



NIBBLES

GARDEN UPDATE

You may have noticed some changes in the garden spaces at your child's school when you returned in August. You may also be wondering, "Where is the garden at our school?" Ask your child's teacher or principal where it is and go see what we are doing. A crew from Youth Employment Services and I spent the month of August digging out weeds, building and repairing beds, laying gopher wire and generally preparing the gardens for the arrival of new soil for the beds and granite for the paths. The gardens at Meiners Oaks, Mira Monte, Topa Topa and Summit will be ready for our Kindergarten, 1st and 5th grade classes to begin planting in mid-October. We plan to have a garden up and ready at San Antonio for a spring planting. All the schools will have a garden club that every child can join. I hope those of you who are interested in helping in the garden will be in contact with me. Any time or energy you can offer will be greatly appreciated.

I am looking forward to watching our beautiful gardens grow and grow!

Sara MacCracken, Garden Coordinator
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Plant A Small Garden At Your Own Home

Now is a great time to start a small salad garden. You can plant lettuces, radishes, beets, spinach, kale or other dark leafy greens and even a few edible flowers like Johnny jump-ups.

What you need:

- A container: an unused sandbox or an old tire is ideal, but any large flat box, crate or tub will do. Or, you can go real small and do a couple of plants in a large pot or window box.
- Seeds will work for all the veggies but I recommend using starts for the flowers.
- Lots of potting soil
- A spray bottle, watering can and water

1. Decide where to put your container. Full sun is ideal for this time of year as the days are getting shorter and cooler. If you only have partial sun that will probably work as long as you start very soon.

2. Put soil in the container. Make the soil deep enough for the plants' roots and leave 1 inch for empty space at the top (so when you water, the soil and water stay in the container).

3. Decide how you want to use your space and plant. Plant your flower plants first and then arrange your seeds accordingly. Read the seed packets so you know how much space each plant needs to grow and how deep you should plant the seeds. Smaller seeds like lettuce should not be planted to deeply, whereas beet seeds can be slightly deeper. Always put a few more seeds than you will need and then you can thin the plants as they come in.

4. Water gently. Use the spray bottle for the first two weeks or until you see seedlings. Make sure that the soil is soaked. The spray bottle will keep the smaller seeds from moving around and getting displaced. You will need to spray twice or more a day to keep the soil from drying out. If you have a hose attachment with a mist setting this is an ideal way to spray with a lot less effort. Once you see your seedlings you can switch to the watering can.

5. Watch them grow and harvest as plants mature.
Enjoy your salad!

WELCOME BACK!

Food for Thought is starting its third year in Ojai Unified School District. This year will be the year when the five program elements will be available at the elementary schools. We are excited that the original vision will be the reality for the children of our district. Here is an outline of the *Food For Thought* grade level offerings in addition to the weekly salad bar:

Kindergarten : Garden-based learning and salad bar introduction
1st : Garden-based learning
2nd : Waste Reduction/ worm bins
3rd : Nutrition Education (3 lessons)
4th : Farm Field Trip
5th : Garden-based Learning
6th : Nutrition Education (3 lessons)

Food for Thought relies heavily on volunteers to assist with our various programs. Thank you to the parents eager to be involved with *Food For Thought* this year. Please contact your school's *Food For Thought* volunteer coordinator to learn where help is needed at your school.

Mira Monte : Kelley Mays
Meiners Oaks : Lori Hamor
San Antonio : Renee Roth
Summit : Kelley Bortoli
Topa Topa : Susan Decordova

Lori Hamor, Program Coordinator
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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
(WWW.FOODFORTHOUGHTOJAI.ORG)
WHERE YOU WILL FIND ALL OF THE
PAST ISSUES OF NIBBLES ALONG
WITH OTHER INFORMATION.
WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS,
SUGGESTIONS AND INPUT.



OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW (PYRAMID, THAT IS)

Have you checked out the USDA's revised Food Guide Pyramid, "MyPyramid"? This new logo and website debuted last Spring. The new logo is a wordless triangle with colored upright bars representing the food groups. The stick figure climbing the steps of the pyramid is there to represent the importance of regular exercise. The new website, www.mypyramid.gov, contains a wealth of information for the motivated, computer savvy consumer.

The new "MyPyramid" has three key messages:

1. Make smart choices within every food group as well as between food groups.
2. Keep a balance between food intake and physical activity.
3. Get the most nutrients from your calories.

In addition, each food group has a goal message:

- **Grains:** "Make half your grains whole" (see "Going with the (Whole) Grain")
- **Vegetables:** "Vary your veggies"
- **Fruit:** "Focus on fruit"
- **Milk:** "Get your calcium rich foods"
- **Meat and Beans:** "Go Lean with protein"
- **Oils:** "Know your fats"

THE BOTTOM LINE: The pyramid may look new, but the familiar message of eating more fruits and vegetables remains. Encouraging your children to enjoy their schools' FFT salad bar is a fun and tasty way to increase their intake of fruits and vegetables (and maybe even help them discover a few new favorites!).

SUGGESTION: Get to know "MyPyramid". Check out the website for more tips, menu ideas and calorie tracking.

Going With The (Whole) Grain

The recent government dietary guidelines recommend that Americans stop going against the grain and start eating more whole grains. Refined grains (white flour, white rice, etc.) lose antioxidants, phytochemicals, Vitamin E, B vitamins, fiber, healthy fats and minerals none of which are replaced by enrichment. The dietary guidelines state that "consuming at least 3 ounce equivalents of whole grains per day can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, may help with weight maintenance, and may lower risk for other chronic diseases".

What should you be looking for when buying grain products?

- Don't be fooled by color. Brown-colored bread is often made with mostly white flour (Unbleached, enriched wheat flour is white flour). Their brown color comes from caramel coloring, molasses or raisin paste.
- Check the ingredient list. The first ingredient should be "whole wheat flour" or another whole grain (i.e. oats).
- Check the fiber content on the Nutrition Facts panel. Fiber is an important component of whole grains. If the product has lots of added sugar or fat, the fiber content will be reduced. An excellent source of fiber has at least 5 grams per serving; a good source has at least 2.5 grams.

GROWING FAST!

Last year, with the help of our incredibly dedicated team of volunteers and two wonderful part-time staffers, *Food For Thought* was able to expand its scope across the District. Integrated program elements can now be found at all five of our elementary schools and Matilija Junior High School. We hope to initiate activities at Nordhoff this year.

To fuel this growth, we have been fortunate to receive funding from the California Endowment, the Marisla Foundation, the University of California Hansen Trust, and other foundations and individuals. We also had an incredibly successful fundraiser this summer called Locally Grown (featuring Jack Johnson, the Malloy Brothers and Ted Lennon) that will help us keep humming along this year.

Because of this rapid growth, we are making plans to become a formal nonprofit organization and file for 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. We have been operating under the financial umbrellas of the Ojai Education Foundation and the OUSD. We feel that acquiring this nonprofit status will help us become more efficient and effective, and will allow us to provide our donors with tax credit as well.

ORANGE-DATE PUMPKIN MUFFINS

Here's a recipe using whole-wheat flour that is packed with antioxidant power. These muffins can be made in a mini-muffin pan (reduce the baking time somewhat), and they freeze well. They make a great soccer game snack!

1 cup all-purpose flour
 1 cup whole-wheat flour
 2 tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1 tsp. salt (can be reduced)
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 1 large seedless orange, scrubbed and cut into 8 wedges
 1 large egg
 1 large egg white
 2/3 cup pumpkin puree
 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
 1/4 cup honey
 3 tbsp. vegetable (canola) oil
 3/4 cup chopped dates or figs
 3 tbsp. chopped walnuts or pecans

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line 12 muffin cups (or approximately 36 mini's) with paper liners.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together flours, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon; set aside.

3. Place unpeeled orange sections in a food processor and puree. Add egg, egg white, pumpkin, sugar, honey and oil; process until mixed.

4. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and add the orange mixture and dates; stir with a rubber spatula just to moisten the dry ingredients. Spoon into prepared muffin cups and sprinkle with nuts.

5. Bake for 18-20 minutes, or until tops spring back when lightly touched. (Recipe can be doubled.)