

Junior Master Gardener Program - Seeds of Diversity

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The Junior Master Gardener [JMG] Team assembled 8 “Seeds of Diversity” resource totes for statewide use. These JMG totes are designed to encourage discussion about diversity and contributions that various cultures have made to America through plants. The “Diversity Totes” will be utilized in a variety of 4-H settings including after-school 4-H clubs, traditional 4-H club and a 4-H project working with the Shivwitts reservation.

Each JMG Seeds of Diversity tote included:

1. “Seeds of Diversity” - guidebook that includes:
 - a. “Diversity Salad Bowl” and “Breads of the World” lesson plans
 - b. Simple hands on activities and program vignettes of youth programs that have used gardening to teach about diversity
2. “Seeds of Change” - a lesson book full of hands on activities that teach about the rich diversity that can happen through cultural change
3. Paper Pot Maker - soils and seeds to plant seeds with origins around the world
4. “Everybody Bakes Bread” - a picture book that describes a young girl learning about her diverse neighborhood
5. A disposable camera to assist counties with documenting their experience

Also included is a Native American gardening activity book that will be going to the Shivwitts Band to see if youth and leaders feel that the book assists them with getting more involved in gardening project.



When I began this project, I thought that it would involve simply writing a lesson and preparing some background material about cultural exchange. I discovered that there were a lot of materials available to teach as well as make cultural contributions through plants. Ultimately, we decided to include more hands on activities in the activity guide to increase the options a 4-H leader would have to meet the needs of youth.

We don't want the tote to sit in a county office; we want it to be utilized. We will continue to contact the counties that requested the materials to ensure that they are being utilized. As we follow up with 4-H leaders using the materials, we will be able to find out what aspects of the tote work and what needs improvement. In addition, we want to find out how the counties used the materials; for example, was there an ongoing gardening project or simply a one time club meeting?

Advice to those who might replicate this project includes:

1. Be sure to ask others for their input about the resources that may already exist. There is no need to re-invent the wheel!
2. Review the materials to see if they will work in the non-formal teaching environment.
3. Document the impact of your activities through photos and participant quotes on the value of the activities to them.