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Glen Park News



Lemon Tree Registry Promotes Sharing Homegrown Produce

There's an official registry of lemon trees in San Francisco, and Glen Park has just two on the list. But anyone who has peeked over backyard fences knows our neighborhood has a lot more lemon trees.

“It's a perfect weather neighborhood for Meyer lemons,” said Isabel Wade, the “chief lemon ambassador” of Just One Tree, the non-profit organization that maintains the registry.

Glen Park is one of the sunniest areas in San Francisco, which is why it is ideal for growing lemon trees. Just One Tree's mission is to provide San Francisco and similar cities the ability to rely on residents to source produce locally.

Just One Tree wants to enable people to share their home-grown produce with others, which will benefit the environment since it means fruits and vegetables will not have to be shipped in from other regions, or even other countries. It also aims to get healthy food to people who may not be willing or able to buy it in the store.

Cal Broomhead and his family own one of the registered trees in Glen Park. It's a potted Meyer lemon they've had for about seven years. Most of the year, it sits in their Thor Street backyard, but come the winter solstice, it's brought indoors. “It's our Christmas tree,” said Broomhead.

The family hangs lights and ornaments on the 3-foot-tall tree, and on New Year's Day, it's taken back outside. But soon, the tree will be planted in the ground, ending its holiday reign. The Broomheads plan to pot another lemon tree, however, to take over the holiday tradition.

Their lemon tree has hit-and-miss years when it comes to a bountiful harvest. When lemons do grow, they're picked and juiced.

San Franciscans, it appears, have a penchant for citrus, consuming more than 25,000 tons a year, according to Just One Tree. But the local food-shed produces an estimated 5.3 tons annually, which means a lot of citrus, including a lot of lemons, is being imported each year.

About 235 lemon trees currently are registered with the organization. The goal is to grow the number to 12,000—both by chronicling the trees already growing in city yards and by getting people to plant new ones.

Just One Tree is starting with lemons, but may expand to other produce. The goal is to have everybody sharing their local produce so it's cheaper and doesn't have to be imported.

To register your lemon tree, go to www.justonetree.org. Not only can you register your lemon tree, you also can get helpful tips on how to take care of it and delicious lemon recipes to try out. ♦

JUST ONE TREE: www.justonetree.org

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