

Aquaponics in the Classroom

Presented by Randy Mann
6th Grade Teacher
Johnson Elementary School
Mesa Public Schools

"It is a jungle in there." *Grace Mann*



“ Fresh clean veggies and sane protein from your own backyard in your own mini-ecosystems: it doesn't get better than that....and you can quote me on that ”

Ted J. Hill, Riverside, California

Randy Mann

- Teacher
- Gardner
- Aquaponics Enthusiast

The Origins of Aquaponics

AQUACULTURE

Is the farming of aquatic organisms such as fish, crustaceans, mollusks and aquatic plants. (Aquafarming)



Started: 2,000 - 1,000 BC in China

HYDROPONICS

The cultivation of plants by placing the roots in a liquid nutrient solution rather than soil.



Started: 600 BC The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Aquaponics Defined

A SYSTEM OF AQUACULTURE IN WHICH THE WASTE PRODUCED BY FARMED FISH OR OTHER AQUATIC ANIMALS SUPPLIES NUTRIENTS FOR PLANTS GROWN HYDROPONICALLY, WHICH IN TURN PURIFY THE WATER.



Beginning Aquaponics-Two Possibilities

Aztec "chinampas"

- "floating garden system"
- Evidence in the Valley of Mexico
- Used prior to Aztec civilization
- Became more systematic under Aztecs

6th Century Asian Farmers

- South China-Thailand-Indonesia
- Rice paddy's with carp
- Ancient Chinese integrated aquaculture (finfish,catfish,ducks,plants)

<https://www.milkwood.net/2014/01/20/aquaponics-a-brief-history/>

Backyard Aquaponics

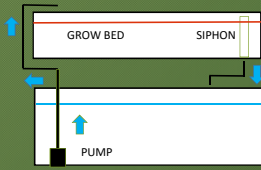
- The term aquaponics is often attributed to Dr. Mark McMurtry at North Carolina State University.
- Mid 1980's, Mark McMurtry and Professor Doug Sanders created the first known closed loop aquaponic system. Effluence from fish tanks trickled through sand filled containers and back into fish tanks.
- In 1969, John and Nancy Todd and William McLarney founded the [New Alchemy Institute](#). Created the "Arc" self-sufficient, solar-powered, bio-shelter
- Early 1990's, Missouri farmers Tom and Paula Speraneo introduced their bioponics gravel grow beds (S&S AquaFarm).
- The Australian connection Murray Hallam ([Practical Aquaponics](#)) and Joel Malcom ([Backyard Aquaponics](#) book and magazine).

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My Guru's

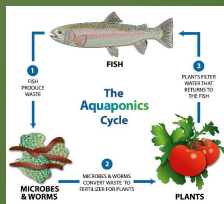
- Travis Hughey (Barrel-ponics) "the system" free PDF. Created [F.A.S.T.](#) Faith and Sustainable Technologies. He uses his Barrel-ponics system in third world countries to produce vegetables and protein for the local inhabitants.
- Sylvia Bernstein ([Aquaponic Gardening](#)) "the science". The most comprehensive book for layman (like myself) regarding the science behind aquaponics. Easy to read and great illustrations. Created [The Aquaponic Source](#) hands down the best website going for all the information you need on doing aquaponics right.(IMHO)

The System: Flood and Drain



The simplest of all systems to understand and assemble!

How it Works: The Easy Explanation!



<http://www.theaquaponicsource.com/>

“

“The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture.

”

Thomas Jefferson

Aquaponic Players

Grow Beds & Tanks

- 1:1 ratio of grow bed to fish tank
- Solid Construction
- Non-toxic Food Safe
- Inert
- 50 gallon tank for plate size fish
- Medium: [Hydroton or Gravel](#)
- Biofilter: "[Nitrifying Bacteria](#)"




Fish & Water

- One pound of fish per 5-10 gallons of fish tank water. (beginners)
- [Tilapia](#)-Goldfish-Catfish-Koi
- [Fish Food](#)
- Shrimp-barramundi-pacu-perch-trout-Oscars-fresh water lobster
- [Water pH](#) 6.8-7.0 (power of hydrogen) balance plants & fish
- [More oxygen](#)
- [Cycling](#)

Plants

- Plants with a pH of 6.9-7.1 have a hard time growing in aquaponics systems.
- What can you [grow](#)?
- Root Vegetables?
- Air-Structure-Temperature-[Salt/NaCl](#)
- Seeds-Plugs-Cuttings-Starts
- Plant Health/Insects
- Plant Density

In the Classroom

What to Teach: *Aquaponic Source*

- *Biology* – What role does nitrifying bacteria play in aquaponics? Where does it come from?
- *Physics* – How does water move throughout the system? What light spectrums grow plants best?
- *Chemistry* – What happens to the uptake of iron in plants if pH gets too high? How is oxygen in the water affected by temperature?
- *Horticulture* – What does a plant need in order to grow properly?
- *Zoology* – What do fish need in order to grow properly?
- *Ecology* – What happens if a eco-system becomes out of balance? What role do composting red worms play in aquaponics?
- *Nutrition* – What is the difference between freshly picked food you grew yourself and food from the grocery store?

