

Growing plants outside

Planting a garden is one of those outdoor activities that does so many things for students - it gives them a place to practice care of living things, to take responsibility and follow through on tasks, and to work with others. It gives them a sense of ownership and connection to their land, ecosystems, and food chain. As students get older, students can take on more responsibility, more planning, and more intellectual and academic tasks, like running a garden stand to sell produce.

AGES: All

INTENDED OUTCOMES: Hands, Feet, Heart (and Head – for older students)

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES:

- Gloves, seeds or starters, big and small shovels, compost or soil amendment, water access
- Pots or materials for creating raised beds, if suitable land can't be found on site

Suggested steps and/or focus for each grade level*:

ECE-3RD GRADE

- Focus on simple tasks like weeding, watering, planting, and putting the garden to bed for the winter. Give them time to explore and look for worms or insects.
- They can help with the set-up of garden bed or pots, or not - it's up to you!

4TH AND 5TH GRADE

- Have students help plan out the garden by investigating the irrigation and soil conditions for native plants, researching and deciding on which vegetables to grow and when, and helping to set up a schedule for care of the garden.
- Students can help teachers and maintenance staff to install raised beds, amend the soil, check for and help to identify pests and plant disease.
- Students can also plan and organize harvest festivals or garden farm stands.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

- Consider giving students the opportunity to design, plan, and implement a school garden for younger students.
- Use the garden as a real world setting for complex math, science, and economic lessons, as well as a chance to build vocational skills - both in horticulture and basic job skills like project management.

*For more detail on the grade-level focus for natural and social concepts and sense of place, please refer to the Guidelines

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Choose plants and select planting times so that students will be able to see the fruits of their labor - lettuces and radishes can be planted in early spring and harvested in early summer. Kale, chard, parsnips, leeks, and brussel sprouts can be harvested through the winter, but often need to be planted in the summer.
- Your garden doesn't have to be focused on vegetables. Try herbs, flowers, or native plants that provide wildlife habitat or support pollinators.



Relevant Standards

SC09-GR.P-S.2-GLE1, SC09-GR.6-S.2-GLE.1, SC09-GR.HS-S.2-GLE.2