



Urban Living Newsletter



The *Many Faces of Extension* in Baltimore City

MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, BALTIMORE CITY OFFICE
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Program Spotlight - Farming the City

By *Josue Lopez*

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The Urban Agriculture Program at the Baltimore City Cooperative Extension Office began in the late 70s. Since its beginning, the program focused on educating Baltimoreans to develop and maintain a healthier environment by promoting urban greening initiatives through environmentally friendly horticultural practices. The program has also established and expanded networks and partnerships with community agencies and organizations that share similar goals.

An essential element of Urban Agriculture is the community gardens project, "Farming the City". This project helps identify garden sites in the city, organizes a garden plan, advises on horticultural practices, and nurtures gardeners to encourage productivity and sustainability of the garden. Most of the garden sites are vacant lots that after being adopted by community residents become green heavens. It is required that a future garden site has access to water or a nearby hydrant and that the vacant lot is a city property.



Baltimore Urban Garden

The purpose of the project is to:

- help reclaim vacant lots
- advise on lawn care
- promote home gardening
- teach proper garden insect and disease control
- train Master Gardeners
- promote environmental stewardship, and
- protect Chesapeake Bay

Once the garden space is adopted, the next step is to conduct a soil test. A soil test is a must because our city soils are highly depleted. Then gardeners proceed to improve the garden soil by adding organic matter whether in a form of compost or manure and conduct any soil amendment recommended in the soil analysis.

Through this research-based community education program

Please see Program Spotlight page 2



Master Gardeners

Financial Management

By *Michael Elonge*

Simplifying the Recession for Community Awareness

Everywhere you go almost everyone is talking about the recession. In fact, it may not be an exaggeration to say that the most popular business and economics word highly echoed during the last nine months is recession. This writer has heard in the community various explanations of recession such as "money's tight, people are tight with money, an excuse for the rich to get richer and the poor poorer, financial institutions are in crisis and the economy is melting." All these reasonable explanations of the recession symbolize the financial difficulties that most of us are experiencing in the community. The bottom line at this moment is not the explanation of the recession that really matters, because the recession is here and its impact is being felt almost everywhere. What really matters therefore are things that individuals can do to help themselves and each other excel from the recession.

*See next issue:
Some helpful
techniques to excel
from the recession*

Program Spotlight - *Farming the City* from page 1

Cooperative Extension has:

- Helped convert more than 20 acres of city rubble to productive gardens
- Educated hundreds of community residents about gardening
- Saved the city thousands of dollars in wages and maintenance costs
- Helped gardeners raise tons of produce
- Trained and certified dozens of Master Gardeners and volunteers

There are many things you can do to help make Baltimore a better place to live. Among those you can:

- Adopt a lot
- Organize a community garden
- Organize a school yard garden
- Consult with us in developing your plan
- Donate extra produce to the Food Bank
- Use good land steward methods
- Test your soil
- Add compost to your garden
- Help us teach youth about gardening



Vacant Lot

We may not have a lot of acreage to grow vegetables and ornamentals, yet we have enough vacant lots in the city that not only will produce fresh food for your family, but will beautify our city. Improving a vacant lot with a garden is an intense, but highly rewarding experience. If you don't believe me, ask any of our long time gardeners.

For further information about adopting a vacant lot for a garden, please call Cooperative Extension's Urban Agriculture Program in Baltimore City at 410-856-1850 x 121.

EFNEP

By *Kerry McCarthy*

Spring Nutrition News

March brings with it the start of spring and along with it the promise of flowers and fresh local produce. Since fresh fruits and vegetables are usually more expensive this time of year, it can be difficult to keep up with the daily requirements of 2 ½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit each day.¹ Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables seem more appropriate and affordable but there is always the question regarding their nutritional content and if it is the same as fresh produce. To the relief of many, there isn't a great difference in terms of nutritional content. People have been freezing, canning and drying food for centuries to ensure food availability during scarce times. In the same way, having access to different storage forms of fruits and vegetables ensures we can benefit from their taste and nutrients all year long.



EFNEP: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

Frozen Produce

March is national frozen food month and an appropriate time to think about the freezing process. In general, fresh produce begins to lose some of its nutrients directly after it is picked and it could take several days, to several weeks, before it is shipped to your local store, losing some of its "freshness". Whether freezing at home or if done by a food manufacturer, the process of freezing helps slow deterioration and prevents the growth of microorganisms. Frozen foods bought in supermarkets are often packaged and put into freezers just hours after being picked, helping to retain the taste and most of the nutritional content. The nutrient value of produce shipped fresh to supermarkets compared to frozen produce is very similar. Caution must be taken to ensure that your frozen foods are not exposed to fluctuating freezer temperatures which can cause food to thaw and refreeze and this process can negatively affect the nutrients and taste of vegetables and fruits.

Canned Produce: Canning and Convenience

Years ago, you would encounter more people who canned their own produce. Nowadays most people leave it to manufacturers to can produce. Like frozen produce, fruits and vegetables are usually canned within hours of their harvest since most canneries are located within several miles of where produce is grown. First they are blanched with hot water, and then once sealed in the can, cooked at a low temperature for about ten minutes. Although the

*Help us teach youth
about nutrition.*

Call to volunteer today!

4-H Youth Development

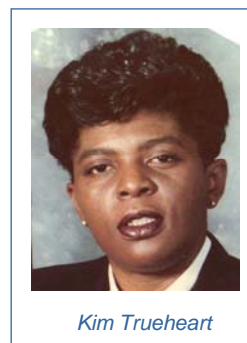
By *Manami Brown*

Ms. Kim Trueheart is the recipient of the 2009 Maryland Partner In 4-H Award

An African proverb “a single bracelet does not jingle” speaks to the importance of partnerships and collaborations. One person can be effective in creating community change, but when one person partners with others it can produce greater results. Kim Trueheart, a dedicated community leader had a vision to create change by developing a comprehensive workforce readiness program for 25 teens in the Cherry Hill community of Baltimore City. Before long, her vision became the vision of the Cherry Hill Youth Development Committee, community members, and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension (UMCE)-Baltimore City. Ms. Trueheart worked with UMCE-Baltimore City 4-H Program, and community partners to secure funding, develop lesson plans, coordinate educational field trips, and schedule guest speakers to enhance the learning experience for the youth entering this new workforce readiness program.

On the first day of the program, the teens didn’t realize that their lives would be changed forever. They went from a group who cared primarily about themselves and wanted to know “when do I get paid” to “we have made a difference in Cherry Hill through our actions”. The teens collectively garnered over 600 hours of on the job readiness training experience. Ms. Trueheart personally met with each of the local businesses where the teens worked prior to the start of the program. The teens learned workforce readiness skills such as resume writing, career planning, personal accountability, critical thinking, networking, team building and college preparation.

In addition to learning new skills, the teens designed and implemented a community garden and even engaged community members of all ages! What was once a trash ridden pathway, became a showcase for the community and a symbol of what it was about to become. The teens then began attending community meetings after the hours of the workforce readiness program. They began to voice their opinions on what changes needed to happen in their community. They were able to bring a fresh new perspective to the meetings that were previously represented by only the adult members of the community. By the end of the program, the teens had a different vision for their community and the adults learned to respect what young people bring to the community development process. It all started with a single person’s vision. A person who didn’t get paid for all the work that went into developing the program and what has continued after. The single bracelet has become many!



Kim Trueheart

“We have made a difference in Cherry Hill through our actions”



4-H Youth Development

EFNEP – Spring Nutrition News from page 3

heating process does destroy some of the vitamins, most of the nutrients remain intact.

Canned tomatoes actually have more lycopene than fresh tomatoes due to the canning process. Lycopene, a group of nutrients referred to as phytochemicals may contribute to long term health and prevent certain types of cancer. There are two things to watch out for when buying canned produce: salt and sugar. Avoid fruits canned in heavy syrup and instead look for light syrup or “packed in its own juices” on the label. For vegetables, salt is often added to increase taste, so when possible buy cans that say “No salt added”.

Another factor that can work against safety and nutritional benefits in canned produce is if it is dented. Cans that have dents on seams or where the side and end meet, as well as any cans with sharp dents should be discarded. Also, cans that are swelling or bulging or have rust that does not wipe off should be thrown out immediately. At the same time that you keep an eye on the salt and sugar amounts, keep in mind that vegetables and fruits carry no fat and are tremendous source of fiber as well as vitamins and minerals.

What About Dried Produce?

More and more dried fruits and some vegetables are becoming available in the produce section of supermarkets. The packages seem small and expensive, but a little goes a long way when it comes to dried foods. In the drying process most of the moisture is extracted which decreases the volume significantly, yet also makes the flavor more intense. Drying also makes the nutrients in the fruits and vegetables more dense. One large fresh apple is considered a cup of fruit whereas a ¼ cup of dried apples is the equivalent of 1 cup of fruit.

Variety is Vital

It is important to eat of fruits and vegetables throughout the day. A key factor in fruit and vegetable consumption is to have as much variety and color as possible. Introducing new fruits and vegetables into your diets can decrease your risk of certain chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and certain forms of cancer. Even though produce may not be as readily available during certain months of the year, having the options of canned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables keeps you in supply all year round.

Sources:

American Dietetic Association www.eatright.org
American Frozen Food Institute
Canned Food Alliance
USDA Dietary Guidelines

“Cook your food thoroughly and use a food thermometer to be sure of an accurate temperature.”

¹USDA Dietary Guidelines average daily requirement of fruits and vegetables for adults between the ages of 19 and 51 with a 2000 caloric intake with 30 minutes of physical activity daily.

Healthy Recipes

Hearty Black-Eyed Pea and Tomato Stew

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 can (15 ounces) black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups ready-to-serve canned, hearty tomato soup
- 3 cups cooked brown rice*
- 1/2 cup finely chopped peanuts

Preparation Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Cook Time: Approximately 15 minutes

Preparation:

Heat oil in a medium, non-stick saucepan. Add onion. Cook and stir until onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.

Lightly mash peas with a fork. Add peas, tomatoes and soup to onions in saucepan. Cook over medium heat for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened to a stew-like consistency. Add water or more soup if too thick.

Put 3/4 cup rice in each of four bowls. Serve stew over rice. Top with peanuts.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 450; Total fat 13g; [Saturated fat](#) 2g; [Cholesterol](#) 0mg; [Sodium](#) 680mg; [Carbohydrate](#) 69g; [Dietary fiber](#) 10g; Protein 14g;

Grilled Pineapple tart

Ingredients:

- 1/2 of a 17.3 ounce package of Puff Pastry Sheets (1 sheet)
- 2 16 oz cans of sliced pineapple
- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/2 cup sweetened coconut, toasted
- Vanilla ice cream



Fresh Vegetables



Kitchen Utensils

Grilled Pineapple tart (con'd)

Directions:

Thaw the pastry sheet at room temperature for 40 minutes or until it's easy to handle. Heat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or spray with vegetable cooking spray.

Heat the grill to medium. Brush both sides of the pineapple slices with oil. Grill for about 6 minutes, turning halfway through cooking. Remove and cut each slice into quarters. Set aside.

Unfold the pastry sheet on a lightly floured surface. Roll the sheet into a 12-inch square. Place on the prepared baking sheet. Brush edges of pastry with water. Fold over the edges 1/2 inch on all sides, pressing firmly with a fork to form a rim. Prick the pastry thoroughly with a fork. Brush entire pastry shell with the egg. Place 40 of the pineapple pieces on the pastry crust, making 4 rows of 10, overlapping slightly. Mix the brown sugar, mint and ginger in a small bowl. Sprinkle the mixture evenly over the pineapple. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden. Let cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Top with the coconut. Serve warm with ice cream.

Nutrition information: Calories 200; [Total fat](#) 10 g; [Saturated fat](#) 7 g; [Cholesterol](#) 20 mg; [Sodium](#) 150 mg; [Carbohydrate](#) 28 g; [Dietary fiber](#) 2 g; [Sugars](#) 17 g; Protein 2 g; [Calcium](#) 2g

Photos of the *Many Faces of Extension* in Baltimore City



Cherry Hill Youth Garden



EFNEP Eat Right, Get Moving Conference in Baltimore City



Advisory Board Dinner



Urban Gardener's Supper



Youth Expo Exhibit Entry



Youth Expo Arrival

Educating People To Help Themselves

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