



## Medinah Country Club: Growing Much More Than Golf Courses

*Chickens, bees, maple trees, and an organic garden bring healthy dining to one of America's most prestigious private clubs*



**Medinah, Ill. (Feb. 14, 2017)** -- During Medinah Country Club's 93-year history, it has hosted many of golf's most prestigious events, including U.S. Opens, a PGA Championship, even the 2012 Ryder Cup.

Today, Medinah is also hosting healthy farm-to-table meals that feature produce farmed on property.

In the year-old organic garden—tucked away just inside the club's main gate—25 beds have been planted with 34 different fruits and vegetables, 17 savory herbs and garnishes, and six varieties of fragrant and edible flowers. The vegetables and herbs are featured on the club's "Garden Menu," while some of the fruits are being turned into jams, enhancing seasonal dishes, and garnishing cocktails.

Last spring, an on-site chicken coop housed 20 hens. Another 20 have been added—all hatched on premises—and the club is cooking with their USDA-certified eggs as well as fertilizing with a compost made from egg shells, chicken droppings, trimmings, and coffee grounds.

Many of the stately maple trees that adorn the courses are being tapped for maple syrup served in the club's restaurants atop waffles, pancakes, and French toast, and being added to vinaigrettes, marinades, and sauces. The syrup is bottled under the name "Meacham's Garden," honoring the Meacham family that owned the local land back in the 1800s. At the recent Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) "Idea Fair" Medinah's "From Sap to Syrup" food and beverage innovation program took home the blue ribbon.

Beginning this spring, the club plans to inaugurate its own bee colony, starting with two hives that will help pollinate the garden while producing honey.

Besides providing food for Medinah's members, the gardens, coops, and other all-natural sources are part of a concerted effort to create what General Manager Robert Sereci calls "a homey, nurturing, comforting, and intimate community."

"My team and I want to make Medinah the *new neighborhood*," says Sereci. "Along with golf, members join Medinah Country Club because they want to be part of a welcoming and thriving social community where they can experience dynamic shared experiences with other members and their families. Building community is why we do what we do, and these new amenities help support that vision in a unique, wholesome, and family oriented way."

Speaking of the Medinah garden, Chef Michael Ponzio has said, "It is the start of an amazing future of organic and sustainable products that we care for from start to finish. We are able to choose the varieties, control the environment they thrive in, and pick them when we feel they are at their finest."

Creating yet another unique eating experience, last year Medinah purchased a food truck that now provides a constantly changing choice of smoothies, handmade burgers, seasonal street foods, and homemade grab-and-go snacks at key stops on the club's three golf courses as well as its shooting center and other on-property events.

Says Sereci, "We are building a community with a stream of experiences for all family members. The golf courses, like our farm-to-table idea and our food truck, represent things that create experiences that will amplify our neighborhood."

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**Media Contact:**

Karen Moraghan

Hunter Public Relations

908/963-6013

kmoraghan@hunter-pr.com