

TEAM Punta Gorda

The student garden at the YMCA Recreation Center is growing and thriving!

Carol McDonald and I have been working with the students - cleaning in and around the garden beds, harvesting produce and planting new plants. Here's what's been accomplished since the last update:

We've finally picked our first ripe strawberry! The pickling cucumbers and onions have germinated. Our diseased tomato plant was removed and replaced thanks to Carol's watchful eye! We now have a couple of new tomato varieties that are developing flowers and fruit. Waiting for the tomatoes to turn red enough to pick is a challenge but the students are very patient! Our pepper plant is loaded with tiny green peppers - waiting for those to turn red as well. The beds are bursting with lots of herbs which are being picked with care and sent home. The Zinnias remain in bloom, adding vibrant and attractive color to the garden landscape. Next week we hope to harvest the fennel, beets and carrots.



I'd like to take a moment and thank a few folks who have donated plants for the student garden. We truly appreciate their generosity!

- Debbie donated a cucumber seedling.
- Kim donated pineapple straw to put under our strawberries. Those tender berries could really use a soft dry bed while they ripen.
- An anonymous donor has given a lovely brussels sprout plant

In addition to gardening, we took some time this week to tidy up the garden area. Both the students and adults weeded and picked up debris in the area around the garden beds (wearing gloves of course). The black weed block was exposed and frayed along the perimeter and the wood chip ground cover is thinning. We worked to put the weed block back into place and redistributed wood chips to cover the bare spots. Thank you Betsy and Team Punta Gorda and Andrea at the YMCA for continuing to make this project possible! A special thank you to Nicole and Lilly for their weekly assistance in coordinating the students and their help with supervision. They are wonderful.

Margaret Whitney, Volunteer Coordinator
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