

Children's Vegetable Garden Program - Fall 2015 Session August 22, 2015

Agenda 1: Gardening Session #1 for Fall 2015

Instructors: *Please review with all children together in each section.*

Special Reminders for Instructors Today:

- Assign one volunteer from each Section to escort the children and parents from the front entrance gate to their assigned plots.
- Familiarize the children/parents with the layout of the garden and the location of the restrooms.
- Stress the necessity of proper clothing, sunscreen, water, etc.
- Emphasize the importance of being on time and ready to garden. Parents and children are encouraged to be here as early as 8 am through at least mid-September.
- Explain the importance of reading the agenda and keeping a well-organized binder and journal.

Every Day Reminders for Children, Parents and Volunteers:

- ❖ **All** volunteers, children and parents please sign-in and out every week and check with **Ms. Mary** before you leave.
- ❖ Take care not to walk in or on any of the beds. It's very hard to replace irrigation lines and broken boards, plus we do not want to compact the soil. This includes the perimeter and center research beds. If there are any issues or concerns, please notify your Section Leader(s).
- ❖ Pick up debris in-and-around your section and walkways. This includes any weeds (**especially palm saplings**), rocks or trash. Throw material away in assigned trashcans. **Do not put anything in the compost bins unless instructed.** Take note of how clean and organized the garden is today. **Please make every effort to stay on top of weeding during the entire session.**
- ❖ **Coffee Campaign:** Children and families as well as volunteers are encouraged to bring coffee grounds, disposable coffee filters and tea bags from their homes or from their local coffee shop. This compostable material will be added to the backside of our compost pile until further notice. The compost pile is located behind the brown-fenced area marked with a red pylon closest to the gate entrance.
- ❖ Please visit and like us on Facebook and follow the Bexar Youth gardens blog for updates on the Children's Vegetable Garden Program (CVGP) and more.
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bexar-County-Youth-Gardens-Program/1447247425548890>
<https://bexaryouthgardens.wordpress.com/>
- ❖ **Please: don't return any dirty tools to the tool shed. It is everyone's responsibility to keep that area clean.**

Pre-plant Chores this Morning

- Adjacent Sections work together to make sure that all the trellises and the tomato cages are nice and straight within their section before any planting begins. If necessary, replace any damaged structures. For example, all plots in Sections 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 8 and 9 should all line up nice and straight. **Plots 12 and 13 should follow the same guidelines of having their cages line up with plots 1-11.**
- Apply eight cups of *Lady Bug natural derived Alfalfa based Organic Fertilizer* throughout your plot. Make sure that the fertilizer is evenly distributed and kept within the irrigation lines.
- Scratch the fertilizer into the entire plot with a gardening rake or grubbing hoe to a depth of about two inches. Remember, *we are not tilling or digging deep into the soil*. Discard any rocks or large debris and break up any large soil clods. Plots should look nice and leveled with no craters. All the irrigation lines, including the lines coming off the on/off valve should be clear of any soil.

We start planting today!

Follow the Planting Guide and the Example Plot located in Section 3, Plot 14

Fertilizer: please refer to the table for amounts of fertilizer mentioned in the agenda.

Fertilizer	Amount	Where	When
<i>Lady Bug natural derived Alfalfa based Organic Fertilizer</i>	8 cups per plot	<i>Throughout entire plot.</i>	<i>Before planting begins</i>
	2 cups per tomato	<i>Mixed with dirt from each tomato hole.</i>	<i>Before backfilling tomato hole with soil.</i>
	1 cup per tomato	<i>Around the top of each tomato plant.</i>	<i>After backfilling tomato hole with soil.</i>
<i>Hasta-Gro 2 ounces per gallon</i>	¼ gallon per tomato	<i>Around each tomato plant.</i>	<i>After mulching and watering in each tomato plant.</i>

Each section should use one bag of fertilizer at a time so we don't have so many bags open. When you return a bag of fertilizer to the shed, please close the bag tightly.

Tomatoes

- Today we are planting two tomato transplants. **Handle plants carefully at all times.** Planting instructions are the same for each transplant. Use the on/off irrigation valve as a guideline for the location of each plant.



1. "Tycoon" tomato transplant

<http://today.agrilife.org/2014/03/13/tycoon-tomato-texas-superstar/>

Locate the tomato cage in the middle of the plot closest to the on/off irrigation valve. Measure 15" from the middle of the inside of the plot towards the on/off

irrigation valve. Place a bamboo stick to identify where the large fruited 'Tycoon' tomato transplant is going today. **Many of the tomato cages will need to be reset.**

2. 'BHN 968' Dwarf Cherry Surprise tomato transplant <http://today.agrilife.org/2013/04/01/wbhn-968-cherry-tomato/>

Locate the tomato cage in the very backside of the plot opposite the on/off irrigation valve. Measure 60" from the inside middle of the plot towards the front of the plot to place a bamboo stick to identify where the small fruited 'BHN 968' tomato transplant is going today.

Many of the tomato cages will need to be reset.

For each tomato plant:

□ ***PLEASE! Do not remove or tamper with the bamboo stake*** if one is attached to the tomato plant. Move the tomato cage and anchor stakes out of the way into the walkway without impeding the flow of traffic (safety, safety, safety). Dig the planting hole and check that it is deep enough and wide enough to gently place your one-gallon tomato plant in the hole. Carefully remove the plant from the hole and add water to the hole to check for proper drainage. After the hole has drained, dust half a cup of rock phosphate in the very bottom. Mix two cups of *Lady Bug natural derived Alfalfa based Organic Fertilizer* with the soil dug from the hole.

Remove the tomato from its container and carefully place it in the hole. Backfill with half the mixed fertilized soil and then fill the remainder of the hole with water. Once the hole has drained some, continue to backfill with soil. The tomato should be planted level with the soil. Spread any remaining soil around the tomato plant with a soil berm and thoroughly water it one more time with the water can. If any soil gets on the plant, wash it off with the water can, but always minimize watering the leaves of the vegetable plants. Make sure no roots are exposed.

Evenly apply another cupful of organic fertilizer on the very top of the soil around the plant. Proceed by mulching the top of the soil with about 2-3" of mulch from the mulch provided. Do not cover the trunk of your tomato with any mulch. Water the plant in one more time to help settle the mulch on the soil.

With the help of the instructors/volunteers place the tomato cage very carefully over the plant and hammer in tightly with three-or-four rebar stakes. **The cage should not shake at all.** Thoroughly water the plant one more time with the water can. Make sure that the plant has a nametag. The tag should have the name of the plant on the front. The back of the tag should have the date with the gardener's initials.

□ Fertilize today's tomato transplants in with quarter of a gallon of *Hasta-Gro* liquid soluble starter mix. Due to the weight of the water cans (two gals), instructors will mix two oz. of *Hasta-Gro* with half a water can of water (about one gallon). Each plot will only need a half gallon of mixed fertilizer. This means that half a water can of mixed fertilizer will fertilize two plots. Do not get any of this fertilizer on the leaves, just on the soil around the plants.

Water Management

- Become familiar with the irrigation system. Without getting anyone wet, water the planting area with low pressure for 10 to 15 minutes. **Make sure that every orifice in the irrigation line is unclogged with a paper clip. Due to the water pressure in the garden, no more than two sections should be watering during any given time frame.**
- **Be observant not to flood plots or walk-ways. If the plots start flooding, let them drain a little, then proceed in watering again. DO NOT RELY ON THE SYSTEM TO WATER NEWLY PLANTED TRANSPLANTS.** If your irrigation system cannot be fixed (Instructors, try first), flag it and then provide **Miss Mary** with the section number and problem.
- **Section Leaders should hand water all their tomato plants in using the water hose with a water wand to help settle the soil around their plants at the end of the day. Be careful pulling the hose throughout the plots. Someone should walk behind the water person after they have finished watering, to make sure that none of the roots have been exposed. If roots are exposed, address this immediately.**

Special Projects for Garden

Everyone needs to participate to maintain the beauty of the garden.

- Before leaving today, *please check with Miss Mary* for your *Section assignments*.
- Are you completely finished? Make sure your Instructor walked your plot and section, everything looks neat and clean (no weeds, trash, rocks, etc.), all plants are watered and all your tools are cleaned and placed neatly in the tool shed.
- Remember, you're ending time at the Children's Vegetable Garden is around 12 noon.

Thanks Everyone! It's going to be a great fall.

David Rodriguez