



July 7, 2010

63 learn to garden in summer school

BY MARK TOWER
Staff writer

FREMONT -- Local middle school students may have put down their books for summer vacation, but some have picked up hoes and rakes and continued to learn a different set of skills.

The summer school gardening program began June 21 as part of a collaboration between Fremont City Schools and WSOS Community Action. It will continue through July 30.

Two to three days each week, program supervisor Trisha Baker and a large group of girls in grades six through eight head out to a vegetable garden behind Ross High School's tennis courts, which can be seen from U.S. 20.

The boys' group alternates days in the garden with the girls as 63 students stake tomato plants, pull weeds and run an irrigation system. They eventually will harvest and devour the fresh vegetables.

"The best part is we get to eat them all when we get done," ninth-grader Achante Haywood said. "I like pulling weeds, and making the garden look pretty like it should be."

Jersie Spears, an eighth-grader, said she enjoys putting the stakes in for the tomatoes. She also looks forward to eating the fresh lettuce.

Another eighth-grader, Nacaila Roberts, said she also enjoyed doing the staking and was happy to get a tan while she worked outside.

"I'll eat some of the tomatoes with salt on them," Roberts said.

Baker said it has been rewarding for the students to see plants grow from seedlings to crops, nearly ready for harvest within a few weeks.

"For some of them, this is a really great learning experience. Some of them have never gardened before," she said.

Fremont's middle school students built the beds behind the athletic fields and planted all the seeds before the end of the school year.

Summer and after-school programs through WSOS are available to families in Fremont and Clyde-Green Springs schools and to residents of Fostoria.

For information about those WSOS programs, call Mae Dell Leake at 419-334-8911 in Sandusky County and Gaby King at 419-435-4884 in Seneca County.



Sixth- through eighth-grade students weed garden beds Tuesday afternoon as a part of a summer school gardening class run by Fremont City Schools and WSOS. (Mark Tower | News-Messenger)



Summer school students pull weeds Tuesday in the garden located on the north end of Fremont Ross High School's campus. The middle-school students have been weeding and watering the plants since June and expect to harvest vegetables at the end of the month. (Mark Tower | News-Messenger)



July 14, 2010

Students spend summer in the garden

Submitted story

FREMONT -- A Verti-Gro Hydroponics Garden has been planted by summer program participants at Croghan School, a collaboration between Fremont City Schools, WSOS summer and after-school programs and a summer youth works program called the School Garden Project.

Collaboration among community partners has been the key to this project, with the youths providing labor and local businesses providing materials.

This spring, the vocational agriculture department at Ross High School planted vegetable seeds, pampered them in the school greenhouse, built raised beds and then transplanted the plants to raised-bed gardens behind the tennis courts at the alumni fields.

FFA students will plant sweet corn this summer and will harvest it this fall. Topsoil for the beds came from the excavation of the new middle school.

Training on building and caring for the raised beds took place in a couple of sessions with a local master gardener, and the training on the hydroponics garden came through the Center for Innovative Food Technology in Toledo.

WSOS and Fremont City Schools have submitted a grant to the Joint Solid Waste Management District to get funds for a sign, composter, benches, a garbage can and planters made of 25 percent recycled material.

The students will have a lot of hands-on time with both gardens. When it comes time to harvest the foods, they will be able to eat them as part of their school lunch.

The gardening project aims to encourage students to learn about the importance of healthy eating. Ross High School family and consumer science classes will help gather and clean produce and develop recipes students will like.



Students work on a garden as part of a collaboration between Fremont City Schools, WSOS summer and after-school programs and a summer youth works program called the School Garden Project. (Submitted photo)