

“Kid”ing Around in the Garden

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What does research say?

- Fruit and vegetable consumption is associated with decreased risk of cardiovascular disease
- There are disparities in healthful food access in underserved communities
- There is potential to increase access to fruits and vegetables

- American Dietetic Association, 2010

Why a Community Garden?

- **Builds and empowers communities**
- **Decreases Carbon Footprint**
- **Fosters social and environmental justice**
- **Breaks down racial and ethnic barriers**



Why Garden?

- **Promotes education to include**, science, ecology, history, social studies, math, nutrition and agriculture – and more
- **Bridges senior's to youth through interaction**
- **Reduces crime**
- **Provides green space**
- **Therapeutic and healing – physical as well as spiritual**

Why Garden?

- **Provides better food security for individuals, families and communities**
- **Improves fruit and vegetable consumption**
- **Increases physical Fitness**
- **Fosters a sense of community**
- **Increases property value**

Developing and Organizing Community Gardens



Types of Gardens

- Youth/school gardens
- Entrepreneurial/job training gardens
- Communal gardens
- Food Pantry Gardens
- Therapy Gardens
- Demonstration Gardens

Where do we start?

Get the word out!

- Start talking about the garden
- Get names and contact info for interested parties
- Hold a meeting with interested parties

Who are the key Partners?

- School administration
- Colleges and Universities in the area
- County Health Department
- Local YMCA
- OSU County Extension Office
- Local companies
- County DHS office
- Local/Regional Food Banks
- Master gardeners
- City Officials (Parks and Rec Depts. and City Councils)

Basic Foundation for Developing Successful Community Gardens

- **Meet with individual or group that is interested in developing a community garden to determine seriousness and need** (one person does not a community garden make)
- **Ensure they understand that building a garden does not mean that people will automatically come – participants must buy into it before the actual development and construction** (*build it and they will come makes a great movie but does not work in real life*)
- **Ensure the basics are present by visiting the proposed site**
 - 6 – 8 hours of sunlight
 - Water is present and responsibilities set on who pays for it (amazing at how many people do not think about water)
 - Offer to do a soil test for them through the extension service
 - Determine if any dangers are present such as underground cables

To do List.....

- **Don't oversell – encourage if the need and the desire is present – discourage if they are unwilling to do the up front work. *It is not a sprint race* – taking time to plan and develop increases the chances of a successful and productive community garden**
- **Be willing to share the “Good – the Bad and the Ugly of Community Gardening”**

Other Planning Considerations

- **What kind of beds (raised or traditional)**
- **Water source**
- **Soil Tests**
- **Common area care**
- **Areas for entertainment and activities**
- **Greenhouse or season extension systems**
- **Rules (organic or not)**
- **Pay to grow or free?**



Big Event Work Day

Suggestions

- **Pick someone to be the primary Decision Maker** (points a lot)
- **Have someone available to “go fer” forgotten** (always something)
- **Have materials pre-delivered and staged for ease of moving**
- **Power tool areas near outlets and only supervised by trained workers** (cut off fingers is a bad start to a good thing)
- **Refreshments**
- **Toilet facilities**
- **Parking areas**
- **Consider public awareness through PR – radio feeds, drawings, newspaper coverage** (consider having pre-planned messages)
- **Invite the neighbors to help or observe**
- **Kids activities**
- **Clean up crews**
- **Alternate work days in case of inclement weather**
- **Lots of pictures**
- **THANK YOU NOTES AND PICTURES TO ANY DONORS!**

YMCA Youth Learning Garden

Foundation for Collaboration

- Dec 2009 - **Pioneering Healthier Communities** (PHC) grant
- **Community** collaboration (K-12, business sector, higher education, health department, etc)
- **Policy** and **environmental** change strategies
 - Access to fresh fruits and vegetables
 - Increased opportunities for physical activity

Powerful Collaborations

- Edmond YMCA
- United Way
- University of Central Oklahoma (students and faculty)
- OSU-OKC Master Gardeners
- City of Edmond
- Lowe's
- Private business owners
- Volunteers

Goals: Youth Learning Garden

- Educate youth and families about the relationship between food, its origins, nutrition, and health;
- connect children (and adults) to the natural world as a place of wonder, exploration and resource for their personal growth;
- reinforce and teach work ethic, cooperative learning and team building skills;

Goals: Youth Learning Garden (*con't*)

- expand interest and public awareness of urban gardening and gardening with children;
- encourage inter-generational relationships; and
- plant propagation techniques; and
- adoption of healthy behaviors, attitudes and knowledge by children who complete the KAB Questionnaire.

Where Access Begins



Raise *This* Garden!



Innovative Thinking & Manpower



Time To Dig In!



A Fun Community!



7 Hours, 104 volunteers later..



Planting Day



The Heat Is ON!



July 2011



Veggie Stand



August – *still producing*



YMCA Adventure Garden



Should I start a garden at my school?

School Gardens or Outdoor Classrooms?

- Incoming evidence shows students who participate in school gardening score significantly higher on standardized science achievement tests.
- Can create a stronger connection to nature
- Gardening can transform student's food attitudes and habits
- Increase student activity levels

Why A Teaching Garden?

“Garden-themed lessons teach nutrition, math, science and other subjects all while having fun in the fresh air and working with your hands.”

- **Nearly 1 in 7 adults (13.4%) had been diagnosed with diabetes** in Okfuskee County, which was 38% higher than the national rate.
- Okfuskee County had the **2nd highest rate of obesity** in the state (35% of adults).
- Okfuskee County ranked **among the bottom ten counties for physically inactive adults, residents in poverty, and fruit/vegetable consumption.**

American Heart Association – About Teaching Gardens

<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/HealthierKids/TeachingGardens/About-Teaching-Gardens>

2014 State of the State’s Health Report, Oklahoma State Department of Health

<http://www.ok.gov/health/pub/boh/state/SOSH%202014-County%20Report%20Cards.pdf>

What is a Teaching Garden?

Plant, Grow, Harvest, Taste!

Functional, Adaptable addition to classroom

- Curriculum
- Supplies
- Technical Assistance
- Parent resources – newsletters, tips, seasonal recipes,



Lesson Ideas for Physical Education

- Eat a Rainbow – Nutrition lesson emphasizing eating a wide variety of color
- Stations in the garden – set up stations for activity in the garden such as tilling the soil with a hoe or picking weeds, have students switch at intervals
- Students logging their time spent working in the school garden – counts as exercise or workout time

More Ideas

- Explore the senses – have students smell and/ or touch plants (no peeking) to describe or identify the plant – Herbs are great for this
- Fairy gardens
- Digging for Potatoes
- Container Gardening – Vertical Gardens
- Cultivating seeds to start other gardens at home

Vertical Garden

www.towergarden.com by juice plus



Put the Plan into Action:

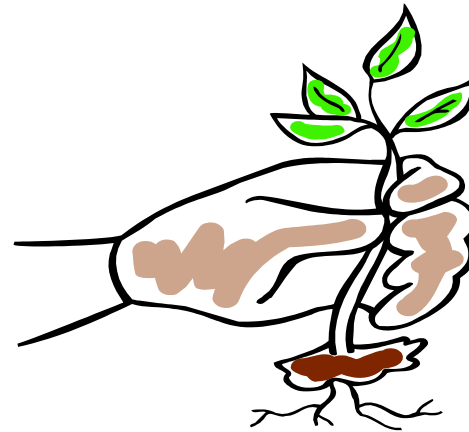
Okfuskee County
School Garden

The Opportunity

- American Heart Association – Teaching Gardens
- 2 opportunities:
 - Native American student population
 - prefer to work with school

Process and Planning...

- Meetings with Principal and Science Teacher/School Champion
- Grant Application completed...awarded
- Garden committee formed:
 - Middle School Principal
 - 4/5 grade Science Teachers
 - Physical Education Teachers
 - Custodian
 - OSU Extension
 - Parents/ Grandparents
 - Health Department



Then the Garden...

- Planting Day - October 2013 – Let It Rain!!!
- Planting Day 2 – Spring 2014
- Indoor gardening activities to supplement



Garden Success

- Science Lessons
- Vegetables and herbs grown
- Students are learning where their food comes from
- Partnerships
 - University Extension
 - Parents/ grandparents
 - Health Department
 - High school groups
 - Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative



Garden Challenges

- Unknown Challenges
- School Requirements
- Need for additional planning
- Maintenance in the heat, when school is out



Future Growth

- Incorporate into summer program
- Increase parent and community involvement
- Training for staff and volunteers
- Continue Planning
- Link to Community Health Improvement Plan
- Keep moving forward!

Success!!!



References

- 2014 State of the State's Health Report, Oklahoma State Department of Health
<http://www.ok.gov/health/pub/boh/state/SOSH%202014-County%20Report%20Cards.pdf>
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– communitygarden.org
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<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/HealthierKids/TeachingGardens>
- American Journal of Public Health
- Agriculture and Human Values
- Bruce Edwards, Director Of Sustainable Agriculture, Maisha International
- National Gardening Association, kidsgardening.org
- OSU Cooperative Extension Service, oces.okstate.edu
- University of Missouri Extension, Community Gardening ToolKit
- <http://urbanagokc.org/2015/03/09/adventures-in-learning-school-garden-guide-now-available/>