

Planting it Forward.....

ON a recent trip to Moscow Idaho, I was honored with a tour of PCEI (Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute) and organization that teaches and offers their services for cleaning up rivers as well as teaches how to be environmentally responsible. I was challenged by many of the aspects of PCEI but the one that stood out the most to me was their community garden program. Instead of having a “literal community garden” they have people pledge to donate a percentage of their home garden to the community kitchen – in our community that would be the equivalent of Jubilee Ministries. They also are an organizational “house” where local farmers can call if they have gardens or orchards that the farmer will allow to be gleaned, once harvested that food too is taken to the community kitchen.

I was particular challenged by PCEI perspective. Sure I have given produce to friends and neighbors, but it was out of my excess and abundance... But I certainly didn't plant with the “goal” of meeting the needs of others. At PCEI; they asked families to purposely plant more (and extra row of each crop) to give away. This year (more then some in the past) seems to be a good one to move in that direction no matter what community one lives in. I for one think this was a great idea. Certainly; something to ponder.

This week at the market we will have Mark Whiting from WSU answering all our questions on Cherries; the different varieties and uses; growing them etc. A few things I have learned about cherries are:

1. They are a good source of potassium. Increasing evidence shows that a diet rich in potassium may help to control blood pressure and reduce the risk for hypertension and stroke.
2. They are a source of melatonin. Melatonin is an effective means for reducing jet lag and promoting overall healthy sleep patterns.
3. They have anti-inflammatory properties which studies suggest may help to control arthritis and gout.
4. They contain antioxidants. Antioxidants found in cherries may help to reduce the risk of cancer.
5. They contain antioxidants. Studies show that the antioxidants found in cherries may help to reduce the risk of heart disease.
6. They are a healthy snack. A serving size of 21 cherries has less than 100 calories.
7. The anthocyanins found in cherries may help to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

See you at the Market.

