FOOD

The World's First Underwater Veggie Garden Reopens: It Grows Lettuce & Strawberries

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The first underwater farm in the world, i.e. the Nemo's Garden, has started producing fruits and veggies again after a long break.

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This unique farm consists of six greenhouses underwater located off the coast of Noli, Italy. It's been installed by the Ocean Reef Group back in 2012.

Little by little, the project began yielding different herbs like basil, fruits like tomatoes and strawberries, veggies like summer squash, and even green peas, beans, mushrooms, and aloe Vera.

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The most Unique Farm in the World

According to Gianni Fontanesi, the project coordinator at the garden, they're discovering new possible uses for the biospheres every year. Some of them are eco-tourism, fish farming, seaweed farming, and research labs and underwater stations for wildlife monitoring.

Fontanesi believes that underwater farming may be more than solely a plaything for the development of quality, niche crops. They're currently trying to discover if the project is viable to be later used for commercial purposes.

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Unfortunately, in October 2019, the farm suffered major damage from a storm. And, it was quite close to being destroyed completely. But, the team managed to recover it and gave new life to these six underwater pods filled with air that are anchored to the bottom of the sea.

However, another challenge came along: because of the pandemic restrictions, this farm was without supervision for months. Still, it fended for itself and it recently reopened, stronger than ever.

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How Are the Crops Produced under the Sea?

The farm is based on a hydroponics version and creates fresh water through desalination. The seawater in the structure evaporates and the condensation drops on the roof. It then drips back down fresh water that feeds the crops.

Unlike underground hydroponic systems and greenhouses that use various cooling and heating systems and LED lights for the temperature regulations, this farm's submersion in water allows for a stable temperature and avoids the extreme weather on land.

In terms of sunlight, studies indicate that a lot of plants (although not seaweed) depend on the red spectrum to develop. This is why the farm's pods are submerged five to eight meters below, even though they can go deeper.

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The tests done by the Ocean Reef Group point out that the crops which are grown underwater develop quicker than their on-land counterparts.

Sources:

EURO NEWS

THE GUARDIAN

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