

**Brown County  
RM Report  
From Seeds to Salsa**

**Situation**

The youth who enroll in the Howe School 4-H program attend a school where there is a high incidence of poverty (87%), low achievement scores (~50% proficiency), and a high concentration of minority students (70%). This group of 4-Hers meet daily to have fun while learning in a safe and stimulating environment. A primary objective for the summer 4-H program is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, a cross-age spirit of community, and a place where kids and adults learn to work together to achieve common goals.

**Response**

In the spring of 2005, UW-Extension staff met numerous times with Mrs. DeVillers' 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Howe Elementary School to cover various gardening topics including Roots & Shoots, the effect of frost on plants, how seeds are planted, the effect of soil temperatures on plants, and what we need to grow to make our own salsa. Hands-on activities included the daily monitoring of nighttime temperatures using a MIN/MAX thermometer, planting of seeds and caring for seedlings, transplanting of seedlings, monitoring of soil temperatures, and making paper pots.

**Results**

A variety of students had the opportunity to learn about and care for the garden. These included the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Howe and the students attending the 4-H Summer Program (grades 1-5).

**Evidence**

As a result of our efforts, we were able to achieve the following outcomes. Youth gained a broader knowledge of gardening. Youth learned about the planting and care of crops. Youth were able to recognize the origins of their everyday foods. Youth were able to grow the ingredients to produce salsa. However, they were not able to harvest the ingredients due to several incidents of vandalism to the school garden. The vandalism did, however, provide a "teaching moment" for Extension staff. Youth and adults discussed possible solutions to vandalism and how they would react to friends who might be the source of the destruction. Youth and their leaders cleaned up the garden and repaired and rebuilt as much as they were able. Ingredients were purchased at the end of the program so that students could still make salsa to share with their friends.

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