

Residents' garden grows in Hudson County

It's a slice of Americana more commonly associated with suburban subdivisions and single-family living. But the "greening" of the country and the rising popularity of personally growing and producing your own fruits and vegetables has made strong inroads in urban multi-family buildings.

A renewed awareness of the advantages of homegrown produce by the Federal government and initiatives and events centered in the White House organic garden have brought ideas and fundamentals of harvesting from suburban and country neighborhoods into the minds of mainstream America.

Seeking to join the bountiful harvest and enjoy a self-sustaining lifestyle, community gardens are now appearing in the rooftops and yards of condominium and rental buildings throughout Hudson County. And these green spaces serve a dual purpose. Not only fulfilling the role of the suburban garden, community gardens are becoming one of the most popular building amenities to foster social interaction and strengthen togetherness among neighbors.

In Union City, residents of The Lenox, a condominium building located at 500 Central Avenue, expressed great interest in having an outdoor destination where they could gather and enjoy activities together. Joao Carlos Assumpcao, a homeowner in the 16-story building for four years, was aware of the growing desire for community gardens by younger urban dwellers and suggested the idea to the Lenox board in 2011.

Winning approval and with the assistance of Union City Mayor Brian Stack - who donated soil for the garden - Assumpcao set out to research the best methods and practices to create and develop one of the area's most effective and evolving community gardens.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUN EQUITY PARTNERS

When his fellow residents at The Lenox expressed a desire to have an outdoor space where they could gather, Joao Carlos Assumpcao got permission to create a garden on the grounds of the Union City condo building.

The original layout of the Lenox Community Garden called for 38 individual boxes spread across a 60-foot x 25-foot plot. While initial interest was high at The Lenox there was no telling just how popular the garden would become after only three seasons or how it would develop into a trendsetting, community-supported agricultural project under the supervision of Assumpcao and Sherman Sullivan, who together have discovered and implemented innovative sustainable urban garden systems.

Sun Equity Partners, developer of The Lenox, completed a comprehensive modernization program throughout the building, including the introduction of a new suite of first-class recreational and social amenities. In addition to the community garden, there's an onsite 24-hour concierge to handle specific needs and requests, impressive lobby, state-of-the-art fitness center, residents' lounge and a clubroom with pool table and flat-screen TV.

Newly-released studios, one- and two-bedroom residences at The Lenox are available for immediate occupancy. Homes feature spacious floor plans with contemporary finishes and appointments at attractive prices starting from \$179,000. The building is also approved for favorable financing programs offered by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) that require a 3.5-percent down payment.

A variety of floor plans are available ranging in size from 535 to 1,089 square feet of living space. Designer finishes found throughout the homes include hardwood floors, kitchens with stainless-steel GE appliances, custom white gloss kitchen cabinetry and quartz countertops with marble backsplashes; and spa-like bathrooms with imported tile walls and floors and Moen shower fixtures.

In addition to its attractive pricing, stylish homes and amenities, The Lenox also offers residents a convenient location close to mass transportation and major thoroughfares, providing easy access to New York City, New Jersey's Hudson River 'Gold Coast' and Bergen, Essex and Passaic counties.

For additional information on The Lenox, call 201-866-8768 or visit www.thelenoxcondosnj.com. The Sales Center is open by appointment only. Open Houses are conducted on Sundays from 1 to 3 p.m.