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












































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An Edible Garden

by Sarah Stegner
on 01/24/11 at 09:00 AM



The Green City Market, a "sustainable" farmers market in Chicago, has an educational component to its mission, an Edible Garden. The garden is located on the grounds of Lincoln Park Zoo, which is very close to the actual market site. It is 5,000 square feet of breathtakingly beautiful vegetables. I am a founding member and Co-Chair of Green City Market and Jeanne Pinsof Nolan, "The Organic Gardener," runs the garden. This teaching garden is used by many area schools so kids can learn what can be grown at their own school given the limited growing season in the Midwest. Jeanne believes that every child deserves some "real time" planting, weeding, or harvesting so we put them to work with their hands in the soil. She has also created adult education programs that include seminars for container gardens, appealing to the urban life style. A portion of the garden is designated to preserving heirloom vegetables and reintroducing old varieties to the public.

One thing I can not share in words alone is that Jeanne is an artist who is extremely talented. Her gardens are not only functional but beautiful. The pathways are laid out thoughtfully and incorporate raised beds with wheelchair access. Her staff is trained at both gardening and educating.



Clearly, I feel strongly about this component of Green City Market. I believe that people should first be able to feed themselves from their own gardens and then go to a farmer. Anyone who goes through the experience of

growing their own food walks away with a healthy respect for the product and the person growing the food. The most loyal customers at Green City Market are people who share the passion and are engaged in the excitement of farming. What better way to get our children connected to good food then through the process of gardening?

One of my goals is to make an Edible Garden a reality at Northbrook Junior High School. This school is near my restaurant, Prairie Grass Cafe. I am their "Chef Partner" and I feel that this component of education can shape the way our future generation eats.

I am not alone in this belief. My friend Carol Wagner, the Holistic Nutrition Consultant for the district is on it! One piece of advice I have for chefs and parents who are trying to make a difference in a school is that you need stakeholders at the highest levels of the school district's administration. Carol started an advisory council several years back that advocates for healthy eating within the school. On that council sits the superintendent, the principal, a teacher, and a member of the school board, among others. While she is very respectful of the chain of command, they operate together as a team. They all share a like-minded passion to give students every opportunity to learn about health and wellness, whether in the classroom, in the cafeteria, or (hopefully soon!) in a garden.



The preliminary stages are taking place to make a garden a reality. We've asked Jeanne Pinsof Nolan to be our expert and the administration is receptive. Carol is exploring places to integrate initial teaching opportunities and I will work with the food service vendor to ensure that what the students grow will be turned into wonderful eating experiences during their lunch period. I will keep you posted on our progress and successes! If you want to start your own program in a school, check out

the [Chefs Move to School](#) program, started by the First Lady. Do YOU have an edible garden? I would love to see your pictures linked to in your reply.

Tagged with: [Cooking with Kids](#), [Eat Local](#), [Epicurious](#), [Farmer's Market](#), [Gardening](#), [Green](#), [Green Market](#), [Healthy](#), [Kids](#), [Organic](#), [Restaurants](#), [Sarah Stegner](#), [Seasonal](#)