

## NEWS BREAK

Article: **In a challenging, exhausting year, the garden was a lifeline**

Section: **AT HOME IN THE NW, F4**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, January 10, 2021** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

***\*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

### **Standards:**

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1**

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2**

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

### **Objectives:**

Students will discuss the ways their families have been impacted by COVID. They will focus on how the government stimulus payments have impacted their family and whether they have spending or saving it, or doing both. Students will talk about how spending habits have changed within their family during this time. They'll debate whether the \$600 payments were the best idea, or whether more money should've been funneled to the unemployed.

- ***What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?***
- ***What things did you already know from prior experience?***
- ***Did your family start or maintain a garden during COVID?***
- ***Have you ever gardened before? If so, what do you like/dislike about it?***
- ***Does gardening give you a sense of accomplishment? Pride? Why?***

- **Does your school have an outdoor garden? Are you a part of that club? Why or why not?**
- **Gardeners seem to have a true sense of community. Why do you think that is?**
- **Why is being outside in nature important?**

*Then there's the mental succor. When you're tying up a tomato vine or pulling a weed, you can put aside for a while the unrelenting news of an upended world.*

- **When you are outside, whether working in a garden or taking a walk...do you seem to put aside the worries and/or stressors in your life? Does it help you to feel calm? Why or why not?**
- **Do you set aside time to get outside and move your body each day? Do you think it would make a difference if you did? Why or why not?**

*As it grew, Ross would come by once a week to consult and take his share of the goodies. They would text when Mara Tyler needed day-to-day guidance. "I got to learn from someone very experienced, so I felt very lucky," she said. The minor duds — the flea-beetled eggplants, the stinging watermelons — were overshadowed by all the successes, including a surfeit of choice varieties of tomatoes, greens, beans, squashes and okra, to name a few.*

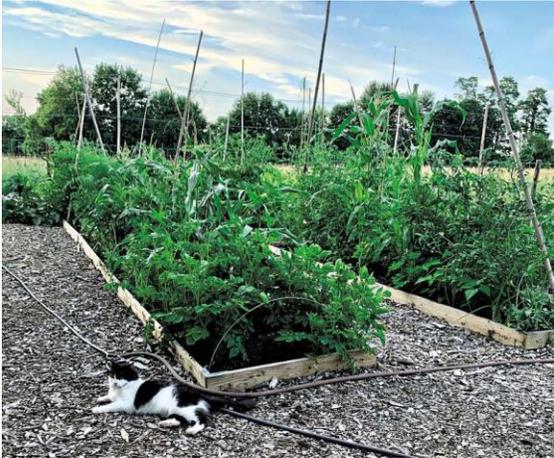
- **What are the positive points of working together with other gardeners and planting your own food?**
- **In this story, what "mindsets" do you see among the gardeners, both young and old?**
- **Is gardening helping their mental outlook during COVID? How?**

*The author states that the pandemic and its disruption of school and social life has been especially pressing on older children. Do you agree? Why or why not?*

*Was it hard for you to pivot to your own changing roles, while being at home? What do you miss the most? How are you handling things?*

*How is both your physical and mental health doing? What do you do to feel positive when you're feeling down or overwhelmed with what's happening in our world?*

## Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using only this picture?
- Are there clues? What can you infer?

## Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“Then there’s the mental **succor**. When you’re tying up a tomato vine or pulling a weed, you can put aside for a while the unrelenting news of an upended world.”

### **Succor Guess:**

### **Succor Definition:**

## Comprehension Questions:

1. But the project has been about more than just putting food on the table. What other benefits has gardening provided to her?
2. “The garden has given me a lot,” said Elizabeth Gomez, reflecting the shared sense of blessing for those who threw themselves into gardening this year. Her flower and vegetable garden in Winchester, Virginia, became what?
3. The garden has also been a lifeline for parents this year. How?
4. The pandemic and its disruption of school and social life has been especially pressing on \_\_\_\_\_ children.

**Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:**

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News Break is posted to the Web on Monday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.  
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