

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

NDSU EXTENSION
SERVICE

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Gardening in the Classroom

The Situation

Many kids are growing up further removed from the farm and do not know where their food comes from. They also are not aware that they can produce their own food and have fun doing so. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 92% of North Dakota kids do not consume the recommended amount of vegetables for a healthy diet. In a systemic review of 14 articles, 10 showed reports of statistically significant increases in fruit and vegetable consumption among participants after implementation of a gardening intervention¹.

Extension Response

A total of 360 students from kindergarten through 4th grade was reached in Lisbon, Enderlin and Ft. Ransom schools. Students learned about gardening and growing their own food. Science skills learned included how to plant seeds and what plants need to grow and produce food. Each grade was taught a different lesson and activity related to gardening. Each year students will build on the skills learned from the previous year. Every student planted a pumpkin, tomato, and sunflower plant that they could take home to replant, care for and watch grow over the summer. Not every family has a garden, but students are encouraged to partner with someone with a garden or do some container gardening. This project educated kids how their food is raised and to realize that it doesn't just show up in the grocery store.

Deb taught the lessons in each of the classes while Brian talked to the kids about proper seeding techniques, and how to be successful with growing their seeds. Both helped the kids with their in-class activities and planting their seeds.

Impacts



We received 129 follow-up surveys back from families that were involved with the program. Some families with multiple kids did one survey for their family.



69% said that their family already has some type of garden, traditional, raised bed, container, or other type of system in place.



Of those that did not have a garden 68% indicated this program started a conversation to begin a garden



Of that group 56% said they started a garden because of this program.

Feedback



"They loved eating and carving something they grew/got to participate in growing."



"He loved to care for, weed and watch his plants grow."



"It's a wonderful opportunity for kids who normally wouldn't get a chance to plant to potentially start their own garden."



"We got over 60 pumpkins off one plant! He sold pumpkins and donated the money to a family in need."



"We tilled a spot and are planting a garden next year."

Public Value Statement

Knowing how to garden and learning how to grow plants can increase awareness of the health benefits and economic value of gardening. Growing their own food is a way to spend time with family, increase physical activity and enjoy the fresh produce they harvest.

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¹Source: Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences Faculty Publications, 2-2017