

The Arabia Mountain Agriculture Fruitful Forest

Sponsored by: Georgia Organics Inc.

Advisor: Joshua P Rogers

The Arabia Mountain High School Agricultural program sought to create a perennial garden of a fruitful nature. With the help of Georgia Organics and their Farm to School grant of \$2,075 the dream became a reality. Over the course of ten weeks, the plants were selected, planted, and taken care of to ensure a grand start to their life at Arabia Mountain High School. The plants were established on the west side of the building near the greenhouse so that sufficient care could be provided.

The plants selected are wonderful diversity of many species. The trees include Pear, Plum, Persimmon, Pomegranate, Service Berry, Cherry, and Fig. Over perennial specimens include three different varieties of blueberry, raspberries, and dragon fruit. Three extensive herb gardens were established as well as an annual vegetable garden where currently tomatoes, squash, pumpkins, and watermelons have been planted.

The planting process considered all aspects of the organic growing process to ensure the upmost honest approach at the plant's development. The holes for the specimens were filled with seasoned compost. The herb gardens were made from compost surrounded by stones instead of treated lumber. There are no pesticides to date that have been used in the entire quadrant of the fruit forest. There has also been zero amounts of application of fertilizer or growth hormone.

As stated in the proposal, many of the equipment aspects of the project were already owned by the program. The following breakdown discloses all costs used.

30 Plant Specimens: \$1, 286

Robby Astrove's assistance and expertise: \$ 314

Hardware, Fencing, Fence related tools: \$ 228

Organic soil, seeds, germination pots, wheat straw: \$247

The forward looking aspects of the project are to forever educate the high school aged student on nutrition and better eating options. There are also hopes of establishing an outsource option for the cafeteria to provide to the students during lunch. The fruitful forest will be projected at full functioning fruit production in three years. They are established and will be taken care of until then.

1. Number of children impacted/served by grant: 150
2. Number of other stakeholders impacted/served by grant:

Teachers: 5

Parents:3

Cafeteria staff: 2

Others_____ : Principle, and administrative staff

3. Brief description of project (250 words or less) see above

4. Please share the following: (please keep answers to 3-6 sentences, bulleted responses are fine!)

a. Accomplishments:

b. Lessons Learned: A great lesson about when to time your efforts. The official planting day took place the Friday before spring break. Students were given excused absences to attend the planting and help. Not all 150 were in attendance here, but probably 70 in total throughout the day.

c. Challenges/solutions:

d. Impact on students (i.e. understanding of local food system, preference for healthy foods, desire to learn more about food and growing, making healthy choices including eating and physical activity, etc.) Many students did not know what some plants looked like to know where the fruit came from. I also had a student see us planting dragon fruit and immediately recognized it from her yard and no one in her family ever knew what it was.

e. Stories and quotes from students, staff, teachers impacted by project: Principle was very pleased and had great reviews to say about the efforts of the students and the compassion they had for making their learning environment a better place.

f. How will you sustain and continue your school's farm to school efforts?

The garden is a year round duty, but the trees and perennials just need time and a little love now and then. We hope to educate the school so that no harm comes to the trees.

5. Please include at least 2 photos from your project! (*Please be sure to provide photo release forms for children included in the photos.*)

