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Wednesday, July 15, 2009

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**Rep. Doris Matsui Designates August As Community Gardening Awareness Month**  
*Legislation Introduced Today Will Recognize Benefits and Rise of Community Gardening  
Across the Country*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) today introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives that will recognize August of each year as Community Gardening Awareness Month and recognize the enormous benefits that community gardening plays in helping to produce nutritious food, especially in America’s cities, and the tremendous rise in community gardening around the country.

“Community gardens are on the rise across the nation as Americans look to shrink their monthly grocery bills, introduce produce and more nutritious foods into their children’s diets, and as a way to create a connection between our communities and the food we feed our families,” said Representative Matsui. “Recognizing August as Community Gardening Awareness Month will help bring attention to the benefits that community gardens can bring to America’s families and support those who want to take part in feeding their families and their communities.”

According to the National Gardening Association, just over 1 million households participated in community gardens in 2008 and an estimated 5 million households are very interested in having a garden plot in a community garden located near their home. With the national attention provided to community gardens by First Lady Michelle Obama and the garden at the White House, more and more Americans are expected to take-up community gardening in the coming years, with activity peaking in August of each year.

“Community Gardening is taking on a new meaning in America,” stated Bobby L. Wilson of Atlanta, GA and President of the American Community Gardening Association. “People from all walks of life are making an effort to clean up vacant lots and grow their own fresh vegetables in our cities. As President of the American Community Gardening Association, I support Community Gardening Awareness Month.”

“Community gardens are on the rise across the nation and in Sacramento; in part because of the economy, but also people want to grow organically and know where and how their food was grown,” said Bill Maynard, Community Garden Program Coordinator for the City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation. “Community Garden Awareness Month will help bring attention to a national movement.”

The Community Gardening Awareness Month Resolution would establish Congressional support for the goals and ideals of National Community Gardening Awareness Month, including:

- Raising awareness about the importance of community gardens and urban agriculture;
- Improving access to public land for the creation of sustainable food projects;
- Encouraging further growth of community gardens and other opportunities that increase food self-reliance, improve fitness, contribute to a cleaner environment, and enhance community development; and
- Supporting cooperative efforts among Federal, State, and local governments and nonprofit organizations to promote the development and expansion of community gardens and to increase their accessibility to disadvantaged population groups.

“A Community Gardening Awareness Month is just what we need to draw attention to this important trend in local food production and community building,” said Rep. Jay Inslee (D-WA). “As a parent, I’m happy to note that community gardens engage families and children in growing their own vegetables, which studies have shown has increased the willingness of children to eat their veggies. The resolution recognizes the importance of community gardeners around the country and honors their achievements, and I support it,” he continued. “Today is really the day for community gardeners, between this resolution and the bill to establish a grant program that I and Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC) introduced today.”

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