

# NMU Hoop House

## 2014 *Annual Report*

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The NMU Hoop House serves as a collaborative learning center for eaters of all ages who are curious about where food comes from and want to learn more about how it is grown. Through student-driven research and community education on sustainable agriculture, the project aims to expand our local food system, increase food security, and promote access to fresh, healthy food for everyone.



# About the NMU Hoop House

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Located on the campus of Northern Michigan University, the Marquette Hoop House Pilot Project began in 2009 as a partnership between Northern Initiatives, NMU's College of Professional Studies, and the Marquette Food Co-op. The project works to help current farmers, potential farmers, and the greater community learn more about sustainable agricultural practices and using hoop houses to extend the growing season in a northern climate. Harvests from the Hoop House are donated to the culinary programs at NMU and local charities.



## What we do

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- Workshops on gardening and farming
- Tours of the Hoop House available for groups or individuals of all ages
- Lectures, presentations, and educational activities on local food systems, sustainable agriculture, and healthy eating for your school or group
- Research and internship opportunities
- Hands-on experience with small-scale farming as a volunteer



## Ways to get involved

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- Volunteer at weekly workdays
- Attend a workshop
- Borrow a hoop bender
- Propose a seed saving research project





# 485

pounds of fresh  
food grown for  
food pantries  
and culinary  
students

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# 24

volunteers got  
their hands in  
the dirt

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# 113

gardeners  
attended  
workshops

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# 724

people learned  
about the hoop  
house through  
tours,  
presentations,  
and community  
events

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# 214

NMU students  
visited to find out  
more about the  
local food system

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# Projects

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## Helping School Gardens Grow

We offer technical support and consulting for UP school garden and hoop house programs. Students from Marquette and Alger counties visit the hoop house to learn about innovative ideas. The first UP School Garden and Hoop House Conference attracted 22 teachers and school staff from around the peninsula.



## Tool Library

A tool library connected with the Co-op's Access Fund for farmers has begun by purchasing two hoop benders, which allow farmers and gardeners to use season-extension technology on a small scale. Both in hands-on workshops and independently, 88 hoops were made.



## Salad Bar Calculator

Working to integrate school gardens with lunch programs, we developed an informational tool to help teachers and students plant seeds according to projected harvests. At Superior Central School, 127 pounds of produce for the lunch room were harvested.



## Seed Saving Garden

We've been growing, then saving seed from, our garlic for 4 years now. The outdoor seed saving gardens are a place to develop plant varieties like beans, peas, tomatoes, lettuce, and onions that are particularly well-suited to the UP's short growing season and harsh climate.



## Making Soil

Using worms to make veggie scraps into a rich soil amendment is called vermicomposting – we turned about 260 pounds of inedible produce into soil.



## MAEAP Varification

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program verifies that farms are using water and nutrients in environmentally aware ways. At the NMU Hoop House, we use 6800 gallons of water per year—which is probably about as much water as you used bathing last year.

## Donations

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### What We Grow

spinach, radishes, tomatoes, peppers, collard greens, kale, peas, garlic, onions, beans, potatoes, cilantro



### Where it Goes

Harbor House and NMU Culinary Students





# Volunteer Opportunities

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Want to get your hands in the dirt and meet other people who care about sustainable agriculture? Join us on workdays April - October. Volunteer trainings are offered throughout the season and provide necessary information about food safety and the work we do. Contact us to find out about the next training session!

Our volunteer program, which is recognized by Superior Edge in Citizenship, gathers many NMU students majoring in environmental science, geography, sustainability, biology, nursing, and education together over the simple act of working in the garden. The NMU Hoop House provides these students a place to pursue their interest in agriculture in a way that no other program at the University currently offers.

## Thanks To:

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Our volunteers, especially daily volunteers Shane Sizemore, Leon Katona, Laura Ferris, Rach Headings, and Mika Benton.

Rock River Farm, Rock River Perennial Garden, and Cedar Creek Farm for donating plant starts and irrigation equipment, and community members who brought windows for cold frames, hoses, and plant start containers.

Nathan Mileski, Eric Moe, Deb Pearce, Chris Kibit, Andrew Sear, Loganne Boorsema for bringing local food to the table – literally – at NMU.



# 2015 Hoop House Events

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If you have questions about your project, contact Abbey at 906-225-0671 x 725 or [apalmer@marquettefood.coop](mailto:apalmer@marquettefood.coop).

Preregistration is required: [www.marquettefood.coop/events/workshops](http://www.marquettefood.coop/events/workshops)

## DIY Hoop Houses

Learn about the materials and tools used to build back-yard scale hoop houses. You don't need to invest in a commercial hoop house to enjoy the benefits of season extension, like riper tomatoes, spinach and lettuce far into the fall, and protection from deer and rabbits. The class will include instruction about how to site your hoop house, what you can grow in it, and where to purchase plastic. During registration, you will have the option to purchase materials and bend 4'X4' hoops at the class using Hoop Benders from the MFC Tool Library.

**When:** 6:00 pm on Wednesday, April 22

**Where:** NMU Hoop House

**Cost:** \$5 per hoop, FREE to observers. Donation to MFC Access Fund appreciated.

## Central UP School Hoop House & Garden Conference

Think like a Farmer

Do you know how to build healthy soil on the cheap? The real difference between direct seeding and transplanting? The best methods for safely harvesting and handling produce? School gardens and hoop houses can adopt some of the methods that small, diversified farms use to make their operations efficient and profitable. An introduction to soil health and amendments, crop planning ideas, and food safety activities tailored to school settings will be discussed – and practiced. Come get your hands in the dirt and learn from experienced UP farmers in a hands-on setting designed to help your school garden program grow and thrive! SCECH credits are being pursued for attendees.

**When:** 10:00-5:00 on Saturday, May 9

**Where:** Central UP - TBA

**Cost:** \$20 (scholarships available). Lunch provided.

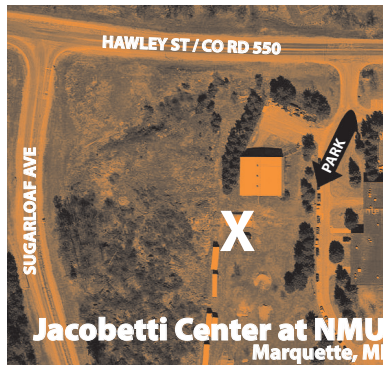
## Vermicomposting

Put worms to work for you! Vermicomposting uses worms to digest kitchen scraps into a great soil amendment. But where do you get the worms, and how do you take care of them? At this hands-on workshop, we'll provide a starter batch of worms, build a container, and troubleshoot common problems that can arise. You can also investigate larger-scale worm operations through examples at the NMU Hoop House. During registration, you will have the option to purchase materials to make your own worm bin.

**When:** 6:00 pm on Wednesday, June 17

**Where:** NMU Hoop House

**Cost:** \$15 for those building worm bins, FREE to observers. Donation to MFC Access Fund is appreciated.



## Location

The Hoop House is located in a field beside the Jacobetti Center on NMU's campus. Turn into the Jacobetti Center off of Hawley St/550, and follow the drive to the right.

*a partnership between:*



College of Professional Studies



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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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