OFE Growers Newsletter August 19, 2021

We are half way through the hottest month of the year and for the garden that means okra, eggplant, and peppers are the crops of harvest. The rest of the garden has gone into a period of dormancy. At this time, in preparation for the fall and winter gardens, we are removing those plants that have gone through their life cycles. We are working on the beds making them ready for fall planting (September) in anticipation of cooler weather, more rain, and the 5th grade students’ planting of root crops, lettuce, and radishes. Our major crop of the early fall, however, will be the sweet potato. Last year’s class planted several beds in the Annex and a long row in the Orchard. This crop will be a large one and will be enough sweet potatoes for the whole class to take home and enjoy. When the students return in September, we will begin gardening by planting and then caring for lettuce, radishes, carrots, beets, cabbage, kale, squash, and cauliflower, in October we will harvest the sweet potatoes!

What to expect when we first start in September: Our first encounter will be a time for introductions, getting acquainted with the layout of the gardens, and the tools we will be using. Our hope is during the year each student will have a safe and great time gardening and will be learning a lot while having fun. Each student will be given a garden manual which will have all the class lessons we will cover over the entire year and quite a few more. The garden manual can be a valuable resource for those that find gardening to be fascinating. Such things as a planting chart based on the Houston area is in the back of this manual, what it means to garden organically, and how to plant and care for a vegetable garden that will reward the caregiver with wonderful fruit and vegetables all year long. Overall, the lessons learned can be employed in whatever type of garden one wishes to nurture, so can be used for a lifetime!

We all look forward to a very enjoyable year and the fun we are going to have together. There will be many fun events such as smashing pumpkins, arbor day, sugar cane harvesting, growing cotton, and of course the harvest fest at the end of the year! It’s going to be great!

See you soon!