

Berkeley Technology Academy Garden Program

Another Year in the B-Tech Garden

Great things have been happening at B-Tech this year! Many new B-Tech students are now taking advantage of the opportunity to get their hands dirty in the fertile soils of the garden - many of whom have previous experience as gardeners! Whether having spent time in gardens with parents or grandparents or having gardened during their primary school years in Berkeley public schools, each student brings unique experiences and insights to the class. While some high school students might not be as easily impressed as elementary students, garden-based education provides a powerful place for high school students to gain hands-on experience growing food and learning about nutrition. Whether planting and harvesting produce or making smoothies with fresh fruit, the experiential nutrition education provides a forum and space for students to think about how their everyday decisions can impact their personal health and the health of the environment.

As the days get longer and the nights warmer, the B-Tech garden continues to flourish. We are clearing our winter crops of onions, collards, chard, broccoli, garlic, lettuce, and cauliflower and making way for summer's warm season crops of tomatoes, corn, squash, beans, basil, strawberries, and cucumbers. Year-round gardening inspires students and parents alike to start growing food in the beautiful climate we enjoy here in the Bay.



In a silent tribute to the long-held truism that planting a fruit tree is a sign of hope for future generations, three of our eldest apple trees have begun to bear fruit for the first time. After years of care and nurturing they are just now beginning to bear fruit for those who have cared for them. This provides further inspiration to plant fruit trees for the benefit of future generations. We hope to grow our garden by planting a mini-orchard for B-Tech classes of the future.

During the last semester of the school year, the venerable Joy Moore joined B-Tech to support the garden. Joy has volunteered to help with the garden class by assisting with garden maintenance and cooking up some healthy dishes. With Joy's support, students made fruit smoothies and discussed the fun of food preparation, how easy it can be to prepare snacks, and how eating fresh nutritious food can improve your health and behavior! Student's interest in preparing food has grown as a result of Joy's enthusiastic instruction on how to utilize fresh ingredients to create delicious and nutritious meals.

Thanks to a gift certificate from Berkeley Bowl, the classes have prepared smoothies, refried bean tortillas, beet, onion and apple salad, collard greens, and made green salads using produce harvested from their garden.

Justin Watkins, B-Tech Garden Instructor

