HORTICULTURE WITH ODILE HUCHETTE AND THE URBAN FOOD PLATFORM

TALKING POINTS

KNOWLEDGE & COMPREHENSION

1. What are some of the sub-topics covered in horticulture?
2. Why did Odile set up the Urban Food Platform? What scientific concepts has she used the UFP to demonstrate?
3. What types of data do students working on the UFP collect and analyse?

APPLICATION & ANALYSIS

4. What are some of the most important lessons that work on the UFP teaches students?
5. How do students who work on the UFP connect with the wider community? What do you think they – and their community – gain from this?
6. What types of experiential learning have you participated in? What did you gain from it? What types of hands-on learning would you like to experience and why?

SYNTHESIS & EVALUATION

7. To what extent do you agree that people do not to appreciate agriculture and where our food comes from? How could more people be educated about this?
8. What would you gain from working on the UFP? From reading about Trequan and Baker's experiences, what elements would you benefit from the most and why?
9. How would you design a learning space for younger children to learn more about horticulture? What facilities would you include? What activities would you like them to experience? What skills and knowledge would you aim for them to develop and why?

MORE RESOURCES

- Odile recommends the International Society for Horticultural Science (www.ishs.org) and the American Society for Horticultural Science (ashs.org/default.aspx) as very useful resources to learn more about her field.
- The official website for the National Agricultural Library in the US is really useful: **www.nal.usda.gov/main/**
- The American Horticultural Society website includes a good list of resources, courses and apprenticeships: **ahsgardening.org/**
- The National Junior Horticultural Society, a non-profit organisation in the US, promotes horticulture young people: **njha.org/**

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME OR IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Recycle egg boxes for sowing seeds. If the boxes are plastic, ensure there are small holes at the bottom of each cell for drainage. Fill each cell with soil. Plant a seed in each cell, firmly but without compacting it. You could use lettuce or basil seeds (that could produce seedlings) or radish seeds (that will germinate quickly and continue to grow in the cells). Place your box on a saucer. Water gently so that the seeds stay in place while the soil becomes moist.

   Like Odile's students, test the effect of the environment on your seeds by comparing two or more boxes placed in different moisture conditions. Place one box under a Ziploc bag – it will simulate greenhouse conditions and help maintain constant moisture as the seeds germinate. Compare with one or more boxes to be watered in different way, making sure you keep one to be watered after the soil dries out. You can test different watering regimes, such as watering to maintain moisture at all times.

Observe your boxes daily until seeds germinate, and count how many seeds are germinating in each condition.
- What happened in the different conditions?
- What do you notice about the effect of moisture on germination
- Which condition provided the best results for a maximum number of germinating seeds?

2. Use egg boxes as described in Activity 1 to produce baby lettuce or basil. Once the seedlings are large enough to be moved from the cells without damage, select a couple of your best seedlings and plant in a larger pot (one per pot). Make sure you use pots with drainage holes and place on a saucer. Water when planted.

   Place some of the pots by a window, some away from the window. Remember to water your plants to keep the soil moist but not too wet.

   Observe your plants on a regular basis.
   - What do you notice about the effect of light on your plants?
   - Compare the size and colour of the plants grown in different light conditions.
   - Which condition allows for the most healthy-looking plants?

ODILE'S TIP: *If you used lettuce or basil seeds, you can keep them growing until they reach a portion size for you to eat. To keep them going and use them as long as possible, place them close to a window and cut the oldest leaves as you need, always keeping new growth on top. Water with added fertilising solution if you notice the oldest leaves becoming yellow.*