

Christian Children's Fund

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Contact: David Hylton 804.756.8994

Successful Gardening – Lessons from Developing Nations

Richmond, Va. – April 14, 2009 – More than one million children under age 5 in the developing world are undernourished for their age so the ability to secure food for families is critical. Unfortunately, in many of these countries harsh climates and scarce water contribute to poor harvests.

Christian Children's Fund, a child development organization that helps deprived, excluded and vulnerable children in 31 countries, works closely with families and communities to employ proven strategies and provide technical support and needed resources, including seeds, tools and irrigation systems, to start sustainable gardens.

Many of the planting methods of these countries can be adapted this spring as more Americans take up gardening to cope with rising food prices.

Gardeners in CCF countries have learned to –

Choose crops that are adaptable to the environmental conditions.

CCF helps families get started with starter seed kits that include string beans, peas, carrots, beets, coriander, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, onions, cabbage, squash and the protein rich gandul bean. Adding legumes to a garden has the added benefit of providing a biological source of nitrogen, an essential component to healthy growth and development.

Use a drip irrigation system.

The construction of these systems has been crucial to the success of sustainable gardens in developing countries where water is frequently scarce. "Not only do they conserve water, but they enable families to produce food all year round," said Pedro Aguilar, program manager for CCF Honduras. With CCF's assistance, 11-year-old Martha, a sponsored child in Honduras, has had the opportunity to grow and flourish as she and her family tend their garden that contains tomatoes, sweet chili pepper, cucumber, soya beans, corn, yucca and plantain.

According to the Alliance for Water Efficiency, drip irrigation is the most efficient method of providing water to trees, crops, gardens and landscapes. The efficiency of a well-designed drip irrigation system can reach nearly 100 percent compared to overhead irrigation, which is typically around 50 percent. That also translates to less wasted water.



Christian Children's Fund (CCF) is a global force for children, helping the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable survive and thrive in order to reach their full potential. Serving children since 1938, CCF works in 31 countries and assists approximately 15.2 million children and family members worldwide, regardless of race, creed or origin. CCF is a member of the ChildFund Alliance.

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Effectively manage the soil.

Inappropriate soil management can threaten the sustainability of agricultural production by reducing the nutrients available on which agriculture depends. This is especially critical in developing nations with harsh climates as available fertile land is not as plentiful.

CCF soil management strategies include managing land in accordance with the properties, distribution and potential uses of the soils, and maintaining a record of the inputs and outputs of the land. In other words, the soil unique to your land may be better suited for some crops and not others.

Follow organic control practices.

In countries where CCF works, practices are employed that apply a minimal use of agrochemicals to control weeds, pests and diseases. Organic protection and pest control is cheaper as well as better for your health and the environment.

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