



Identifying type of soil through texture by feel during the "Super Saturday" Workshop, Seattle.

Photo: S. Morales



Selecting soil to prepare "soil profile" during the Super Saturday, Seattle..

Photo: S. Morales

agriculture education and youth program

Overview

King County is home to 1.9 million people living in 39 cities and unincorporated areas. Despite the importance to our nation, the number of farmers in King County has decreased for many reasons, including urban encroachment, lack of technical support, high cost of land, and low profitability. These factors have discouraged young people from pursuing an agricultural career and lifestyle. Although less than two percent of our nation's population is directly involved in agricultural production, a healthy agricultural system is vital to everyone's daily life. Agriculture provides the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter, yet many of us take for granted the ease with which we obtain these items. Additionally, the important economic impact of agriculture in the United States and the world is often not realized.

Agriculture Youth is an educational program dedicated to helping youth grow in their knowledge of agriculture, the environment, and natural resources. Students have the opportunity to increase their ability to function more effectively as agriculturally literate citizens. They learn to break the misconception that food is not necessarily produced at the grocery store. In addition they learn that agriculture is everywhere and many crops are used in food production.

Through hands-on experiments youth learn different aspects of agriculture such as soil texture by feel, pH concepts, soil preparation, and seed collection. This program also provides "Agriculture in the Classroom" subjects, which are designed for school teachers with little or no agricultural background.

Washington State University (WSU) Extension has designed and implemented an interactive agriculture program for students wanting to learn about agriculture and related sciences. This program offers opportunities to learn and discover agriculture as a diverse career.

What's been done:

Over 10 youth and adults attended the "Dirty Soil Healthy Food" workshop presented at 4-H's Super Saturday in King County. They learned about crop production in Washington state, soil, texture by feel, and pH.

Program Goals:

To develop positive partnerships between WSU Extension and other youth organizations.

To increase the number of youth and adults with knowledge in agriculture and related sciences.

To develop skills through agricultural education.

KING COUNTY EXTENSION ~ ~ MID-YEAR REPORT ~ ~ JUNE 2009



Presenting an agriculture workshop during the Festival of Trees at Magnuson Park, Seattle.

Photo: S. Morales



"Community Garden Dedication" at Ballard Community Center, Seattle.

Photo: S. Morales

A total of 8 individuals attended the presentation entitled "Keeping our trees alive and climate change around the world" workshop for the Festival of Tree celebration at Magnuson Park, Seattle. The coordinator of the Festival pointed out the opportunity for WSU Extension to participate in the planning for the 2010 festival.

Two AmeriCorps volunteers were mentored in the area of agriculture and received a total support to continue learning agriculture activities and how they could include them in gardening projects.

Representing Extension 4-H in the Community Garden Dedication at Ballard Community Center in Seattle, the Seattle Parks and Recreation authorities applauded the contribution the 4-H Youth Development program has provided to Seattle Community Centers. They also mentioned that they expect 4-H will continue providing gardening projects at several Seattle Community Centers.

Program accomplishments

Youth learned about the importance of soil in agriculture and how their work has contributed to the food chain. They learned that soil, texture by feel, and pH are only small pieces in agriculture as a career.

AmeriCorps volunteers participated in the "Dirty Soil Healthy Food" and learned that crop production, soil, and texture by feel are activities that should be incorporated in 4-H gardening projects. They also learned that hands-on educational activities are tools to develop skills such as leadership, communication, teambuilding, and more.

Comments:

I liked the fact that youth were introduced to soil textures and why they are important in classifying different soils. They find out how to feel the difference between soil textures. Great lesson, thanks!

~ ~ Volunteer, Super Saturday.

I did not know anything about soil and texture by feel. I learned a lot and enjoyed helping youth with the hands on activities.

~ ~ AmeriCorps participant.

Look! I learned how to classify different soils and identified them through texture by feel.

~ ~ Youth, participant

Thank you for coming to the Community Garden Dedication. We truly hope the partnership with WSU Extension 4-H motivated a lot of young people to participate in agriculture/gardening projects.

~ ~ 4-H leader, Ballard Community Center

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