

Growing Point

Garden lessons in the Bible

Week 13: Reaping the Harvest

Then Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

-Matthew 9: 37 NRSV

The last several weeks many families have been on vacation. Our gardening crew has been 6-12 kids each week. We have had some big jobs to accomplish – lots of watering, weeding and harvesting. It has been a lot of work for our MCC garden kids. We have worked hard and at the end of each session we have had an impressive pile of harvested vegetables to take home – basil, beans, beets, chard, lettuce, and zucchini. There has been enough that some families have made whole meals from the MCC vegetables. The harvest has been plentiful. The laborers have been fewer than some weeks. But we have proven that we can accomplish a lot when we work hard.

Jesus had been travelling and talking with many people in the synagogues along the way. Crowds gathered in each location. Many of them were sick with various diseases. Many of them were distressed because they were not accepted in the community – they didn't do the 'right' things, or believe the 'right' things. Jesus talked to these people and healed them.

Rather than harvesting fruits and vegetables from a garden, Jesus harvested people. He accepted and loved these people that others had rejected. In so doing, they were healed and went on to achieve great things.

We are like workers in Jesus' field of people. In this passage, Jesus calls on us to harvest not only beans and broccoli, but also people. If we see the good in each person, they will feel good about themselves, and their mind, body and spirit will heal. If we all work hard together, we will achieve amazing things and the harvest – the rewards will be great.

Soul Water

Nurturing your soul through prayer

Week 13: Reaping the Harvest

Dear Jesus,

You are the Good Gardener.

You nurture our hearts and our souls.

We water the plants in our garden.

And we water the people in our lives when we shower them
with love.

We weed the plants in our garden.

And we weed people when we set a good example and
guide them away from bad choices.

We harvest the plants in our garden.

And we harvest people when our efforts lead to many great
friends achieving many great things to make the world a
better and better place to live.

Help me to always learn more about watering, weeding and
harvesting plants and people.

Amen

Earth Explorations

Nurturing Connections to the Soil

Week 13: Reaping the Harvest

Are you observant? If you are, you might be interested in helping out with the WiDNR's phenological calendar. Phe-nol-o-gy is the study of changes in plants and animals as they respond to weather, climate, and the seasons. Each spring we anxiously await the first returning robin in the hope of warmer weather. That is a phenological event. It happens every year but the return date depends a lot on the weather. Migration and flowering are two more examples of phenological events.

OK, here's your challenge. Look around for the following seasonal/phenological changes and notice any of the following...

- In wetlands, dragonflies and damselflies quickly dart over ponds.
- Bobcat "kittens" (young) are born in dens found in caves, rock crevices, or hollow logs or trees.
- Listen for crickets singing in the evening air.
- Watch for sulfur butterflies gathering around puddles - butterfly watching is at its best in August.
- Acorns fall from trees, providing meals for hungry wood ducks, deer, whooping cranes, and turkeys.
- The prairie's purple coneflower is in bloom.
- Jewelweed's orange blossoms. Later, when this "touch-me-not" has ripened, help send the seeds shooting by simply touching a bulging seed pod. They are quicker than the eye!
- Wild blackberries ripening awaiting hungry hikers and bears to strip them from the vine.
- Warblers, shorebirds, and nighthawks beginning to migrate south.
- Wood duck families can be seen floating along rivers and ponds near overhanging branches and hollow standing trees.

The above phenology activity is part of an environmental education program for kids called EEK! offered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Check it out at

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/nature/season/pheno.asp>.

They would like you to email them if you see anything on the above list - DNREnvironmentalEducationforKids@wisconsin.gov.

Happy phenological observing!

Seeds for Thought

Additional Resources to Nurture Soil & Soul

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Harvest of Hope

The Harvest of Hope is a MCC Ministry that has been providing farm crisis relief for 22 years. Through this fund, MCC provides financial assistance and hope to Wisconsin farm families in distress.

The 2007 MCC Annual Report states that while many Wisconsin farmers received more for their harvests in 2007, most also faced much higher costs for gas, fertilizer and seed, and many faced drought in northern Wisconsin and flooding in southern Wisconsin. So, for many, their actual income went down.

In 2007, the Harvest of Hope fund gave out 29 gifts totaling \$23,000 (an average of \$793.10 per gift). Since the fund started in January 1986, it has awarded 1,273 gifts totaling \$753,980.

Harvest of Hope has clearly made a difference in the lives of many Wisconsin farm families. Maybe your family would like to consider making a contribution to the Harvest of Hope fund. For more information, contact one of the committee members: Roger Williams, Howard Kanetzke, Debra Greene, Brian Kuhn, John Szalkowski, or Bob Forbess.