

## Healthful diet seen as way to help achieve a healthier planet

*MCC's urban agriculture initiative offers workshops to explore strategies*

By Diana Whittle

Eating a more healthful diet while caring for the earth are two goals many South Tempe and West Chandler residents have embraced. A series of programs being offered at Mesa Community College is helping them reach those goals.

MCC's Center for Urban Agriculture, along with Brooks Community School, have announced the remaining schedule for a series of free environmental workshops, "Urban farming: Healthy Foods and Healthy Living."

The center serves as a community hub for K-12 and college STEM education through horticulture and sustainable urban agriculture.

It also houses a localized hub for the study of aquaponics, a food production system the combines raising aquatic animals such as snails and crayfish with growing plants in the water.

Information about the center and its pursuits can be found at [www.mesacc.edu/cua](http://www.mesacc.edu/cua). Click on the "About Center" link in the left navigation bar for a brief overview of its development and mission.

Click on "Resources and Media" for more information about the EPA grant which was awarded to the school and used to develop the workshop series.

Workshop attendees can learn about a variety of environmental topics in the classes which are held locally on the fourth Thursday and Saturday of each month through October.

Meetings are held at 6 p.m. at MCC's Southern and Dobson campus, 1833 W. Southern Ave., Mesa.

Peter Conden, director of MCC's horticulture program, said the sessions are in response to increasing interest in the subject.

"The workshops are fantastic opportunities for community members to learn and participate in urban agriculture projects in a fun, educational setting," Conden said.

"Our desired outcomes are successful, clean, healthy, sustainable, revitalized communities where people can work and live in safety."

In addition, MCC offers several full-semester, for-credit classes through the college in the Urban Horticulture program, including Aquaponics, Gardening and Urban Plant Care.

**Workshop schedule:** July 23 and 25 — Integrated Pest Management; Aug. 27 and 28 — Water and Energy Conservation; Sept. 24 and 26 — From Backyard Hobby to Business Enterprise; Oct. 22 and 24 — Backyard Orchards; Nov. 19 and 21 — Healthy Cooking.

Note: The November workshops will be held on Nov. 19 and 21 because of the Thanksgiving holiday.

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## It's not too late to register for fall classes.

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