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### Starting A Garden

I will plant the following; milkweed, green onion, tomatoes, celery, mushrooms, & Dutchman's pipe vines.

Milkweed has immense wildlife value for butterflies. Many species of butterfly use this plant as a larvae host, and monarch butterflies rely on this plant to lay their eggs. Their flowers provide nectar for bees as well. The use of pesticides, such as Round-Up, with the combination of industrial farming practices have, in recent years, decreased the amount of milkweed planted, which in turn has decreased the monarch butterfly population. This plant is necessary to support pollinators.

Green onion has many benefits in terms of nutritional and physical health value, but it is also quite simple to grow. It has a low carbon and water footprint, Green onions can be regrown and recycled by planting the stem in a glass of water, so any faulty green onions I plant when first starting out can be replenished. Planting tomatoes in my own personal garden will help reduce the carbon footprint that comes from the transportation of tomatoes, as many are grown in Mexico, which requires a lot of energy to be shipped to my location. This goes for green onion, tomatoes, celery, and mushrooms; I can share the food with neighbors, friends, family, etc. The climate benefits from growing vegetables in your own home. The people eating from my garden will also save money! Celery can also be regrown from the stump, thus cutting down on food waste even more. Celery found in grocery stores is commonly laden with chemicals and pesticides, and growing my own will reduce those pesticides being spread into the atmosphere as well as being ingested by myself and others. Mushrooms are the most important food item I am planting, for they are decomposers. Through their mycelium roots, they absorb carbon in the atmosphere, and store it in soil. Some mushrooms store up to 70% of their soil with carbon! This soil is recycled and used as energy for other plants. Mushrooms are a great, nutritious food source, and they are a fantastic example of how decomposers can help the planet.

Dutchman's pipe is a native plant here in California. Their vines support many species of insects, but most specifically swallowtail butterflies. It is extremely important to these butterflies, for it is their only host plant. They can thrive in a large variety of soil types.

My garden will be planted outside, in my school, or in a local park that would like to host a community garden.

Some agricultural practices I will take into account are...

1) Reducing soil tilling -

I will insert the planting seeds directly into undisturbed soil. Soil tilling is bad because it reduces the nutrients in soil, and the topsoil gets eroded away from its plant.

2) Mulching & manual weed control

Pulling weeds out with my hands, and getting my friends and neighbors to help, is better than using pesticides for weed control. Mulching improves nutrient retention in soil, and reduces the need for soil tilling.

3) Biodynamic farming

I can use compost to enrich my soil, especially my produce. My produce can be rotated throughout the year as different seasons change.



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rania\_.pgc My garden!!

It will be planted in the gardening center at my school or at my local park where there is a public greenhouse.

I will plant tomatoes, celery, green onion, mushrooms, Dutchman's pipe, & milkweed, keeping in mind A) no soil tilling B) manual weed control (no pesticides) & C) biodynamic farming (seasonal crop rotation + composting)!!

## Works Cited

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