

## The EDIBLE GARDEN

The Marion Institute is dedicated to sustainability and consuming locally. With the new opportunity to create a garden of our own, we have set off on a local and organic adventure to create healthy, tasty and beautiful edibles.



**Beauty with a Purpose:** Edible Landscaping offers the ultimate organic option for any garden or public space. This type of food gardening is beautiful as well as productive in that it provides edible plants, a wildlife haven and an excuse to get outside during the work day! This garden creates a stronger work community as well.



**The Herb Spiral:** The herb spiral is a permaculture gardening method that uses nature to its full potential. Gravity allows the water to seep through the levels meaning that the plants at the top get full drainage while the ones at the bottom reside in wetter conditions. It also gives herbs shady spots with varying degrees. The herbs that need full-sun can be grown in those positions while more shade loving plants can be located on the opposite side. Another benefit of an herb spiral is the ease with which one can access the plants whether it be to pick, plant, or maintain them. The spiral doesn't take too much space and its varying heights mean that you're not always bending over - much better for the knees and back!

**Location, Location, Location:** The placement of our plants was determined through aesthetics, companion planting guides and instinct. In order to cover up the monstrosity of the electric boxes, among other things, perennial bushes (blueberries, bayberries, etc) were used. Additionally, because this garden is organic, the vegetables were planted in correspondence with which other vegetables they grow well with and which ones they do not grow well with (companion planting). For example, potatoes and tomatoes are risky to grow together because they are attacked by the same blight. However, tomatoes grow great with mint, which brings out the taste and improves health of the tomatoes.

MORE



## The Garden (Cont...)

**Soil:** Since this is the first year for our organic garden, we have paid special attention to what nutrients are put into the soil. During the winter, winter rye was planted around the garden in order to provide nutrients and stable soil. When spring arrived, the winter rye was tilled into the soil. Vegetables were planted according to their soil temperature preferences (cold frames were used for plants that needed warm soils, such as melons). Lastly, seaweed mulch and horse manure compost has been used to control weeds and provide more nutrients into the soil.

\*Plant Labels are originally made by members of the Marion Institute. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact Desa, Glenn or Katrina.

## COMPOSTING!

Composting is a vital component to complete the cycle of sustainability. We try to recycle anything and everything that we consume at the Marion Institute. Therefore, our compost device, also known as the *earthmaker*, provides us with a place to put our fruit peels, coffee grounds, weeds, napkins, etc.

Our *earthmaker* is a handy device for the small space that we have. The location that we chose was a place shaded from hot, midday sun. This allows the radiant heat to warm the top chamber and assist in composting. Too much heat can soften the plastic and reduce its structural integrity.

**Compost ingredients:** We use between one to two parts of green material to every one part brown to get a great heap of fertile compost. Once the blend is put into the top compartment of the *earthmaker*, water, oxygen, and heat help micro-organisms (fungi and bacteria) break down the raw material. In the cooler middle and bottom chambers, macro-organisms (worms and invertebrates) work to further break down material to mulch, and finally compost.

The Compost Monster...



**Green Material:** grass clippings, weeds, kitchen scraps (except meat), seaweed, animal manure, and vegetable peelings, leaves, and stems

**Brown Material:** sawdust, shredded/chopped newspaper, paper items, cardboard, straw, twigs and small branches