



School Garden Project

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Global Warming on Your Dinner Plate

Sarah Mazze

Glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising and regional forest fires are expected to increase 50% by 2020. The impacts of climate change are already knocking at our door, as are the lists of things we can do to reduce our personal greenhouse gas emissions. But what does that have to do with dinner?

Increasing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which are attributable to humans, absorb and radiate heat back to the earth. The resulting rise in global average temperatures is leading to major climatic shifts around the world.

While we often associate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with transportation and energy, agriculture accounts for a whopping 7% of emissions in the United States. Those emissions result largely from nitrogen fertilizers and livestock and do not even include emissions from food-related transportation, manufacturing, storage, and cooking!

Fortunately, there are a number of ways we can reduce the impact of our meals and snacks on the climate. While the possibilities are not all straightforward, and the choices not always available, a framework to help you make decisions can alleviate some of the ethical dilemmas involved in food shopping and eating.

Here are some tips to consider, when you've got the option:

- **Choose organic**—Soil farmed organically retains about 30% more nitrogen and 15–28% more carbon than conventionally farmed soil. When released from the soil, they form the greenhouse gases nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide.
- **Enjoy your veggies**—Livestock are responsible for 18% of the world's anthropogenic, or human-caused, greenhouse gas emissions, according to a recent United Nations report. Even cutting out one meat meal a week makes a difference. Meat from pastured ruminants results in fewer emissions than meat from ruminants that are corn-fed, since they digest grass better than corn.

Most large predatory fish also have a large climate footprint since they live far out in the ocean and it takes a lot of fuel to catch them and bring them home.

- **Eat local and in season**—Skip the emissions from transporting food from miles away and relish the bounty of the Willamette Valley. This is harder in winter, but some farms offer late season or winter Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares for which you pay in advance for a season of weekly food boxes. To find CSAs, ask at the Farmers Market or download a copy of Willamette Farm and Food Coalition's Food Directory at www.lanefood.org/.
- **Go for whole foods.** Processing and packaging use tons of energy, which leads to greenhouse gas emissions. Eating fresh fruits and veggies, whole grains, and legumes will trim your climate footprint and maybe even your waistline! Processed foods are often full of sodium and sugar that don't do much for your health.
- **Cut out the waste.** In the United States, 4,000 calories are produced for each person per day, but it's recommended that we only eat 2,000 a day. The extra production and associated emissions are thanks to waste in every step of the production process as well as overeating problems in this country.
- **Bike, walk, bus, and trip chain to get groceries.** Your trip to the store is one of the most energy intensive parts of your food's travel, since our cars aren't usually packed as full as a barge or a semi.
- **Be efficient at home.** Home storage and preparation account for 30% of the energy used in our food system. The refrigerator is the energy hog of the appliance world. Unplug that extra one in the garage that could be costing you \$300 a year, and make sure the one in your kitchen is energy efficient. For an online calculator of your fridge's energy use visit Home Energy magazine at www.homeenergy.org/consumerinfo/refrigeration2.php.
- **Grow your own!** Eat food that is organic, local, delicious, and in season. Get outside and have fun with friends and family. If you don't have room for a garden, rent a plot from the City by calling 541.682.4800 or get involved with SGP and help care for a school garden next summer.

These options aren't always available, but you get the opportunity to make these choices many times a day! All or nothing isn't the only way to make a positive impact on ecosystems and future generations.

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Students weeding, Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School

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Executive Director Site Coordinator

Jared Pruch

From the Executive Director



Working with grade school students in early September inevitably reminds me of my own experiences returning to school in the fall—a mixture of excitement, anticipation, and bittersweet nostalgia for summer. This year, those emotions resonate strongly with me. Stepping into the role of director has been both invigorating and intimidating. I am excited to join this vibrant organization and committed to continuing the tradition of excellence established by our previous staff and board.

The school gardening movement is growing. With increased societal awareness of the importance of eating healthy, local food and with rising concerns about childhood obesity and a deficiency of contact with nature, school gardens are a logical fit—a living venue for lessons on health, science, and nutrition, and a green sanctuary hosting a unique ecological community. Since starting with the School Garden Project in July, I have been contacted at least once a month by a teacher whose school is interested in starting a garden.

This growing need for our services challenges us to rethink how we can best use limited staff hours. Our long-term goal is to recruit, train, and place volunteers with all of our Partner Schools to supplement staff visits. Towards this end we hosted volunteer training events in September and October and have stepped up our outreach and recruitment efforts through presentations at neighborhood association meetings, partnerships with OSU Extension Service and the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition, and networking with the University of Oregon and Lane Community College.

We are also striving to increase our fundraising capacity this fall by meeting with representatives from local banks and businesses to promote our new School Sponsorship program. By sponsoring a school, donors can directly support students in our Partner Schools by underwriting program costs and providing funding for garden improvement projects.

This fall we are grateful for several new additions to our organization: board member Amie Collins, Americorps volunteer Kari Breitreutz, and Windy Hovey, who will assist with grant writing. In the spring, our board gained members Kate Davidson, Debra Eichner, Sarah Mazze, Grace Schubert, Anneliese Sitterly, and Kate Swords, who have already contributed greatly to the organization through their efforts in fundraising and outreach. After serving long and productive terms on our board, Lorri Nelson, Megan Kemple and Lorna Baldwin are stepping down. Lorri and Megan have been with the group since our inception in 2000, and have played integral roles in our successes over the years. Both will continue to serve in an advisory capacity. Lorna contributed two years as a board member and head of the Outreach committee. We are grateful for all their contributions and wish them the best!

We are excited to welcome new Member Schools Edison, Fairfield, Harris, and Awbrey Park. Each of the schools has broken ground for new garden sites and we are excited to join them in the process of establishing healthy and productive gardens. After a long and positive history, and due to limited staff and volunteer time, we were unable to partner with Waltherville School this fall. We hope to continue our program at Waltherville as our capacity increases in the future.

Our ability to serve students in Lane County is directly dependent on the support of our members. Teachers frequently request extra visits that we are unable to provide because of limited staff time. By contributing to the School Garden Project, you help create opportunities for students to grow, harvest, and eat healthy food while they learn valuable lessons on nutrition, science, and ecology. Please consider renewing your membership, or becoming a member for the first time by using the form provided on the back of this newsletter.

Jared Pruch
Executive Director

Fall Highlights

- Our **Harvest Day** event at Applegate and Lorane Elementary schools was a huge hit with 5th and 6th graders who cooked kohlrabi, carrots, bok choy, snap peas, and butternut squash for a stir-fry complete with homemade teriyaki sauce. The meal was the culmination of a joint effort by the School Garden Project, the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (WFFC), and the OSU Extension Service.

Megan Kemple, Farm-to-School Coordinator for the WFFC and former School Garden Project board member, organized the event in tandem with the school's monthly tasting tables and field trips to local farms. Dana Baxter, OSU Extension Service, gave a lesson on phytonutrients and the importance of eating a balanced meal, while Jared took groups on garden tours to taste cilantro, lettuce, and fennel. An article on the Harvest Day appeared in *The Register-Guard* on October 23.

- On October 12, we hosted the *Let's Grow with Project Learning Tree* teacher in-service workshop at the Laurel Valley Educational Farm, which focused on utilizing PLT activities in a school garden setting. Project Learning Tree (PLT) is a national environmental education activity guide. Angela Andre facilitated the hands-on workshop, leading the group of 15 teachers and volunteers through lessons on seed dispersal, sensory awareness, soil composition and plant adaptations. School Garden Project greenhouse manager Nick Routledge spoke on the impact of buying open-pollinated seed and the practice of selectively harvesting and saving seeds at season's end.

- Thanks to volunteers from SELCO Credit Union, the Network Charter School, and the Northwest Youth Corps, the River Road/El Camino Rio Elementary school garden has undergone some much-needed renovation this fall. With concerted volunteer efforts and gallons of elbow grease, we have reclaimed a large section of the garden from the invasive weeds that flourished over the summer. School Garden Project volunteer and BEST program instructor Erin Lamb and former SGP board member Lorri Nelson have been instrumental in outlining a long-term weed management plan for the garden. We are happy to have this garden back under control!

- Oregon's **Farm-to-School Coalition's** Education Committee met in Salem on October 25. The meeting brought together representatives from the Oregon Department of Education, Ecotrust Oregon, the OSU Extension Service, and the Oregon Food Bank to discuss a statewide effort to promote school gardens. The meeting offered a unique opportunity for us to present the School Garden Project as a statewide resource for garden based curriculum and practical school garden design..

Report on Partner Schools

Applegate Elementary

This fall has been a time of planning and preparation at the Applegate garden site. Over the last few weeks, Robin Chinburg's 5th/6th class has been designing the layout for their garden, analyzing the site conditions, brainstorming elements they wish to include in the garden, and working together to create a final plan. Our first raspberries and native plants will get into the ground in mid-November!

Brattain Elementary

Many thanks to the crew from Northwest Natural Gas who spent their United Way Day of Caring laying the groundwork for Brattain's Native Plant garden. In addition to bringing in boulders from the Springfield Quarry to build a natural bed for shrubs, they built a raised bed for the veggie garden and repaired the garden shed. The work was directed by Brattain Garden Coordinator Hanalei Rozen, who continues her after-school Garden Club on Fridays.

Chavez Elementary and Family School

Harvest Day was controlled chaos with Beth Kealy's 1st–3rd grade class in mid-October—kids proudly displayed potatoes, garlands of wheat, and sunchokes while parent volunteers prepared fresh salsa from the garden. Tana Burg's 4th and 5th graders cleared the empty beds two weeks later and planted garlic and fava beans.

Clear Lake Elementary

"Enthusiasm" has been the key word for the second graders at Clear Lake this fall. Not even a heavy downpour kept these kids from enjoying a garden session in late September when they planted healthy arugula, kale, chicory, cilantro, and spinach starts from the greenhouse. Plans for a new garden shed and an additional raised bed are under way for the school's courtyard garden.

Goshen School

In reward for clearing a weedy raised bed and mulching their new plantings in September, hungry Goshen School middle school students picked the school orchard clean. Five of the 7th and 8th graders are acting as "garden managers," assisting Jared during teaching sessions with younger students, watering the garden during dry spells, and cleaning up after garden visits. Thank you Opal, Sarah, Christina, Cody, and Michael!

Lorane Elementary

In September, Ms. Olson's 1st/2nd grade Projects Class learned about edible plant parts by sampling leaves, roots, fruits, and shoots in their garden. 5th and 6th graders cleaned out flower beds, prepared a bed for garlic, and planted cover crops in late October.

Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School

The Ridgeline garden is *flourishing*, thanks to the school's rich, homemade compost and super volunteers Helen Liu and Nancy Shankle. Ridgeline students spend Monday mornings in the garden: special projects this fall have included harvesting greens for class salads, cooking beans and peppers in the classroom, and planting garlic.

River Road/El Camino Rio Elementary

Four days a week, River Road students meet after school with School Garden Project volunteer and BEST instructor Erin Lamb. Under Erin's direction, the garden has emerged from the invasive weeds that moved in over the summer, and students have taken home potatoes, peppers, raspberries, and sunchokes through the harvest season. During Jared's Choice classes on Wednesdays, first and second graders search for bugs, seeds and colorful plants in a weekly scavenger hunt component of the garden session.

Thank You Volunteers!

Our work would not be possible without the dedicated support of volunteers and board members. This fall we would like to recognize the following outstanding volunteers.

Angela Andre manages the Laurel Valley Educational Farm for the Northwest Youth Corps, helping high school students grow and sell vegetables at the school's farm stand. Along with facilitating our teacher in-service workshop in October, Angela recruited a group of 14 students to spend a day at the River Road school garden pulling weeds, transplanting raspberry canes, and preparing raised beds for our winter garden.

Helen Liu has been the driving force behind the Ridgeline Montessori school garden, organizing work parties, coordinating volunteers, and working with teachers to keep them involved with the garden. Helen's dedication has helped foster a thriving garden that is an integral part of the school. Helen has also contributed newsletter production and editing skills to The School Garden Project for the past two years.

Joanna deFelice takes over the newsletter from Helen this month. Joanna is also our volunteer webmaster, and is currently contributing her time and energy to redesigning our website.

Having an extra adult in the garden can mean the difference between a productive, educational session and an hour-long exercise in group management. Volunteers **Nancy Shankle, Lytton Reid, Katy Ansbaugh, Adam DeHeer, George Jeffcott, Debra Eichner, and Kari Breitkreutz** have provided much appreciated assistance in garden sessions this fall.



Student harvesting chard, River Road Elementary School

School Garden Project

of Lane County

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www.schoolgardenproject.org



Students with very large carrot, Family School

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