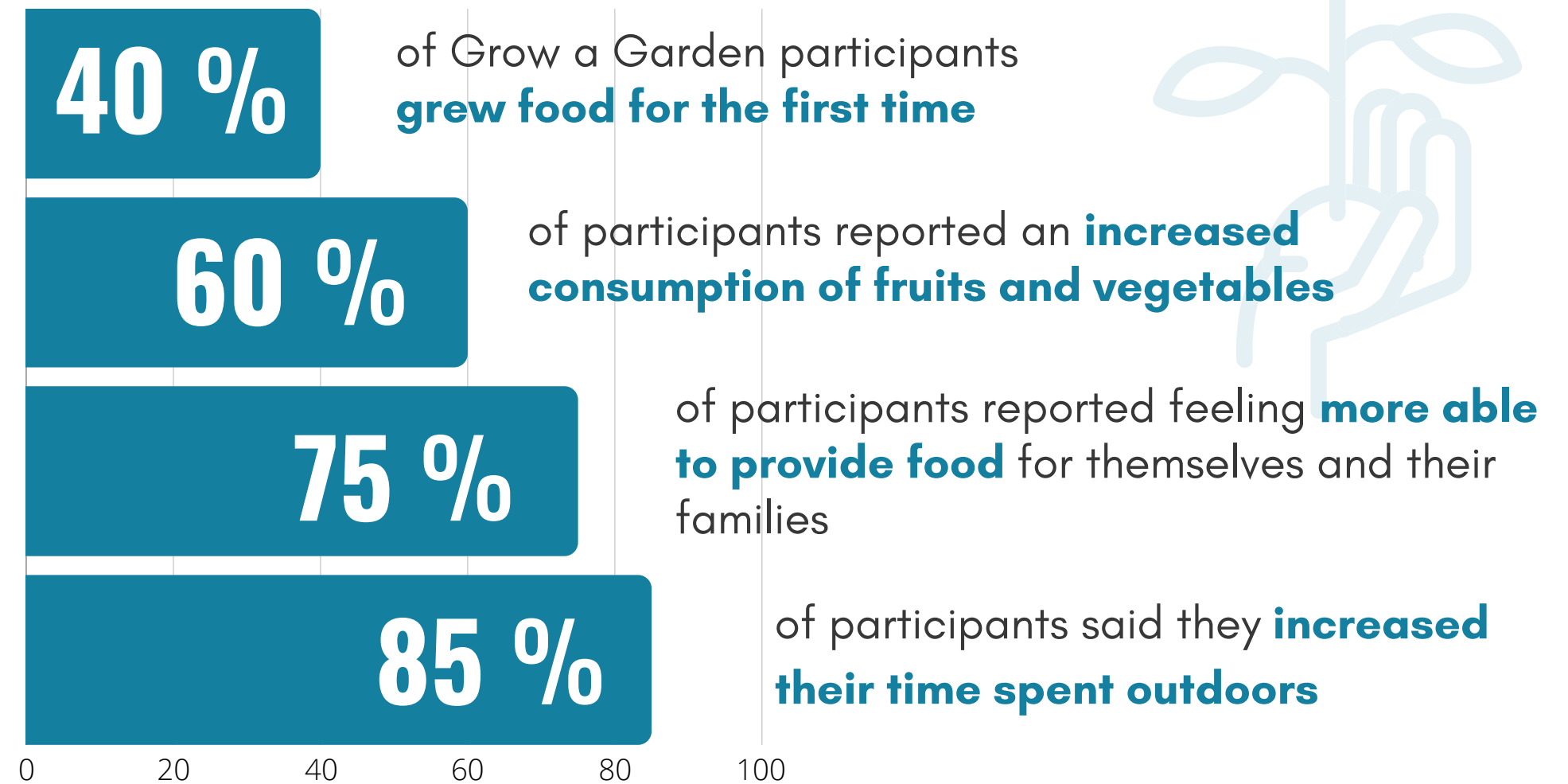
*"We are a single family income who can't always find it in the budget to buy lots of fresh vegetables. Growing a garden this year gave me and my children confidence. We did something as a family and worked together to see an end result which turned into more family time. My kids found out how delicious a cucumber is and how perfect peas are."*







# GARDENING IS AN ACT OF CARE FOR SELF + OTHERS.



*"One of the best things about gardening is the community connection. With COVID, we haven't had childcare and my husband and I work lots of hours. Two of my good friends are master gardeners. Asking my circle of friends about gardening has been a good way for me to connect with people about something other than the pandemic, being overwhelmed with work, or childcare."*



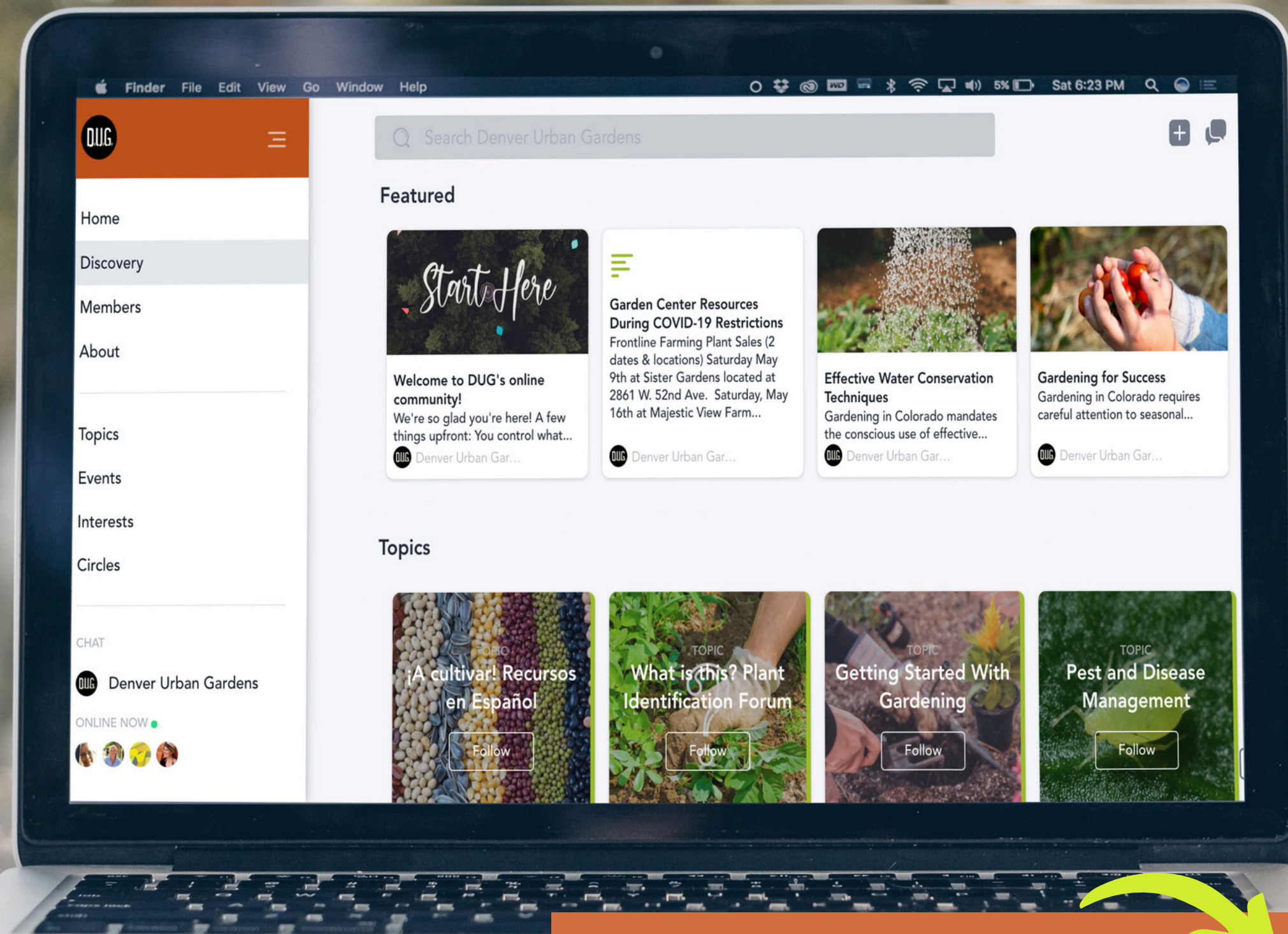
# TOGETHER, WE LEARN + GROW.

DUG has always educated metro Denver through organic gardening classes.

**This year we took the classes online.**

**Our online network is a hub of resources, community, and direct connection to DUG's horticulture experts. It's free and open to everyone (not just DUG gardeners).**

Since our launch, 800+ people have joined our network—and we're just getting growing.



**Join us online!**

<https://community.dug.org>



# GARDENERS + CHANGEMAKERS = STRONG COMMUNITIES

DUG's community education programs do more than support best practices in **organic gardening**—they also develop **leadership and community-building skills** for participants to take back to their own communities.

We offer free and low-cost **gardening workshops** year-round, supporting beginners and experienced gardeners alike with **seasonally-appropriate training** on the basics of organic gardening and beyond.

Our long-standing **Master Composter** and **Master Community Gardener** programs utilize a **train-the-trainer approach** so that participants learn new skills and then apply them through give-back hours in their own communities.



9+

Urban Roots  
Garden Education  
and **Community  
Lunch and Learn**  
workshops held  
virtually



participants in our  
**Master Composter**  
and **Master  
Community Garden**  
training programs



hours of volunteer-  
led community  
**education** delivered



# WE'RE SPROUTING **THE NEXT** **GENERATION** OF URBAN GARDENERS.

DUG works in partnership with **schools in six local districts** to not only **establish school-based gardens** (we're currently at 72!) but also to **train teachers and volunteers** on how to incorporate DUG curriculum into their classrooms. This fall, when Denver Public Schools started the school year remotely, we adapted our curriculum and worked in partnership with Slow Food Denver to develop and offer virtual cooking classes for elementary-aged kids across Denver.

**139**

**students and their families** served in underserved schools

**148**

**food kits** prepped and delivered to families

**28**

**virtual classes** taught in both English + Spanish

**523**

**healthy meals** prepared by students during class

*"My students have a hard time following multi-step directions and sticking things out till the end. When you start with raw vegetables and end with a finished product, and you can taste it (and it tastes good), it excites my students. They are learning how to follow directions and how to persevere because, in the end, there will be a great prize. It helps build my students' intrinsic motivation and teaches them that eating healthy is good for you."*



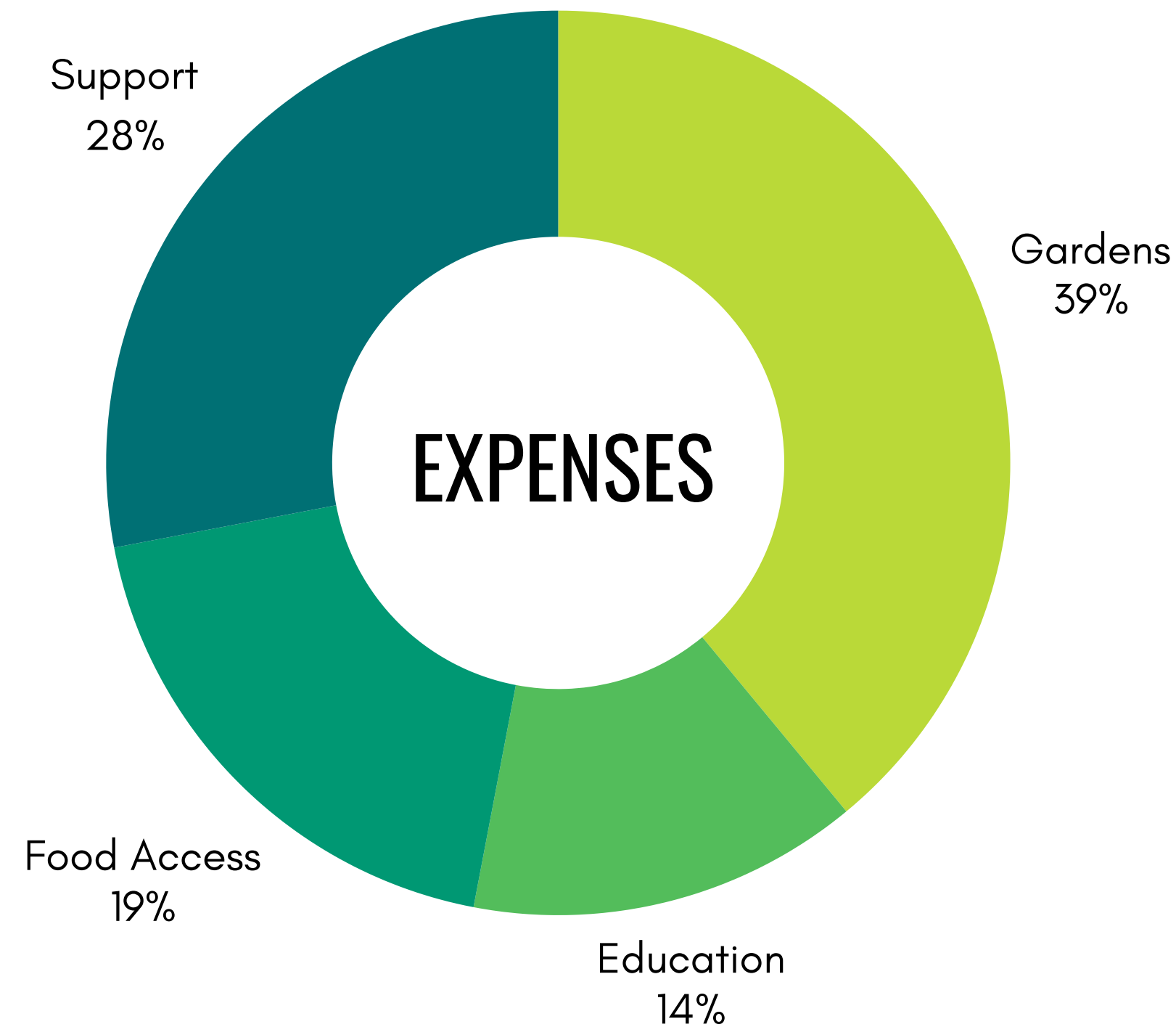
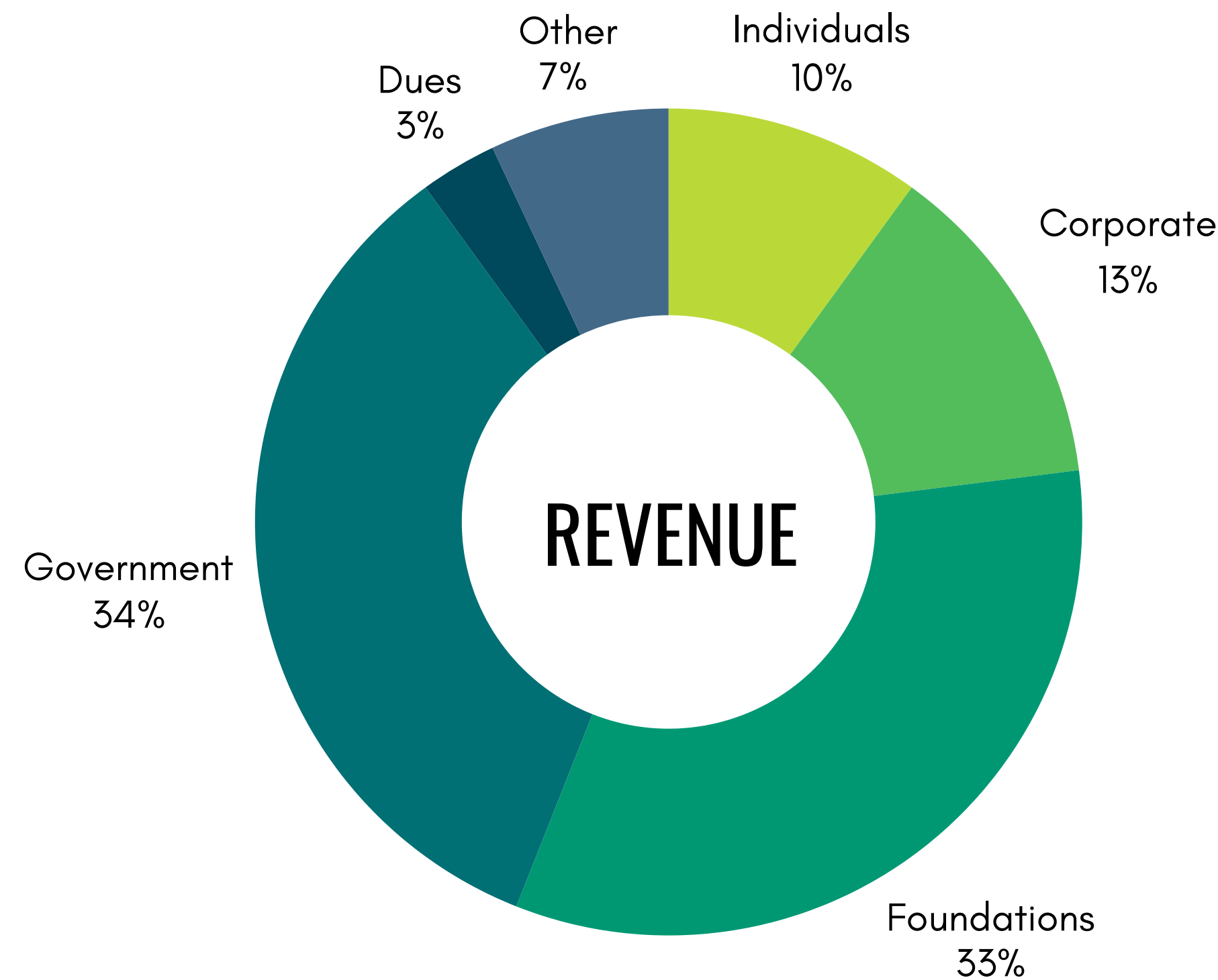




PREPARING MEAL KITS FOR DELIVERY  
DUG Office



# 2020 FINANCIALS







# ROSE ROOTS COMMUNITY GARDEN

## ARVADA, CO



# CELEBRATING OUR COMMON HUMANITY BY GROWING FOOD. LET'S GROW TOGETHER.



## VISIT

**community.dug.org** to explore our online network of resources and connect with other local gardeners

## GIVE

**the gift of knowledge, skills, and resources** for growing food with your donation. Visit [dug.org/donate](https://dug.org/donate)

## JOIN

**DUG for a volunteer worksday** and get growing! Visit [dug.org/volunteer](https://dug.org/volunteer) for more info.

## FOLLOW

**us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn** to stay up to date with the latest news, photos, and videos.







Denver Urban Gardens

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[www.dug.org](http://www.dug.org)