

OFE Growers Newsletter for September 9, 2021

We had our first indoor/outdoor classes this last Thursday. Indoors there was an orientation discussion laying out the hope and the fun activities for the new school year. We also discussed safety which is the fundamental to successful gardening and use of regular garden tools such as shovels and pruners. Then we went outdoors and in teams investigated the annex, compost, shed, main garden and table areas. The student participation was fantastic with so many great questions and yes answers(!!!) as we walked around and looked at the layout and gardening we are looking forward to doing together. I'm super excited!

Other news, August has been a tough month for our garden this year due to the drought, heat and construction related activities. The heat of August brings pests and for an organic garden that is a bit of a challenge. Remember we are an organic garden! For instance the cucumbers are suffering from a multitude of pests. And though the cucumbers want to grow and fruit they are hard pressed to do so. Even as they tend to be one of a few good summer vegetables, albeit needing lots of water, they easily fall prey to those ravenous pests that are looking for food. That said the yard long beans are beginning to produce more heavily with over 7 pounds this last Saturday. The okra is also doing well but is beginning to show some age first noticed with the fruit emerging lower on the stem. So now it is important to look near the base as well near the top to find that nice young okra. They are by no means done, however, as you can tell by their many beautiful flowers still in evidence.

Construction has caused some issues as our water irrigation has been interrupted at several points effecting the orchard and the annex. Our fig trees as well as the water tower grapes were the first indicators that water wasn't getting to the orchard. So we need to pay special attention to the water supply to the outlying areas. This means hand/hose watering in the orchard, and annex as well as the school trees for the foreseeable future.

This week we will finish the orientation and safety classes. Next week we will begin studying composting. It sounds simple but not to be ignored as nature shows us everywhere we look. Our planet sits by itself in space and so it depends on recycling everything to sustain itself. Composting is one of nature's ways of recycling, what a powerful lesson!