



# Master Gardener Spotlight: Selma Held Gardens

**A**s the sun rose in the new millennium on the southeast part of the South Hills in Helena, a local lady of legend awoke and decided it was now or never.

Very close to Selma Held's home lay 5.38 acres of undeveloped city land surrounded by multi-generational mixed housing. Held concluded this was a prime recipe for a community park. In April 2006, she gathered friends and neighbors to form the Beltview Park Development Committee. Helena city authorities were soon convinced of the viability of the committee's park idea.

In February 2009, the City Parks & Recreation Department wrote that basic development of the 5.38 acres into a park would cost \$71,947. Six months later, on August 7, 2009, Selma Held died in Arizona at her son's home, never to see completion of her dream. The dream ultimately resulted in the creation of six city parks in May 2011, including the Selma Held Park which is now part of an eleven-garden organization: the Helena Community Gardens.

Contained in the Selma Held Park is the 18,000 square foot Selma Held Community Garden, another dream of Selma's. In this no-till, 100% organic garden are 38 spaces: 15 in-ground areas and 23 raised beds. As usual, all the garden beds have been rented. Beyond the standard vegetables, there is a mix of young apple and pear trees accompanied by several berry cultivars. Several of the spaces grown are dedicated to the local Food Share, mostly by Dave Krainacker and his Master Gardener wife, Nina. Last year, Selma Held gardeners donated almost half a ton of organic, locally grown, fresh produce to Food Share in close competition with other Helena Community Gardens.

---

**Roger Stone is a Master Gardener who has been the Selma Held Garden manager since 2017.**

**Top and Bottom: 2021 vegetable plantings at Selma Held Gardens.**

