

# Seed to Supper: A free vegetable gardening course

Seed to Supper is a comprehensive 6-week beginning gardening course that gives novice adult gardeners the tools they need to successfully grow a portion of their own food on a limited budget. It is a joint effort of the Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service,

## **History:**

The Oregon Food Bank started the Seed to Supper program in 2004 to enhance the food security and increased access to locally-grown foods for food insecure populations. In 2010, the Oregon Food Bank established a partnership with the OSU Extension Service forming a joint Seed to Supper program.

The curriculum has been expanded and is focused on research-based information. The Master Gardeners have provided the majority of the volunteer course instructors. The Seed to Supper courses are now being offered in more than 20 Oregon Counties. The success and expansion of the Seed to Supper program throughout Oregon has been facilitated by community collaboration of multiple organizations including emergency food pantries, public libraries, affordable housing units, schools, Head Start, community health organizations, churches and OSU County Extension Services.

A 2013 study of the Seed to Supper program in Metropolitan Portland area showed that the Seed to Supper program had impacted the participants by improving their gardening knowledge and thus food literacy and self-reliance. A majority of the Seed to Supper participants had some existing gardening knowledge prior to the Seed to Supper classes, indicating some degree of food literacy. However, in the survey they also indicated that the garden-based classes and workshops better prepared them to deal with garden issues such as pest management, seasonal planting cycles and other dilemmas, showing increased capacity for growing their own food and becoming more self-reliant.

These results show that on the whole the Seed to Supper program does support food literacy and self-reliance for its participants and encourages culturally diverse participants to build on their own knowledge and share it with others.

Withers D., Burns H: Enhancing food security through experiential sustainability leadership practices: A study of the Seed to Supper program. J. Sustainability Education. June 7, 2013

## **Organizational Structure of Seed to Supper program:**

The Oregon Food Bank is the Administrator of the Seed to Supper program. There is a satellite agency designated as the Coordinator for the respective County Seed to Supper programs. A Host Agency is identified for each individual Seed to Supper class. The Host Agency is generally responsible for obtaining meeting sites, recruitment and marketing of the individual courses and coordinating the support for the classes including supplies, child care

and refreshments if needed and the fulfilling the required program reports and evaluations. Volunteer Instructors for the individual courses are usually Master Gardeners from the County Master Gardener Association.

### **Program basics:**

Volunteers teach classes at community host sites such as emergency food pantries, public libraries, affordable housing units, schools, churches, and Head Start,. Classes are often taught indoors in the off-season in order to prepare participants for successful gardening in the springtime. Volunteer Garden Educators may also reinforce lessons in onsite host agency or community gardens, if they are available. The classes use a use a student course booklet and a series of engaging PowerPoint presentations. In many Counties, the courses are taught in both English and Spanish.

The Seed to Supper Course is comprised of a series of 6 classes of 2 hours duration.

- Covers basics of low-cost veggie including soil preparation, planting, growing and harvesting
- Offered for free at host sites that serve the community
- Course topics:
  - Garden site and soil development
  - Garden planning
  - Planting
  - Container gardening
  - Caring for a growing garden
  - Harvesting and using garden bounty

### **Yamhill County Seed to Supper Program:**

The Yamhill Community Action Partnership (YCAP) is the designated Seed to Supper Satellite Agency for Yamhill County. The OSU Yamhill County Extension Horticulturist, Heather Stoven and Jade Wilson, Master Gardener program coordinator are partners with YCAP in the the coordination of the Seed to Supper classes in Yamhill County. The Yamhill County Master Gardeners provide support for YCAP and the Extension Staff to obtain host agencies, and to provide assistance in marketing and recruitment activities and logistical support for the individual classes. In addition, there is a group of Master Gardeners available to teach both English and Spanish classes throughout Yamhill County.

Agencies and organizations currently participating in the Yamhill County Seed to Supper program include YCAP, Yamhill County Extension Service, Head Start of Yamhill County, Yamhill County Housing Authority, Willamina Schools, Hope On The Hill-McMinnville, West Valley Kiwanis Club. West Valley Community Campus, Yamhill Community Care Organization,

Virginia Garcia Health Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, Linfield College Center for the Northwest and St. Michaels Episcopal Church-Newberg.

**Upcoming Yamhill County Seed to Supper Courses:**

**McMinnville:**

**English and Spanish Classes:**

Location: Hope on the Hill  
500 NW Hill Rd  
McMinnville

Dates: April 8 to May 13 (Saturdays)

Time: 10 AM to Noon

**Newberg:**

**English Class:**

Location: St. Michaels Episcopal Church  
110 South Everest Rd  
Newberg

Dates: April 8-May 20 (no class April 29) (Saturdays)

Time: 10 AM to Noon

**Spanish Class:**

Location: Deskins Commons  
1103 North Meridan St.  
Newberg

Dates: April 8- May 13 (Saturdays)

Time: 2-4 PM

For more information about enrolling in a Seed to Supper class or about hosting or supporting the Seed to Supper program please contact:

Yamhill County Extension Office  
2050 NE Lafayette Ave., McMinnville, OR 97132  
503-434-717

Email: [jade.wilson@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jade.wilson@oregonstate.edu)

For more information about for enrolling in a course or hosting or supporting the Seed to Supper program please contact:

Yamhill County Extension Office  
2050 NE Lafayette Ave, McMinnville, OR 97132  
503-434-7517  
Email: [jade.wilson@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jade.wilson@oregonstate.edu)