



Connecting youth to healthy food and nature

10 Years of GROWing

As we welcome in the year 2022 we also celebrate 10 years of GROW! The first school garden built by GROW was established at State Road Elementary School in 2012. Over the past ten years there have been so many people who have played an instrumental role in helping to support and develop this organization. The overwhelming community belief that we can truly make a difference in the health and wellbeing of youth through hands-on seed to table garden based learning experiences is what has led GROW to be the thriving organization you know today.



Plans for 2022

In our 10th year, we hope you join us for some very exciting events and programming. Currently, we are busy preparing to launch field trip experiences at the greenhouse. We will begin with a field trip pilot program in February with students from Lincoln Middle School and Hamilton/SOTA Elementary School.

There will be events and programming happening throughout the year. A spring Kids Cooking Challenge in March will be open to all youth 18 and under. Throughout the winter months the greenhouse will be full of color as we grow produce and herbs for the school lunch program and field trip taste tests. Spring garden lessons will kick off in March. We will be sharing lessons with 2,000 students at eight area schools. The spring plant sale fundraiser scheduled for mid-May will be a great way to support all of these programs and to help get your own growing started.

The summer growing season will be packed with programming including a full schedule of farm camps, summer school offerings, and open garden events. There will also be plenty of opportunities to volunteer in the gardens.

We will all gather to celebrate our 10th anniversary and seed to table learning at the Great Grow Get Together in September, just as we resume garden lessons at all of our school gardens. In addition to lessons in the fall we will be hosting field trips to the farm. As the weather cools, greenhouse field trips will start up again too. Finally, a fall Kids Cooking Challenge will help students put all they learn about healthy foods throughout the year to use as they cook up creative and healthy recipes.

We are so excited to deliver all of these GROWing opportunities in 2022.

Save the date: The spring Kids Cooking Challenge ingredient pick up will be March 3rd. Watch our social media and web pages for registration to open!



Winter Produce to Try

While we know there are some great produce options in the Midwest in the summer, did you know there are also some produce in season right now? Here are some ideas to jazz up your winter meals:

Mushrooms (year-round): Mushrooms are a good source of vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid), which supports healthy skin and hair. You can add them to anything from soup to pizza, or enjoy them on their own!

Rutabaga (October - March): This root vegetable is high in potassium, which helps our muscles function. Along with sweet potatoes and parsnips, rutabaga are delicious as veggie chips! Just thinly slice, sprinkle with salt, and let

sit for 15 minutes to sweat out any extra moisture before lightly tossing with oil and seasonings of choice and baking for 30 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through.

Shallots (October - March): These may look familiar if you participated in the Kids Cooking Challenge! Shallots are full of antioxidants, which help prevent chronic disease. They add a flavor similar to onion or garlic to a wide variety of dishes.

Sweet Potatoes (October - March): High in vitamin A, sweet potatoes support our vision and help keep our eyes healthy. You can use them most ways you would use other potatoes or add a drizzle of honey or a sprinkle of cinnamon to bring out their sweetness!

Kale (October - June): Kale is an excellent source of vitamin K, which is important for helping the body heal from injuries. It tastes great when blended into a smoothie or pesto, massaged and included in a salad, or added to soup.

We challenge you to try a new-to-you produce this month! Email bonnie@GROWLaCrosse.org by February 28th to share what you tried and what you thought about it, bonus if you share a picture of you and/or your meal, for an entry into a drawing to win a GROW prize.

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