

# Urban Gardening Project

Springboard Foundation conducted an Urban Gardening seminar in Barangay Bukid and Manggahan , Merville, Paranaque City. We invited Amy Sotelo, a trainer and Registered Agriculturist, to conduct the urban gardening seminar.



First we asked the participants to fill in a survey form about their knowledge on the importance of vegetables in their diets and the current intake of vegetables in their meals.

Then we proceeded to the lecture. 27 women and 3 men participated in the seminar. Everybody was very interested and listened attentively to the trainer. The participants were asked several questions about nutrition and asked to contribute their ideas on how to grow vegetables at their homes.



The history of FAITH (Food Always In The Home) was discussed. This is a project for the production of vegetables, fruits and raising of animals, to ensure food security in every home. The purpose of FAITH is to give solutions to the lack of nutritious food in the diet of every Filipino. The objectives of the project were discussed; to reduce the amount of the household budget spent on food, and to increase income if there is excess production, provision of affordable, accessible, clean and organically grown vegetables. Planting vegetables is good exercise. Vegetable gardening can be done in any place rural or urban. Having only a small place to plant is not a problem because there are ways of raising a vegetable garden even if there is only a small area available.

After the identification of valuable fruits and vegetables, their importance was discussed. Some of the participants knew that the most common vitamins A and C, can be derived from vegetables, but they were not aware that iron, vitamin B and other micronutrients that can be found in vegetables as well.



Amy taught them how to prepare discarded plastic containers for planting.

The magic square garden was drawn on the board to illustrate how to maximize a one meter lot for planting vegetables that are rich in Vitamin A,B,C and minerals like iron, zinc and iodine. This is water, labor and time saving technology. A small space is not a hindrance to vegetable gardening. At first the participants looked puzzled, doubting that it is really possible. As the lecture went on, some started to nod and understand that it is really possible. The other method demonstrated was the use of used mineral bottle containers and other plastic containers as well as cans. The participants gathered ordinary soil mixed with creek soil which can be found very near their place. The soil is very rich. A demonstration was done to show how to shape the containers to be more pleasing to passers by as these will be placed in front of their houses as anti pollutants, home decoration and gardens. The participants created their own decorated containers. The size of the containers depends on the kind of plant that is to be planted. Camote tops, kangkong, bell pepper, eggplant and tomatoes need a 12 inch container while small containers are for smaller plants. The participants were very creative and designed plant hangers and containers shaped like flower vases.



Gina, from Springboard, shared her observations about container gardening. She told the group that the containers she has seen were crafted so beautifully and the vegetables so healthy that they would be fit for the houses of wealthy people. She also informed the group that a contest will take place between the participants for the best gardening. The awarding ceremony will be in December. Initial criteria for judging was presented: Production 50%, Creativity 30%, Record Keeping 20%.



Free vegetable seedlings, seeds and a Nutri Guide book were given to all of the participants by the Springboard Foundation . We wish them all the best with their vegetable production and hope to see more nutritious meals for their families, as well as savings on their food budgets.