



Pacific Southwest Research Station USDA Forest Service

SCIENCE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

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Bringing the woods to kids: the Richmond Edible Forest Project

ALBANY, Calif. July 1, 2010. The city of Richmond represents one of the most diverse populations in Contra Costa County. It also has a high poverty rate: more than 13 percent of the residents live below the federal poverty level according to a 1999 report published by the Urban Habitat Program in San Francisco. But the Richmond Edible Forest Project hopes to help change those statistics by teaching local youth how to garden and produce a healthy food source for themselves and their communities.

The Richmond Edible Forest Project is a joint venture between the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest (PSW) Research Station, and the Urban Tilth of West Contra Costa County, a nonprofit agency. The \$40,000 Forest Service grant and the \$91,000 matching partner contribution will help engage 700 underserved youth in education programs, according to Doria Robinson, Urban Tilth Executive Director. The youth will learn how to install five edible forests [or gardens] in Richmond parks and school areas. The partnership with the PSW Research Station is helping replicate the edible forests in other local open spaces too. Funding was also provided through the USDA Forest Service's national Kids in the Woods matching grant program. The Kids in the Woods program goal is to work with community partners to help America's youth learn more about their local environment and careers in natural resources.

"The edible forest gardens are also environmental education sites where PSW Research Station scientists and Forest Service land managers can teach kids about the benefits of trees and forested landscapes," says Assistant Station Director Dr. Hao Tran. Tran says the project also represents a partnership of the City of Richmond Parks Landscaping Division, the West Contra Costa County Unified School District, the Urban Tilth, and other community organizations.

After the first edible forest garden is installed, the project will offer a series of 3-hour edible forest garden workshops for school and community gardeners and parks and recreation department staffs from across the Bay area. "We believe that by providing tangible examples of edible forest gardens as well as a short academic overview, we will enable participants to envision edible forest gardens at parks, schools, and other public open spaces," says Tran. "The Richmond Edible Food Project will also provide resources and training to employ youth to create, maintain and use edible gardens at multiple sites on public lands throughout the greater Richmond area."

For more information about the community gardens visit <http://www.urbantilth.org/>. To learn more about the Kids in the Woods program visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/woods/>.

The USDA Pacific Southwest Research Station is headquartered in Albany, California. The station develops and communicates science needed to sustain forest ecosystems and other benefits to society. It has laboratories and research centers in California, Hawaii, and the United States affiliated Pacific Islands. For more information visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/>.

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