

Resolution on Edible Gardens on School Grounds

Whereas:

1. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has not permitted the planting of edible plants on school property because of concerns due to children's potential for allergic reactions to plants, maintenance of gardens, and rodent control.
2. Since September, MCPS Department of Facilities Management started a garden work group to develop guidelines to help schools create and implement container gardens as early as this Spring, with edible, leafy-green plants (i.e. lettuce, spinach, etc.). This work group is also currently finalizing plans for three community gardens through MNCPPC, giving several schools access to nearby community gardens, with additional resources and opportunities to grow more varieties of garden plots.
3. Successful models of school districts around the country (i.e. Cincinnati and DC) have built vegetable gardens on school grounds and implemented models of teaching that incorporate the garden with the school curriculum.
4. School edible gardens provide a rich, hands-on environment for students to learn skills and content knowledge across the curriculum from math to art, engage in positive social and communal skills, and practice healthy physical activity.
5. Engaging students in building edible school gardens teaches them about their food source and healthy eating when the U.S. has seen a rise in the childhood obesity rates.
6. Student engagement in planting edible gardens creates a relationship with the land and cultivates environmental stewardship.
7. First Lady Michelle Obama is creating a national movement of healthy eating with her garden on the White House grounds and hands-on work with students at DC Public Schools.

Be it resolved that:

1. MCCPTA supports the establishment of edible gardens on school grounds by students, teachers and parents,
2. MCCPTA supports the move by MCPS to permit the building of container gardens to grow edible plants and supports school communities who desire to plant safe, edible gardens, and
3. MCCPTA supports and encourages school communities desiring to plant edible gardens to provide detailed plans of their implementation to include a plant list, garden location on school grounds, and maintenance plan to MCPS Department of Facilities Management.