OFE Growers Newsletter for the week of 11.18.2021

Last week we completed the study of Root crops. We have defined a root crop as ‘any vegetable whose roots are edible’. If you have done any additional reading on root crops you have probably come to recognize that Botanists further define root crops as a vegetable that stores carbohydrates and sugars in the main root(s) sometimes referred to as a tap root. When using the Botanists’ definition there is a distinction drawn between the carrot, beet, and turnip and that of the potato or onion for instance. But from the point of view of the user (say a chef), the definition (of edible root) is right on the mark and is the definition we will use. The focus of a definition will often show itself during gardening discussions. Take for instance the tomato, we talk about it as a vegetable, when in scientific terms it is a fruit, same for the cucumber, the eggplant, and pepper, but because they are used as main course foods we accept their definition as vegetables.

This week we continued to plant radishes, turnips, kale, collards, and spinach (fall crops). We are beginning to transplant lettuce into the cinder block holes from our scatter planting beds. Scatter planting beds are beds in which seeds are planted by scattering the seeds and lightly covering with compost to get the plants started. Once the plants are big enough we transplant those that we need into raised beds. This allows us to anticipate when we will be needing a certain crop and start the plants ahead of time so that we will have the plants when we want them.

We are also separating and re-planting our multiplying onions. The separation and planting of multiplying onions is part of harvesting and planting multiplying onions and also crop rotation as the newly separated bulbs will be moved to a new location to allow for the amending and nutrient regeneration of their previous location.

We continue to clear and amend spent beds for the next plantings both in the Annex and Orchard. If you take a moment and look in the Annex you will find newly planted radishes and spinach while other beds are beginning to be mulched and allowed to rest.

If you get a chance you should also look at the sugar snap peas that were planted recently both in the Main garden and Orchard. They are coming up nicely and will soon be climbing up the fences.

Finally, I wanted to re-iterate that the gardens need clean mulch. The grass clippings and leaves can be dropped off at the back of the East parking lot by the large tree near the gated soccer fields (along the black fence). If you don’t want your grass clippings or fall leaves OFE Gardens would be happy to take them to use as mulch in our school gardens. Please consider dropping them off if you can.

Thanks and have a safe and enjoyable week,

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