

GROWING CONCERN

Veggie vision challenges the 'lie' about food costs

Planting in unused spaces helps needy and gives food for thought

Daneel Knoetze
STAFF REPORTER

WHEN Stephen Lamb looks at a rooftop or unused stretch of paving, he imagines what it would look like covered in soil and sprouting vegetables. He calls these "spaces in between" and dreams of the day when ordinary people and companies will use them to their full, nutrition-providing potential.

It is a vision that his company, Touching the Earth Lightly, and the Methodist Church on Greenmarket Square are trying to make a reality by setting an example with an experimental vegetable garden.

In this case, the space is between the church's wrought iron fences and Gothic facade. On Friday, Lamb and Reverend Alan Storey helped volunteers to line milk crates with hessian, fill them with soil, and plant fruits and vegetables in them – Cape gooseberry, tulbaghia, tomatoes, grana-dillas, grapes, lemons, strawberries and spring onions.

"These plants were chosen because they are all hardy, self-seeding, and produce an abundance of fruit," said Bridget Albert of Grow Landscaping, which donated the plants.

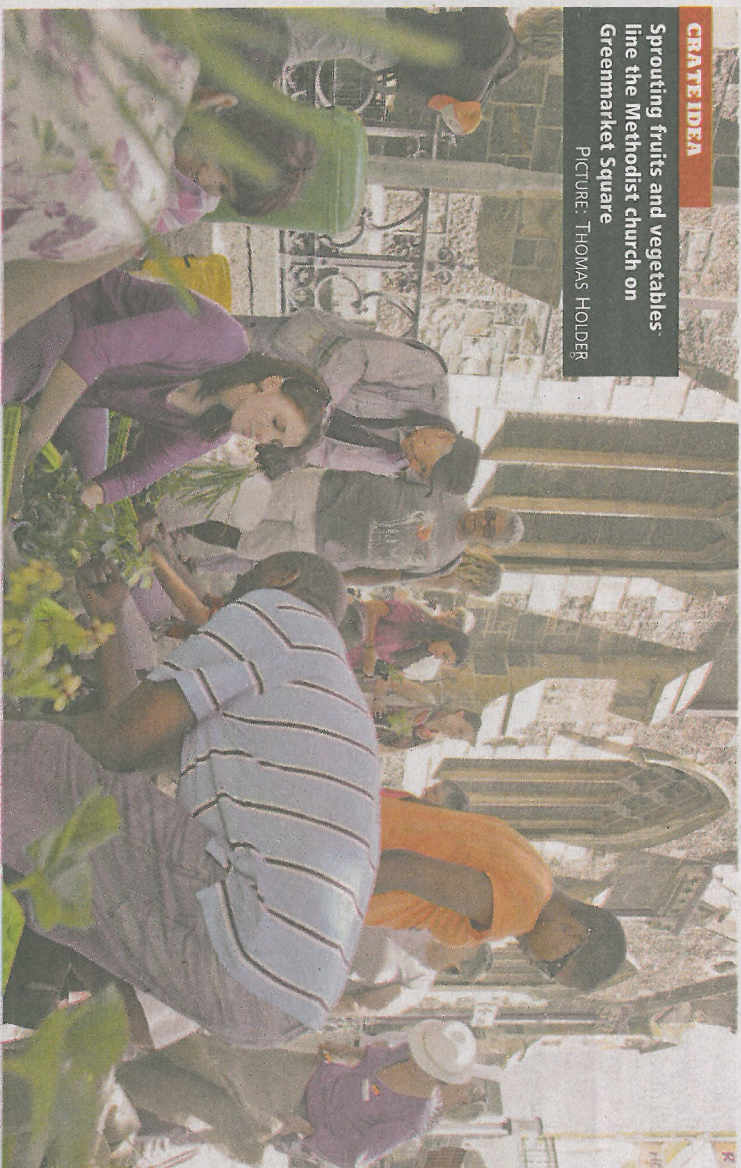
The idea is to educate people about the possibilities of growing food, even in the centre of the city.

The food grown will also be available free to people who live in the city and go hungry as a result of poverty. What isn't picked will go to the church's

CRATE IDEA

Sprouting fruits and vegetables line the Methodist church on Greenmarket Square

PICTURE: THOMAS HOLDER



THE IDEA IS TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF GROWING FOOD

Sunday feeding schemes which help feed more than 200 people weekly.

"We want to expose the capitalistic lie that food costs money... The sun, wind, water, earth and seeds are all resources that Mother Nature gives to us for free. Secondly, the message and idea of green living, changing from a finger-waving indictment to something fun, celebratory, colourful and inclusive," said Lamb.

One of those helping with Friday's planting was Jacques Meyer, who recently arrived from the Free State to look for work. He was nudged on the way and lost his backpack containing most of his possessions.

Meyer is now homeless, but has extensive gardening experience and has volunteered to take charge of the garden's upkeep.

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WATER RESOURCES

Sprinklers to be checked

John Yeld

ENVIRONMENT & SCIENCE WRITER

THE CITY's maintenance team will check the dune irrigation system at Blouberg beach "as a matter of urgency", says Tandeke Gqada, mayoral committee member for community services.

She was responding to concerns raised by a Cape Argus team who saw several broken sprinklers in operation during a visit in the middle of the day.

Gqada said the maintenance team in the area had been alerted and would take the necessary remedial measures.

But it was unclear whether city staff complied with the water by-law, which stipulates that irrigation systems may not be used between 10am and 3pm.

Earlier this year, the city urged residents to practise water conservation measures, even though there had been a wet winter with lots of rain.

"There is still a great need to save water because every drop saved during winter will be available when needed in summer," it said in a statement. "South Africa is a water-scarce country and seasonal rain patterns are unpredictable."

Residents are strongly encouraged to cultivate a water conservation ethos and make saving water a way of life. It is everybody's responsibility to manage water use as best we can."

The city appealed to residents to continue to abide by the conservation measures prescribed in Schedule 1 of the water by-law which is available on the city's website at www.capetown.gov.za/water under the "policies, laws & by-laws" tab.

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TWO PROVINCES

14 rhinos found dehorned

FOURTEEN rhino have been found dehorned in two provinces since Thursday, police said yesterday.

Three of them had been killed.

Eleven of the rhino were found at the Hartzoogte game lodge in Amalia near

Schweizer-Reneke in North West. The game farmer found the first carcass on Thursday after he followed a trail of blood. In the Eastern Cape three rhino were found dehorned at a game farm near Kenton-on-Sea. - Sapa

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