

SPROUT IT OUT!

D.C.'S SCHOOL GARDEN NEWSLETTER

Fall 2011



Office of the State Superintendent of Education
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

School Garden Specialist Introduction

By: Sam Ullery

In compliance with the Healthy Schools Act (established in 2010 by the DC City Council), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education established a School Garden Specialist position to support DC school garden programs. The work of the school garden specialist is housed within the Nutrition Program unit of the Division of Wellness and Nutrition Services. The division also provides Healthy School Act technical assistance on the meal service of locally grown produce and local wellness policy implementation. To receive technical assistance about school gardens see www.osse.dc.gov/service/nutrition-program and scroll down to *start a school garden program*.

Prior to joining OSSE, I taught at Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (TMA) in the Ward 8 community for the past four years. I had the pleasure to work with many dedicated students, teachers, community members, and staff to establish a vibrant school garden. Recently, TMA expanded the school garden to include neighboring DC Public School-Savoy Elementary as a model for sharing local resources.

This is a very exciting time in the District of Columbia- with the passing of the Healthy Schools Act last year and the start of a new school year. For the past three months, I have collected baseline data at over 40 school gardens. As OSSE is preparing for the upcoming School Garden Week (September 26-October 1) and Farm to School Week (October 3-October 7), I am excited to learn from the many experienced educators, community stakeholders, government partners, and community members about their commitments to this work. Please join us as we strive to make Washington, DC a national leader in the Green Schools movement at either School Garden Week or DC Farm to School Week this fall.

School Garden Spotlight:

DC Preparatory Academy

This past summer, DC Preparatory Academy continued its after school Green Thumbs Garden Club at its Benning and Edgewood Elementary Campuses. Students (referred to as DC Preppie's at the school) spent the summer cultivating fruits and vegetables, and learning about other creatures that inhabit the garden.

"DC Preppies" removed harmful bugs such as harlequin beetles and squash bugs, and counted up helpful creatures like worms and bees. On hot days we kept cool indoors, making crafts like raccoon masks and ladybug crowns, or reading books about the insect life cycle and the habits of nocturnal animals. We cooked delicious food at the end of each class, including squash pancakes, mint tea, and ratatouille. On the last day of summer school, families came to sample some of the bounty with mint and beet popsicles, tomato and cucumber salad, and delicious yogurt parfaits.



"DC Preppies" preparing a garden feast



DC Preparatory Academy's Benning Road Campus Garden

School Garden Funding Resources

School Garden Grants are Now Available!

Upcoming Funding! OSSE-DC Division of Wellness and Nutrition Services will be releasing a first time school garden grant Request for Funding during fiscal year 2012.

The School Garden Grant Program (\$2,000/school), in collaboration between Whole Kids Foundation, Whole Foods Market and FoodCorps are available. To be eligible for a garden grant, applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or nonprofit K-12 school that is developing or currently maintaining a school garden project that will help children engage with fresh fruits and vegetables. **Garden projects may be at any stage of development**; planning, construction or operation. Applications must be received by 5pm CST, December 31, 2011. Click here to apply:

<http://wholekidsfoundation.org/gardengrants.php>

Annie's Garden Grant (amount unspecified): Annie's offers a limited number of small grants to community gardens, school gardens and other educational programs that connect children directly to real food. These funds can be used to buy gardening tools, seeds or other needed supplies. If you would like to apply, please read the complete guidelines and fill out an online application (one of the shortest applications out there at a maximum of 150 words). http://www.annies.com/grants_for_gardens

Happenings

School Garden Week **Sept 26th-Oct 1st**

This year marks the fifth annual School Garden Week. This week is dedicated to highlighting the more than 100 School Gardens that have sprouted up all over the city, ranging from a few containers to small scale farms. This year we are challenging schools to engage students in garden related activities, building on their existing garden program, and create new gardens. Register and learn more at:

www.dcschoolgardenweek.org

Farm to School Week Oct 3rd-7th The D.C. Farm to School Network is pleased to announce that the third annual D.C. Farm to School Week will take place October 3-7th, 2011 to kick-off National Farm to School Month! The week will be a chance for schools across Washington, DC to celebrate local, seasonal food in school meals, and engage students in the farm-to-table process. Participating schools will coordinate hands-on food and farm activities for students, and spread the word about the week to their school communities. We'll make sure that seasonal, local foods are featured in school meals. Register and learn more at:

<http://www.dcfarmtoschoolweek.blogspot.com/>

The Capitol Hill Garden Club will give *daffodil and crocus bulbs* to any person or organization in Ward 6 who will plant them in a public space. In the past six years, we have given 50,000 bulbs through this program. Apply here:

<http://capitolhillgardenclub.blogspot.com/>

Farm to Desk DC is seeking teachers interested in incorporating food education into their classrooms to become a part of our new Teacher Cohort. This Cohort represents our next effort to change student attitudes and behaviors toward food in school communities throughout the city. Members of the Cohort will commit to using standards-based content from our online curricular resource in their classrooms twice weekly, and attending monthly potluck dinners with the rest of the group, where stories will be shared. If you have any questions, please contact the Farm to Desk Program Coordinator, Brian Massey, by sending an email to brian@seedlingprojects.org Farm To Desk Wiki: <http://farmtodesk.org/>.

Did you know DC is home to over 100 school gardens?

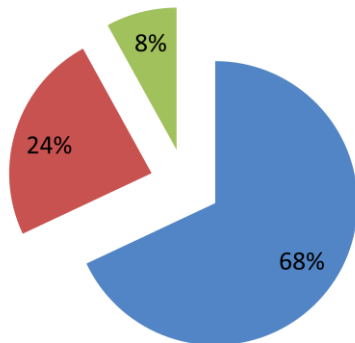
OSSE's Division of Wellness and Nutrition Services would like to know about your school garden. If you have not done so, please complete the school garden snap-shot in order to share how your school garden is used and what schools are maintaining gardens. Help OSSE support you and register your garden here:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9XYMFxz>

School Garden Data

DC School Gardens by School Type*

- Public Schools
- Public Charter Schools
- Private Schools



Grade Level of DC School Gardens*

Grade Level	% of schools reporting
Elementary School	49%
Middle School	13%
Educational Campuses (PS-8)	18%
High School	12%
Other	8%

Garden Features in DC School Gardens *

Feature	% of schools reporting
Raised Edible Beds	63%
Native Garden	46%
Compost Bin/ Pile	32%
Outdoor Classroom	29%
Outdoor or Access to Kitchen	17%
Community Garden Space	8%
Greenhouse	4%

Total # of students impacted: 5,909*

**Data based on 47 schools submitting DC snapshot data*

Technical Resources

Having your **soil tested**, even if you are growing in raised beds from **a reputable source is important**. For \$10 and about 2 weeks wait you will find out exactly what toxins (in DC we are most concerned with heavy metals such as lead and arsenic) levels exist in your school's soil. Get your school garden's soil tested from national resources such as either UMASS

<http://www.umass.edu/soiltest/pdf/soilbrochure2011.pdf> or Virginia Tech <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/452/452-129/452-129.html>. If you have any questions, please contact the University of the District of Columbia, Master Gardeners Program at www.udc.edu.

The University of Maryland Extension Office's Grow it Eat it Program <http://www.growit.umd.edu/> is an excellent resource from pest control to composting.

Grow it Eat it also provides food **safely guidelines** when serving and tasting edibles from the garden. <http://www.growit.umd.edu/Youth%20Gardening/Garden%20and%20Food%20Safety.cfm> Plus, there's a great curriculum for K-5 <http://md.nutrition-ed.org/>

Interested in starting a new school garden, but don't know where to start? School Garden Wizard <http://www.schoolgardenwizard.org/> provides and extensive step-by-step guide to help you along.

DC School Garden Websites

The Farm at Walker Jones:
<http://wjfarm.wordpress.com/urban-farm/>

Stoddert Elementary Garden Blog:
<http://stoddertgarden.wordpress.com/>

Calvin Coolidge High School Greenhouse Garden Project:
<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.222717861102739.51714.179844315390094&type=1>

Watkins Living School Yard:
<http://www.watkinslivingschoolyard.com/>

Interested in contributing to this newsletter?
Comments? Questions? Suggestions?
Please contact: Dr. Holly, Nutrition Program Manager at Dawanna.james-holly@dc.gov or Mr. Sam Ullery, School Garden Specialist at Sam.ullery@dc.gov.