

The rounds of garden orientation for all five classes are over. In the next two weeks the students will tour the garden facilities and begin their first week of getting their hands (or gloves) dirty working in the gardens. After these two weeks, each class will begin with a 30 minute lesson in the classroom. These classes are based on one or more pages in the student gardening manual. In our weekly news, we will let you know which pages will be covered in case you want to follow along at home. The entire manual is now available on line. <http://www.ofegrowers.org/garden-manual.html>.

During the last two weeks we covered safety on page 7. This week and next the tour will cover page 6.

During the rest of the school year, students will be separated into small teams of about five or six students. Each team will be assigned tasks to complete in the gardens. The teams will also have a student captain. One or two volunteers will also be assigned to each team. At the end of the class, the team captain will summarize what the team has done, record data if appropriate, and sign a form with this information. This information then will go into a data base which the students will use to trace their progress in the gardens.

As mentioned last week, it is hot outside and gardening in Houston is an iffy proposition at this time of year. We will be attempting to plant radishes and maybe a few other crops in the next two weeks. With temperatures still in the 90's and almost no rain, growing conditions are not ideal. Harvests will be small for a while. Our first big harvest will be sweet potatoes in October. Hopefully we will have radishes and some other things to send home later this fall. We are still getting a few eggplant, peppers, herbs, and okra from the summer garden, but unfortunately it will not be enough for all 140+ students to have a significant amount to take home. If you know you will not use what your student brings home, ask him/her to give it to a friend whose parents will use the produce. All produce from the gardens is organically grown. If used the evening it is brought home, you will never find produce that is this fresh unless you grow it yourself.

Do go to the web site often to follow the students, find out what they are bringing home in their garden bags, and check out other pages on the web site. Pictures from the past two weeks are already posted on the web site. Give us your feedback. We welcome your thoughts and contributions of any kind. www.ofegrowers.org

Please help us liquidate the preserves from the summer gardens. Several items are now out of stock until next summer. If you want to give a unique gift this holiday season, consider buying a crate of jelly branded from OFE. Tie a red ribbon around the crate and it makes a perfect gift. We have updated the inventory of what is still available. www.ofegrowers.org/produce-inventory.html. Send us a note through the website or to hoppergo@aol.com with your order. We will make arrangements to get the product to you.

