

# The Garden Dirt

News from our school garden and compost program -- November 2010

Web site: [www.jeffersongardens.wordpress.com](http://www.jeffersongardens.wordpress.com)

*In spring 2009, the program began creating school gardens and food waste composting systems at local schools. A Dept. of Ecology grant received by Jefferson Co. Dept. of Public Works Solid Waste Division makes this possible.*



Grant St. third graders thresh wheat by hand

## *Premier Exhibit Award*

Our school gardens received the Premier Exhibit Award at the Jefferson County Fair. Because of the number and quality of our garden entries we were awarded over 20 blue and red ribbons as well as the best in class award for our compost.

*Let's hear it for our school gardeners!*

### **COMPOSTING**

At both Grant St. Elementary and Quilcene schools, the compost program is now a student led program. Student compost helpers assist their fellow classmates decide what should go into the compost bin and what should go into the garbage can which then goes to a land fill 350 miles away. They add compost to the garden and study the many benefits. Ask them about our hit song "The FBI" Fungus, Bacteria & Invertebrates, our helpers in making compost.

Fall harvest is upon us at the Grant Str Elementary School and Quilcene School gardens where around 600 students participate in the school garden and compost programs. We want to welcome six new classes from Grant Street School who have joined us. Now every student at the school participates.

In garden class students are harvesting ma delicious crops while also identifying which part of the plant they eat, its function and its nutritional value. They harvested raspberries, apples, spinach, carrots, kale, summer squash, lettuce, potatoes and an abundance of juicy, sweet tomatoes. Thanks to all the hard work that students put in last spring, this fall's crop has shown us an excellent variety of crops we are capable of growing in Jefferson County, despite an unusually wet summer.

The increase in support of the program by parents and volunteers this year has been a blessing. Their time and effort has aided us in our effort to reach as many students as possible with the opportunity to learn about food cycles, sustainable gardening, nutrition and life science through hands on learning. We are especially looking towards volunteer support in order to continue this program in its fullest capacity, especially as the **grant funding nears its end.**

We look forward to our coming days in the garden with the wonderful students as we ready the beds. and ourselves. for colder. cozier months.

### **WE LOVE OUR SUPPORTERS**

Thank you to all our generous volunteers, organizations, businesses, teachers, school staff and administration who have made our garden program a wonderful success. We have grown beyond our wildest dreams and we couldn't do it without your generous support!!!

### **\*\*\*\*\* WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP OUR GARDEN GROWING \*\*\*\*\***

We have been blessed with the support of Jefferson County Public Works Dept. who received a two-year grant from the Dept. of Ecology. Without the vision of Public Works and the support of the County, this program would not have happened. The grant cycle is coming to a close in 2010. We are seeking other means of program support including donations, fund raising and community involvement. We are moving under the umbrella of the Jefferson County Farm to School Coalition, a local non-profit organization. To find out how you can help and to learn more about the organization go to: [www.jcfarm2school.org](http://www.jcfarm2school.org)

## Harvest of the Month!

We are beginning a program that features one seasonal, locally grown food item in the school cafeteria. In November, the school cafeteria will have organic carrots as the featured item!



I.C.E. students display a bounty of carrots

## LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN FALL 2010

**Wheat Study:** In September Elise and Candice harvested wheat at the Port Townsend Dry Land Farm Project and also received wheat kernels for our project. Students were engaged in an extensive wheat study, which included threshing the wheat by hand and grinding wheat kernels with a bicycle powered grinder! We discussed the nutritional value of whole wheat, which includes the bran and germ and learned that wheat is the oldest cultivated crop in history, going back over 10,000 years!

**Zucchini Muffins:** Later, students ate a wonderful treat made from the wheat they had ground into flour and zucchini they grew in the garden. Thanks to many parent volunteers, each student enjoyed a delicious whole wheat zucchini muffin

**Red, white and blue potatoes:** Our young gardeners dug up California Red, Yukon Gold, Ozette, and All Blue potatoes of all shapes and sizes. We learned about nutritious roots that we eat, which store energy from the plant under ground. We discussed the importance of planting more than one variety to prevent crop failure in case of disease or pest infestation. We also learned the history of our Ozette potato, which has been grown by our native people for hundreds of years after Spanish explorers brought the potatoes from the Andes to Neah Bay.

**Compost and "Green Manure":** To prepare garden beds for the winter and coming spring, we added rich compost and planted cover crop or "green manure" to increase the fertility of our soil. Compost contains millions of microorganism & nutrients that improve the tilth of the soil. Cover crop, including rye, vetch and winter peas will grow over the winter and protect the soil from erosion. In the spring students will turn the grassy cover crop into the garden, which add even more fertility and organic matter to the soil.

**Garlic:** Students planted garlic that was saved from last season's phenomenal crop, that won first place at the Jefferson County Fair. They also learned the many health benefits of eating garlic.

## WHY WE LOVE TO EAT CARROTS

### One cup of chopped carrots are:

- Rich in beta carotene
- A good source of fiber, Vitamin C and potassium
- A source of Vitamin B6, folate and several essential minerals including calcium, magnesium and manganese.

### Helping Your Kids Eat Healthy

You can buy baby carrots to take with you for an easy, on-the-go snack or add raw carrot sticks as a crunchy side dish at lunch. Try grating carrots into salads and over soups to add a crunchy, sweet flavor. Carrots are a great addition to any meal. They can be eaten whole, sliced into sticks, cut into rounds, chopped or shredded.

*Ask your child fun ways to include carrots in family meals*

## Vegetable Quesadilla

### Ingredients:

(Makes 4 servings at 1 quesadilla each)

**1 large carrot, grated**

**1 zucchini, grated**

**8 flour tortillas**

**3/4 cup shredded cheese**

**Bottled hot sauce, to taste**

1. In a bowl, mix carrot and zucchini
2. Sprinkle 1/2 cup mixture over four tortillas. Top each with 3 tablespoons

cheese. Add hot sauce.

3. Cover with a second tortilla.

4. Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat until hot. Place each quesadilla in a pan and cook 1 minute.

5. Turn over and cook 1 minute longer or until the cheese melts.

6. Cut each quesadilla and serve warm.

Serves 4