

Our UGA Summer Research and Extension Experience

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This summer has been a great opportunity for us to not only develop our research skills, but also see how our research can make an impact on both the local community and the world as a whole. Improving crops through scientific research can lead to increased vitamins and nutrient content in food, decreased hunger rates, and decreased cost for healthy food. Drought resistance, disease resistance, and increased yield are all traits that plant breeders and scientists look for to make this improvement happen.

One Saturday during this internship, we were paired up with local farmers at the Athens Farmers Market. We were able to learn from them and help them sell produce to the community. We were paired with Christian and John from Harvest Moon Garden. Several varieties of tomatoes and squash were the big ticket items at this stand.

As we were helping with the stand, we were able to have conversations with John and Christian. It was really exciting to hear their ideas and learn more about how organic farming benefits people and the environment. Christian and John described how they use birds or other animals to control pests and natural, organic fertilizers to increase plant growth. They also love seeing how organic fruits and vegetables can benefit the community and create a healthier society. We exchanged ideas about sustainability, crop production, GMOs, and plant breeding. Hearing different perspectives on these concepts helped us to broaden our horizons and look at our summer research projects from a new point of view.



During the last hour of the farmers market, we were able to walk around and see other vendors. I was excited to get some fresh Georgia peaches from one of the vendors. From baked goods to cut flowers the farmers market offered a variety of organic, sustainable products and foods.



Later in the summer, we will get to visit an organic farm which will allow us to see in person how organic farming is done. This experience really opened our eyes to the impact that plant research, organic farming, and agriculture has on the community.