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Tue, 08/24/2010 - 02:25 -- Susan E. Roth

Our Beverly International Kitchen gardeners day was a success, despite a small group and finally getting well needed rain. I even had a Monarch butterfly Chyristallis, which I have protected till hatching, to show folks. It was threatening to upstage all the tomatoes and other crops that are thriving, despite the lousy season in this area. The participants also enjoyed a demo on making a beet Kvass- a refreshing, fermented beverage that is a great source of good gut bacteria and loaded with other nutrients. Between the showers, we sampled some of the different foods growing- both wild and domestic. Purslane was the big hit of the "weed group" and the purple burgundy beans were providing plentiful snacks. Nasturiums were also a big hit. The main thing people learned was just how much food you can produce in a very small space with the right approach. Good soil, compost, companion planting and a tight planting sturcture can out produce most traditional garden layouts by leaps and bounds. Tomatoes have had a bad year again and are still running about 3.50 and up a pound, but I am still just about half way through the harvest and will have plenty of Amish Paste tomatoes frozen for winter sauces. My next experiment will be a "cultured" ketsup. It is so hard to find a decent one in the market- even the organic ones have sugar in them, it is time to come up with a recipe of my own.

Last but not least, some of the lucky guests were able to get a free nutritional consutation. I hope to offer some classes soon to introduce more folks to real food.

So Beverly's International Kitchen day was a great success, and I look forward to hosting more of these events.

One thing that did not go as well as I expected was the donations for the food pantry, but I found out that folks are taking their excess produce to City Hall, where it is being distributed to local soup kitchens and foods banks. So I hope folks keep that up. Please, remember that lots of people are in need of food in the Summer too, especially since children are not being feed at school! Green Blessings, Susan

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