

NE 72nd Avenue Community Garden *at Cully Park*

How do we know the soil here is healthy for gardening?

When the NE 72nd Avenue Community Garden at Cully Park was planned, community members wanted to make sure the soil would be safe for growing food.

Working with the Portland Brownfield Program, environmental scientists at the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services created a plan for testing the soil. With help from community members, soil samples were collected on August 16, 2011.

The soil samples were sent to a City of Portland laboratory, where they were analyzed for heavy metals, pesticides, and herbicides. The testing is very sensitive and can detect tiny amounts of these contaminants in the soil. Since all soil contains heavy metals, we expected to find some in our samples. The important question was whether the soil had levels of heavy metals that were above those considered safe by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Oregon Health Authority.

What was found?

The laboratory testing found that there were no unsafe levels of contaminants in the garden soil. Some very small amounts of heavy metals were found at levels typical of soil in Oregon. Some samples showed very small amounts of herbicides and pesticides, but at levels far below levels of concern.

We also used a device called a *magnetometer* to look for metal objects underground. We wanted to find out if there were any tanks that may have contained fuel or heating oil. No tanks were found.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the soil safety at
NE 72nd Avenue Community Garden,
or to see the full results
of soil testing, contact

TONY DEFALCO

Living Cully Coordinator
at Verde at 503-309-7385 or
www.LetUsBuildCullyPark.org