*Please submit this completed application and any relevant supporting documentation by the deadline listed on the SSC website to* *Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu**.The Working Group Chairs will be in contact with you regarding any questions about the application. If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the SSC at* *Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu**.*

# General Information

**Project Name:** University YMCA Woody Polyculture Garden

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:** $10,000.00

**Project Topic Area(s):** ☐Energy XEducation XFood & Waste

 XLand ☐Water ☐Transportation

# Contact Information

Applicant Name: Matthew Martinez

Unit/Department: President of Urban Agriculture for SECS (Students for Environmental Concerns)

Email Address: mamrtnz4@illinois.edu

Phone Number: (815) 919 - 5812

**Project Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Department** | **Email** |
| Matthew Martinez | SECS - Urban Ag. President | mamrtnz4@illinois.edu |
| Sarah Taylor Lovell | Associate Professor, ACES | stlovell@illinois.edu |

# Project Information

Please provide a brief background of the project, the goals, and the desired outcomes:

Students for Environmental Concerns would like to plant a woody perennial polyculture community garden on the front lawn of the University YMCA. Woody polycultures are sustainable alternatives for food production and grass lawns. We would like to eliminate the environmental impact of the current grass lawn as its maintenance requires inordinate amounts of water and gas for mowing. A food forest, on the other hand, is composed of shrubs, trees, and forage that are native to the area and require little to no maintenance once established.

We hope to provide the university community with practical information on the sustainable efficacy of woody polycultures through a feasibility study. We would also like for the garden to inform the campus community of edible native plants that are seldom eaten.

Please provide a brief summary of how students will be involved in the project:

Professor Sarah Lovell, of the department of crop sciences, is including a YMCA garden design as a final project in her Designing Sustainable Landscapes class, which takes place the second half of this semester. Students will design a woody perennial polyculture garden or “food forest” based on the parameters of the front lawn of the YMCA, which she will then critique to ensure that it’s not only free of any glaring issues, but of a high aesthetic and practical standard.

Students in Students for Environmental Concerns will be heavily involved in the establishment and maintenance of the garden. Once the garden is established, all students will be welcome to view and pick food from it. SECS will then gather information on the environmental impact that the garden has on the plot.

We are also interested in incorporating the garden as a possible field course for the department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences.

Otherwise, the front lawn of the YMCA is in a highly visible and easily accessible part of campus facing out onto Wright street. Students will be able to learn about the garden through signage and, of course, by exploring it and gathering food from it. The garden will operate on a ‘take what you will’ basis.

Overall, the garden will serve as an educational tool on the practicality of woody polyculture systems.

Please provide a brief summary of the project timeline:

After we receive funding for this garden, we will begin constructing at the beginning of the fall semester when students have returned from break. Fairly involved maintenance will then take place consistently for a span of about three years. The maintenance will be handled by SECS and other student groups. The garden will operate indefinitely after it has been established. Plants in woody polyculture systems can be productive for up to 75 years.

Additional comments

Any additional comments/relevant information for the project proposal