

The gardens are beginning to really show the stress of the hot August weather. The only crops that are still producing are the yard long beans, eggplant, peppers, and okra. We have removed cucumber, squash, and many tomato vines freeing up the beds for the fall garden planting about to begin the first of September. Two new rows of yard long beans were planted two weeks ago and are growing very nicely but are a ways away from starting to produce. Two beds of okra were planted in the main garden about a month ago and are reaching for the sky but no sign of flowers yet but I'm guessing not to long now. The eggplant is producing nicely but the peppers are nearly done producing but could come back when it gets cooler. In the coming week or two we will be prepping beds for planting radishes, carrots, beets, broccoli, and cauliflower. The seeds have been ordered. The sweet potatoes are looking really aggressive in the annex but not doing quite as well in the orchard. They will become a harvestable crop by end of September or mid-October (a high point for the kids).

It is time now to start to press to get the remaining tasks completed before we really get into having the students in the garden. Our first classes will start September 3 with hands on orientation in the form of handling tools, getting acquainted with the different areas of the gardening campus and safety discussions regarding tools and decorum in the gardens.

We have partially completed our power point lessons for the year. These need to be completed and reviewed before we put them on the web for use. We have the first 4 lessons completed which will take us through October so we aren't under the gun yet! The most important thing we need to address is putting together a schedule that we can count on for coverage of the outdoor classes. As I talked about last time we are having classes only on Thursdays but it will consume the whole day even though we will only have the students with us for an hour in the morning (9:30 – 10:30) and again in the afternoon (1:30 – 2:30). The time in between the morning and afternoon is dead time in a sense. Yes, we can work in the gardens and have lunch. We need time to prep for students, for instance tools for each team need to be gathered by the volunteers for each team of students. That means all the support equipment will need to be set up such as the hand tool wagon, weighing station, and the tools required for the tasks to be done that day such as rakes, shovels, wheel barrows etc. What I am trying to say is that we need to be at the shed ready and organized at 9:30 (which probably means ~1 hr before) and 1:30. The question I'm struggling with right now is who are the volunteers that will work in the morning and afternoon times. Best case is 2 volunteers per team. Each team should be no more than 4 students. If 10 - 12 students join us each time for the two morning and two afternoon sessions, we could have as many as 3 teams per session, so 6 volunteers could be needed for the students per session. If we had a complete change of volunteers for the morning and afternoon sessions, that would mean we would need 12 volunteers over the course of the day (6 in the AM and 6 in the PM). If some volunteers wish to work both morning and afternoon that number changes. But we need a schedule so that if someone can't make it they know to let us know and we need to be able to accommodate the change. So please let me know your preferences. I realize some volunteers may not want to work with the students right now and we have plenty we need to do on Tuesdays and Saturdays so please know that you are needed. In fact, if you wanted to come on Thursday but not work with the students that is okay too. Some schedules may not allow for a regular commitment, please let us know that as well. If that is the case and you are willing to work with the students we might need you when someone has an emergency and can't be there for one reason or another. So I hope you can see that we need to get this organized to be able to start well. Please just drop me a line with a ya / nay / maybe and preference so that I can get organized.

Thanks so much for your help this week we had a lot of help and actually got quite a bit done including a lot of good work on the butterfly beds. This week we will attack the front beds, as well as doing the normal harvesting, weeding and watering.

Stay well and be safe,

Denton

