



Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden

Made possible by **Yum!** and **WORLD HUNGER RELIEF 2010**



Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden Grant

Planting the Seeds of Multicultural Respect, Nutrition and Hunger Relief

Introduction

Gardens can be an integral part of respect for different cultures and nutrition. Muhammad Ali Center Peace Gardens, made possible by the Yum! Brands Foundation, aim to educate underprivileged youth on multicultural respect and nutrition by helping children learn to grow their own food with plants from different countries. Integrating the Muhammad Ali Center's core principles of respect, confidence, conviction, dedication, spirituality and giving, Muhammad Ali Center Peace Gardens provide underprivileged youth with valuable life lessons and an awareness of the importance of growing food for themselves and others.



Since different types of crops are grown by each culture, edible gardens are a great tool to teach about and celebrate our diversity. Gardens planted with cultural awareness in mind offer much more than just a delicious harvest, you can teach your students about the concept of peace by providing opportunities for them to practice communication skills, learn about and accept others, and understand the interconnectedness of people, plants, and our planet.



To plant a Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden at your school, begin by discovering the horticultural crops consumed by the different cultures represented in your area. You can focus on historical connections or present use. Uncover these foods through community interviews, student food journals, or visits to local ethnic farmers' markets. You may choose to focus on one culture each growing season or if you have plenty of space, plant a garden select a few crops representing each ethnic group.

Throughout the growing season, continue to research the importance of these plants to each culture and make

a collection of family recipes. The connections to history and social studies curriculum are plentiful! Preparing recipes using the harvest of the garden makes for a tasty culminating activity. Cultures around the world share in the joy of harvest celebrations. From the Chinese lantern fest that celebrates the mid-autumn harvest with moon cakes and pomelos, to the yearly sugar cane harvest fest in Barbados; everyone celebrates fresh and bountiful harvests. Engaging children in cultural celebrations passes along values and traditions unique to families, cultures, and countries.

Hunger relief and food security is also an important focus. Educate youth on hunger issues, research local hunger relief agencies in your area and identify parts of the community in need of food. Partner with community resources on how you can educate youth about the fight to end hunger. Research which areas of the world are most in need of hunger relief and what issues are faced as a result of a limited food supply. Encourage youth to become part of the hunger relief effort. For example, www.wfp.org is a great resource for more information about the issue of hunger.



The pilot program for the Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden at John F. Kennedy Montessori Elementary School in Louisville, KY serves as a great case study. The school garden consisted of different vegetable beds representing the different countries and the diverse cultures of the school: Squash and beans were grown in the United States/Native American garden and were used to make “3 Sisters Harvest Soup”; tomatoes, peppers and onions were grown in a Salsa Garden representing Mexico; sweet potatoes and black beans were grown in the Cuban garden bed; edamame was grown in the Asian bed and potatoes and cucumbers represented Russia. Students made “Peace Pinwheels” with special messages of hope and planted them in the school yard.

Steps for creating a Muhammad Ali Center Peace Garden:

1. **Rally Support.** Recruit kids, parents, teachers, staff, and community volunteers for a garden team. Many hands are needed to ensure a successful, sustainable garden program.
2. **Develop a Plan.** Although it is tempting to grab some shovels and start digging, developing short and long term goals and an educational program to accompany the garden is an important step. Think about the ways you will use your garden as a living example of a peaceful world. A purposeful garden will be a worthwhile and long-lasting garden.
3. **Design the Garden.** Plan big, but start small. A large project can exhaust the enthusiasm of your students and volunteers. Let them get excited about the success of a bountiful, enjoyable, small garden, then expand as your confidence and experience increases. Depending on space available, you can choose vegetables that will grow well in containers, raised-beds, in ground beds or even under indoor grow lights.
4. **Search for Resources.** Think of your funding search as an opportunity to allow other community members to participate in an extraordinary youth program. You can find

donations, apply for grants, host fundraisers, start a youth garden business...get together with your committee and the kids and get creative!

5. **Dig In.** Finally let the planting begin. Take time to properly prepare your soil. Determine how you will meet the water needs of your plants before you get started.
6. **Sustain the Garden.** Keep your garden committee involved and motivated-- their support will be critical for keeping your garden growing strong. Take time to celebrate your harvest and share your work with your community.
7. **Have fun!** Cultivate understanding and build relationships through positive activities that help everyone involved feel like a successful team working towards a common goal to improve their community.



Here are a few activity ideas to help you get started:

Activity 1: Food and Culture in the Garden

Lay the Groundwork: Ask youth to discover important cultural foods in your community by interviewing parents, grandparents, and other community members about important foods in their diets or traditionally prepared for family celebrations. Make a list of all of the fruits and vegetables uncovered through these interviews.

Exploration: Next research the histories of each of these fruits and vegetables using the following questions:

1. In what region or country did this food plant originate? Each student can write the country/region name and the food plant name on the world map outline. To represent this exercise on a classroom map or globe, write the plant name on a Post-it note, and attach it to the correct spot.

2. In what regions of the world do people use this plant for food? Is this the place the plant originated? If not, when was this food plant introduced to different parts of the world? Who helped this plant spread from region to region? What path did it take in its travels? Use this information to draw lines on individual maps. Or, use yarn attached with pushpins or tape to trace the path on the classroom world map or globe.



3. Learn about a harvest festival of the ethnic group or the region you've identified. What foods are featured? What rituals (e.g., dancing, singing, parades) are performed? Does your family have a tradition of celebrating the harvest? Are there similarities among all these celebrations? What about them is different?

Branching Out: Plan a multicultural luncheon or banquet, and invite parents and community members. Consider selling tickets to raise funds for your peace garden, or for a local or global peace organization. At this function, youth can share what they've learned via posters and presentations. They can even unveil the design for their multicultural garden plan. Or write and perform a play based on your research (e.g., about harvest festivals around the world; how food plants traveled from place to place).

Activity: Symbols of Peace

Laying the Groundwork: Discuss with students what peace means to them. Talk about what symbols and objects are representative of peace.

Exploration: Add symbols of peace to your garden. Here are some examples:

- Cattails represent peace and prosperity, Native Americans of the United States used cattails extensively as toys for children, rope for weaving, building material, and food!
- Plant an apple tree. Apple blossoms represent love and peace honored by ancient Celts.
- Create or use the peaceful flow of water by installing a water feature.
- Paint symbols representative of cultures and religions around the world in and around the garden. Try painting olive branches on a wall or images on stones.
- Create origami cranes to hang in the garden, symbols of peace in Japan.
- Design a space in the garden for quiet contemplation using a large stone that sits unmoved in all weather.
- The Tao is a symbol of harmony, balance and unity in China. Create a yin yang in your garden with stones, flowers, or as a painting.



Making Connections: Invite youth to engage in writing exercises to express their views about peace. For example, ask them to write a story or a statement about their peace garden that formally explains why the group chose these objects or images to symbolize peace. Or ask students to write a personal response to the peace garden project. What does it mean to them?

Branching Out: Host a ceremony in your peace garden. A ceremony is a ritual that conveys a specific meaning -- essentially a symbol in action. Examples: Have a dedication ceremony to introduce your peace garden and your peaceful intentions in a formal way to other classes, parents, and the community; create a remembrance space in the garden to honor teachers or students who have died; use the garden as a site for official school functions and ceremonies.



Activity: Peace Pinwheels

Laying the Groundwork: Brainstorm a list of words or ideas that students associate with peace use examples such as, friendship, unity, and love.

Exploration:

1. Write expressions of peace on one side of a double-sided pinwheel. Direct students to write some of the words they generated in the large group. On the other side of the pinwheel cutout ask students to draw peace. Ask, What does peace look like? Pinwheel templates are available at the Pinwheels for Peace Website at:

http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/pinwheelsforpeace/pinwheel_template.html

2. Create pinwheels using pencils, sticks, scissors, and brads or tacks. Students will need to cut on the lines of the pinwheel outline. Help younger students to fold in the lines to meet at the center of the pinwheel. Attach the center of the pinwheel and folded in arms to the stick or pencil with a brad or tack.

Branching Out: Celebrate a day of peace by placing peace pinwheels in the garden or another gathering place. Celebrating with the world on September 21st for the annual International Day of Peace and register with the Pinwheels For Peace Project at <http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/pinwheelsforpeace/home.html>. Invite community members, parents, and students to join in on a celebration. Ask youth to read peace poetry or short peace stories. Involve school musicians or play music that expresses messages of peace. You can also include a potluck lunch or snack that features food from cultures represented or studied in the classroom.

Activity: Hunger Awareness and Food Security

Laying the Groundwork: In 2009, the United Nations reported that nearly 1 billion people around the world do not have enough to eat. Countries in Asia and the Pacific region are home to over half the population struggling with food security. Even in developed countries families experience hunger issues; in the United States 14 million American families experiencing food security issues each day. Tackling hunger issues is a matter of knowledge and empowering students and communities across the globe to bring food to every plate. What greater way to foster peace, then to make sure all humans have access to the necessities of life.



Invite a representative from a local food pantry to your garden to teach youth about food security issues in your community.

Exploration: Challenge youth to find a way to increase community food security and access to fruits and vegetables. Ideas may include:

- Donate a portion of your harvest to families, a local food bank, or a senior center. Encourage other gardeners in the area to do the same. If your garden is small, organize a canned food drive to collect additional donations.

- Organize a youth farmers' market and sell your produce at a reduced rate. Funds can help support your garden or donated to a local food bank.

- Offer youth-led educational programs to the community to teach others how to grow their own fruits and vegetables at home. Youth can also provide recipes or cooking demonstrations to share information about how to prepare fresh produce.

Branching Out: Plant a container garden of vegetables for youth to take home. This gives them the opportunity to share their new knowledge and harvest with family and friends.





Garden Pinwheels Project

Supplies Needed:

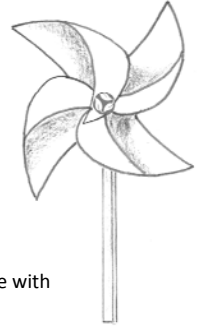
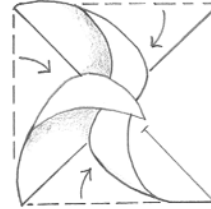
Pinwheel handle: either pencil with an eraser or a wooden stick.

Markers, crayons or color pencils, scissors and a pushpin or tack.

Creating a Pinwheel:

1. Cut out the square on the page. Instruct students to choose one side of the pinwheel for artwork, creating images, or symbols that are reflective of peace. Flip the paper and use the other side for words about peace, a poem, or other peaceful expressions.
2. Cut along lines at the four corners and leave the center uncut.
3. Bend the corners to the center point. Begin with one corner skipping the next, until all four points are bent towards the middle.
4. Use the pin to attach all four points, sticking the pin through the back of the pinwheel and then onto the top of a pencil or wooden stick.

Cut out this Garden symbol to place at the center of your pinwheel



Fold every other corner to center as shown and secure with pushpin or tack

Cut out the pinwheel square and cut in 3 inches from all four corners leaving the center area uncut

