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## Coyote Ridge Corrections Center expands gardens, plants 1,000 vegetable plants to assist with community needs due to pandemic

**CONNELL** – The Coyote Ridge Corrections Center has spent the last several months collaborating between staff and incarcerated individuals to create positive change and provide opportunities to give back to the community through expansion of garden areas at Coyote Ridge.

In July 2019, planning began on projects and programs that would provide opportunities for incarcerated individuals. The group made a unanimous decision to add a splash of color at the Medium Security Center (MSC) by transforming the front of each living unit into gardening space, giving Coyote Ridge a total of 6,048 square foot of space for gardens.

Each of these living units now have two 8- x 16-foot gardens totaling 2,048 square feet, creating 16 additional jobs for incarcerated individuals. The subsequent addition of two 1,000 square foot gardens at the Minimum Security Unit (MSU) created another eight jobs. Additionally, the Coyote Ridge maintenance department has 4,000 square feet of new gardens.

As part of the Department of Corrections' Hope Gardens project, landscapers planted more than 1,000 plants by hand in front of their units, including peppers, tomatoes, zucchini, lemon cucumbers and cucumbers.

"The goal is to produce the most per square foot," said Sam Harris, CRCC Facility Manager.

Individuals hired into these gardening positions will also be participating in educational lectures, and classes such as [Roots of Success](#), beekeeping and Gardening 101. The facility will be working with [Sustainability in Prison Project \(SPP\)](#) gardening program, creating more jobs via peer-led instruction.

The best part of the Corrections' Hope Gardens at Coyote Ridge are the sustainable efforts put in to creating as small of a footprint as possible, by operating with only people and no machinery.

"We are excited about the Corrections' Hope Gardens and the ability to donate produce to our local food banks supporting the Connell, Ritzville and Washtucna communities," said Dorothy Trainer, Environmental Specialist at Coyote Ridge.

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**About Coyote Ridge Corrections Center:** Coyote Ridge Corrections Center (CRCC), located in Connell, Wash., houses between 2,500 and 2,600 adult male individuals in four medium security units, four long-term minimum living units and two minimum custody living units. The CRCC-MSU Sage unit houses ambulatory individuals in an assisted living/nursing setting. The facility employs over 700 staff and 450 contract staff and volunteers who support and mentor the facility population.



MSC Living Unit Gardens (Dorothy Trainer, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center)



Incarcerated gardeners plant MSU Living Unit Garden. (Tom Townsend, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center)



MSC Maintenance Garden (Brent Carlson, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center)