

GROWing Outdoor Learning

There are 33 vegetable gardens at Madison public schools - from the brand new Blackhawk Middle School garden to one of the older originals at Lapham Elementary. School gardens are flourishing. But it's not just school gardens. A movement around outdoor learning is taking shape in other ways. Wright Middle Schools kids are canoeing on Wingra Creek right in their own backyard and students at Crestwood Elementary are tapping maple syrup from their own woodland.

How can we help support and grow this work? Work that an increasing body of evidence is showing to quantifiably improve students' achievement in school, as well as greatly adding to self-esteem, sense of responsibility, and cooperation with peers?

Well, there is a new coalition in town. The GrassRoots/OutdoorWonder or GROW Coalition founded by Sustain Dane and Health Forward Consulting in partnership with Community GroundWorks and Dane County UW Extension. It is a collective of organizations and individuals who are passionate about outdoor learning and want to work to build together what has already started.

On July 29th Joe Muellenberg, UW Extension Nutrition Educator and Co-founder of Glendale Elementary Garden and Lesly Scott, UW Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator, hosted the first GROW Coalition Garden Tour. A group of ten started the day at the Blackhawk Middle School garden, followed by a visit to the gardens at Sherman Middle School, Glendale Elementary and Lowell Elementary. Completing the morning with a lunch made by youth at the Goodman Community Center's Ironworks Café and a tour of the Goodman Community Garden. The participants left the tour inspired by the work they saw and energized by the connections they made.

Join the GROW Coalition for a second garden tour on September 23, 9am-12pm. Be sure to check out the new GROW Coalition website for more information:

<http://growmadison.net>



Picking raspberries at Glendale Elementary

Irrigation Workshops Scheduled for Dane and Rock Counties



Did you know that the number one use of water in the world is for irrigating crops? Almost 60% of the world's fresh water withdrawals go toward irrigation. Here in Wisconsin we are blessed with an abundant supply for

the most part but certain parts of the state have limited amounts of ground water and even in areas with abundant supplies there have been issues with surface water levels decreasing some years. Because of this, irrigation water use has become a debated topic. As growers that use irrigation it is important to use the water applied to crops as efficiently as possible to lessen environmental effects.

The irrigation workshops will provide growers with the latest research based information to get the most from every gallon of water used.

Sept 23 in Janesville, WI 9 am-3:30 pm

Sept 30 in Brooklyn, WI 9 am - 3:30 pm

The workshop will cover water management, irrigation scheduling techniques, uniformity testing, pump/well testing and ways to reduce irrigation pumping costs. A uniformity test will be conducted on a center pivot system and moisture sensors will be installed. Bring boots for walking in wet fields.

Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$30 per person and includes lunch & materials. Contacts: Jim Stute at 608-757-5696 (Rock County) or Nolan Andersen at 608-224-3717 (Dane County).

**Visit our website to keep up with the latest happenings
with Dane County UW Extension!**

<http://dane.uwex.edu/>





So. WI Food Hub – Fresh Market Packinghouse Meeting

Tuesday, October 4, 8:30 am- 4:00 pm

Dane County UW Extension office at 1 Fen Oak Court, Madison, WI 53718

Please join the Dane County Packinghouse Feasibility Study Team for a meeting to discuss the exciting results of the feasibility study and the opportunities ahead. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a detailed summary of the study findings, discuss the opportunities, and identify next steps. The first part of the day will include a detailed review of the following:

- Study methodology
- Supply and demand identified including areas of overlap and mis-match
- Business analysis – model used, ownership structure and assumptions
- Facility size and type
- Job creation
- Pricing and variables
- Packing house services
- Outcomes, opportunities and recommendations

The morning session will be followed by a question and answer period, and a review of next steps and time-lines. The afternoon will be reserved for growers interested in moving forward, and include a more in-depth discussion about business structure and owner/operator preferences, production costs and issues, level and type of participation, and how best to move forward.

Registration is required to attend and seating is limited. Please RSVP to Olivia Parry at (608) 266-4270 or by email at parry@countyofdane.com by Friday, Sept. 16, 2011.

Little Free Library at Dane County UW Extension

Little Free Libraries are popping up all over Dane County and beyond. The library is a small wooden box, a little bigger than a birdhouse, that holds 20 to 30 books for kids and adults. The idea is that you can take a book and hopefully leave a book the next time you visit. The goal is to encourage reading but the libraries also help build a sense of community.

Since Extension is all about education, we loved the idea of the Little Free Library and decided we needed one here at the Dane County office.

Nolan Andersen, our Dairy and Livestock Agent, is also a wood-worker and agreed to build one for us. We were just expecting a little wooden box but were

thrilled when Nolan brought the barn into the office a few weeks ago.

The little library is modeled after the barn on the family farm where Nolan grew up here in Dane County which stood just a few miles from the current Extension office.

Nolan had stored the wood from the barn when it was destroyed in a storm 25 years ago. He decided the Little Library was the perfect project to utilize the wood. In fact, he used mostly recycled materials for the little library.



Andersen Barn

The Little Free Library is now located just outside the door of the Dane County UW Extension office in the Lyman Anderson Ag & Conservation Center. The barn filled with books from the building staff almost immediately and has become a popular spot for staff, 4-Hers, and others who visit the building. New books continue to show up keeping the library stocked on a variety of topics.



Little Free Library at Dane UW Extension

If you would like to learn more about Little Free Libraries visit: www.littlefreelibrary.org and please make a point to check out the Barn Little Free Library some time soon.