



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

BLACK THUMB FARM

FROM OUR FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In just our second year of programming, I could not be more proud of the immense amount of energy, love, passion, dedication, and collaboration that came from every member of our team, Board, youth and community. Black Thumb Farm began in the summer of 2020, during a pandemic, modern day civil rights movement, and the deepest recession post WW2. Our team recognizes the impacts all of these hits have taken on our community, and we have been proactive in participating to make positive change for our youth. Our programs are designed to provide safe green space, technical skill sets, mentorship and leadership training, and access to fresh foods for our local BIPOC youth that are too often overlooked and pushed to the margins. We believe in providing a hand-up rather than a hand-out, and empowering our youth to tackle anything that comes their way, knowing they have the community support of Black Thumb Farm behind them with every step.

We have seamlessly pivoted from a mobile model to a rooted down organization. With a small but mighty team, we were able to reach several schools, dozens of youth, and many SFV community members with our programs and community gatherings. We continue our successful partnerships with Cottonwood Urban Farm, LACompost, NRCS, and many more.

Our third year (2022-2023) will be our biggest yet, as we roll out our school garden program-Black Thumb Gardens-at 2 high schools, host numerous field trips and site visits, establish our first farm stand, and expand our outreach for community gatherings.

Keep Growing,



Alexis Romo
Founder & Executive Director

OUR STORY SO FAR



OUR MISSION

BIPOC communities are often the hardest hit when it comes to food access, especially in the San Fernando Valley and greater L.A. areas. Our mission is to empower BIPOC youth in these areas to take back their health and advocate for food sovereignty on behalf of their community. We equip our youth with hands-on training and experience in farming and gardening, build their leadership skills, and provide our communities with access to healthy, quality produce and a safe, green space.

3

PROGRAMS

40

YOUTH SERVED
THROUGH FARM
HANDS & FELLOWSHIP

138

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS SERVED
THROUGH
NEIGHBORHOOD
NOURISHMENTS

264

POUNDS OF PRODUCE
DONATED TO THE
COMMUNITY

OUR VISION

Black Thumb Farm will always be a space to teach children and young adults to fight for food sovereignty through hands-on training and experience, all while providing our communities with access to healthy, quality produce. Food will be grown sustainably and with an eye on long-term soil health so that our communities may have access to healthy soil for generations to come. We will be intentional and intersectional in our fight against the injustices in our community, knowing that food injustice is just one part in a system created to oppress marginalized communities. Black Thumb Farm will work to grow our youth's knowledge and capacity; nourish our youth's connection to the land and their passions; and empower our youth to advocate for themselves and their communities.



FARM HANDS

Designed for young people 14 to 18 years of age, our Farm Hands are introduced to farming and gardening education that teaches the histories of traditional farming practices, crediting the sources, most of which are Indigenous, Afro-centric, and Asian. They work the land alongside the Black Thumb Farm team to practice and continue these closed circle processes.

Our Farm Hands leave the program able to identify culturally relevant edible plant species and their uses, with a working knowledge of CA Native plants and their history, with an understanding of long term soil health, and with knowledge and experience related to compost.

40

YOUTH SERVED

Our youth came to us from 4 different high schools with varying levels of garden exposure prior to our program. 80% had no access to a garden space outside of Black Thumb Farm.

264

POUNDS OF PRODUCE
DONATED

Every week our Farm Hands brought home a harvest from the garden. From a bundle of herbs to a produce bag full of the seasonal harvest, all of the food grown in the garden was donated to our youth.

37

WEEKS OF
PROGRAMMING

Every Saturday from 9 - 11 am our kids were outside, immersing themselves in the land. Beginning each session with meditation, our youth would jump into a lesson or activity planned by our Executive Director or a guest teacher, then finish up with tasks around the farm. Two hours, minimum, of time spent outside, in a safe, green space.

FELLOWSHIP

Our Fellowship, for ages 17 - 22, gives young people experience with nonprofit management and a chance to develop their communication and outreach skills, while they also attend Farm Hands training in order to be immersed in the land.

Fellows support the Black Thumb Farm Team with administrative tasks, communicate with the communities we serve through social media and in-person workshops, and to take on individual projects of their choosing that will benefit the Black Thumb Farm community while developing a passion of their own.

2

FELLOWS HIRED

We hired two Fellows in 2021, Yesenia Casillas Rios and Angelica Rios. Yesenia was a senior in high school and Angelica was a freshman in college.

393.5

HOURS WORKED

From November of 2021 through June of 2022, both Fellows worked with the team at BTF to manage the farm, assist the BTF team members across departments, and complete their projects.

2

PROJECTS COMPLETED

Angelica and Yesenia completed their projects on plant-based painting and its environmental and mental health benefits and an almanac specific to the Arleta and Panorama City area, respectively. They presented their projects to the team and Board of Directors.





NEIGHBORHOOD NOURISHMENTS

Donation-based, weekend workshops that are open to the community and meant to nourish all that attend, mind, body, and soul. Topics ranging from gardening tips to yoga, nutrition, cooking, and more are covered. We aim to give everyone that enters our space a grounding experience rooted in the Earth and community knowledge. Our workshops are led by team members, BTF Fellows, and guest speakers.

4

EVENTS

We hosted our Neighborhood Nourishments seasonally throughout 2021-2022.

Fall: Dia de los Muertos

Winter: Wreath Making

Spring: Getting Your Garden Started

Summer: Cooking with Your Summer Harvest

138

ATTENDEES

We had 138 community members attend our Neighborhood Nourishments. Each event deepened our connection to our supporters, program participants, and the neighbors that attended. Our events also created opportunities for community members to connect with each other.



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

300

POUNDS OF GREEN WASTE TO LACOMPOST

The on-site location of LACompost's San Fernando Valley regional hub at Cottonwood Urban Farm allows us to divert our green waste as locally as possible. Our youth are able to participate in a community composting system, as well as gain the knowledge and tools to compost on their own.

500

POUNDS OF COMPOST ADDED TO OUR SOILS

As participants in LACompost's SFV regional hub, we locally sourced 500 pounds of compost to add to our crop rows, planters and fruit trees. These crucial nutrients keep our plants and trees producing happily, helps our soil retain moisture, and allows us to grow more healthy food for our youth and their families.

170

CA NATIVE PLANTS ADDED TO OUR GROWING SPACES

CA Native plants are vital to a healthy ecosystem. With the help of the Native Plant Nursery of the Santa Monica Mountains in Newbury Park (SAMO Fund), we leaned indigenous planting techniques and added more native plants to our space, improving our local ecosystem for humans and wildlife alike.



OUR STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS

STAFF



ALEXYS ROMO

FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
& FARM HANDS COORDINATOR



ANALISA CROSTHWAIT

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
& FELLOWSHIP COORDINATOR



ALBERTO ALCAZAR

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR



YU-SHING NI

GARDEN EDUCATION COORDINATOR

A small, but mighty team that saw the addition of Alberto Alcazar as Social Media Coordinator in August of 2021 and Yu-Shing Ni as Garden Education Coordinator in May of 2022.

2021-2022 BOARD

Alexys Romo - Chair of the Board

Analisa Crosthwait - Secretary of the Board

Chelsea Thomas - Treasurer of the Board

Rachel Black - Board Member

Johanna Recalde - Board Member

Rashaad Dixon - Board Member

Rick Perillo - Board Member



CONTACT US!

ALL INQUIRIES:
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www.blackthumbfarm.org/

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