

## **Shoprite-supported garden benefits greater community**

“We live in a poor village, but we have good soil, so we started to farm to help our families and our community.”

So says Thakosile Nxumalo (52), who established the Velemseni Farming Group in Estcourt, KwaZulu-Natal in 2018 to provide fresh vegetables to those in her rural community who could not afford to buy their own.

Together with five other women, she works six days a week in the 0.5-hectare food garden, but the group was unable to expand their garden because they could not access a reliable water supply.

Shoprite stepped in and installed a 10,000-litre water tank as well as the necessary equipment to harvest rainwater and use grey water. The Velemseni Group were already using practices such as mulching to help the soil stay hydrated and to protect the crops.

Shoprite also rewarded four community members who faithfully attended the permaculture training workshops offered by the retailer, with ‘garden in a bucket’ starter kits to establish their own home gardens.

“At the main garden we grow spinach, cabbage, onion, beetroot and maize. When our plants are big, we are going to sell more to the community and we will also share our vegetables with the old age home nearby,” says Thakosile.

Since 2015 Shoprite has assisted more than 100 community food gardens as well as an additional 347 homestead gardens which were established as a result of community members attending the retailer’s training workshops.

ENDS

CAPTION: Shoprite boosted the efforts of the Velemseni Farming Group by connecting their food garden to a reliable water source.