



## Garden, Grow and Learn

Gardening and growing food and other plants at school can play an important role in students' learning. These activities offer a variety of educational opportunities and help to create a supportive learning environment that allows students to engage in the world around them.

### School gardening health and safety

Here are some tips to keep your students safe and healthy while enjoying the benefits of gardening and growing at your school.

- ✓ Always wash hands with soap and water before and after all gardening activities. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- ✓ When gardening outdoors, wear long sleeves and pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and gloves. Apply sun screen of SPF 30 or higher. Use insect repellent to help protect against bites.
- ✓ Follow safety instructions for tools, equipment and chemicals.
- ✓ Be careful of extreme weather conditions.

#### ALLERGIES

Consider any allergies or sensitivities within the classroom and decide if any cautionary steps need to be taken.

#### PARENTS

Consider the need to inform parents that gardening and tasting activities will be taking place in the classroom and obtain any necessary permissions.



#### Food that will be eaten in small amounts by students in your classroom.

Wash hands with soap and water before and after all gardening activities.  
Rinse produce with clean water before handling or eating.



#### Food that will be served or sold to others within or outside of your school.

*(e.g. in the cafeteria, Student Nutrition Program, or donated to a food bank).*

A public health inspector will work with your school to educate staff on safe food handling practices in order to prevent illness.

Call Health Connection at  
1-877-721-7520 to learn more about  
food safety requirements.



## How can having a school garden benefit your school community?

- ✓ Teaches students valuable life skills including leadership, patience, responsibility, discipline and a sense of community and citizenship.
- ✓ Builds student confidence, self-esteem, fosters feelings of belonging and accomplishment.
- ✓ Provides opportunity for physical activity, which helps relieve stress and contributes to positive mental well-being.
- ✓ Contributes to eco school initiatives and supports naturalized play spaces.
- ✓ Engages students in building knowledge and skills to help them make healthy food choices.

## Curriculum links

Here are some examples of how to connect classroom lessons to real-life experiences.

### Math

- Measure growth rates of plants.
- Count and record the number of different plants and vegetables.
- Estimate the length and width of the garden, rows, paths and height of plants.
- Explore patterns and display results on different types of charts and graphs.

### Science

- Investigate the functions of different plant structures.
- Use five senses to explore various vegetables and herbs.
- Learn about the ways that food is grown and impacts on water systems.

### Language

- Keep daily garden journals tracking observations in the garden such as plant changes, weather conditions and classroom activities.
- Write a poem or other narrative to describe experiences visiting the garden and exploring using five senses.

### Art

- Create paintings or drawings of vegetables and fruit growing in the garden.
- Create a collage using pictures of plants from seed catalogues.
- Make a time-lapse film of a plant growing using a movie camera with single-frame capability.

### Health and Physical Education

- Explore the many edible components of plants, the nutritional value of different plants and what is required for a healthy body.
- Participate in garden activities such as carrying water, digging and raking.

### Social Science

- Trace the path of a fruit or vegetable from the field to the table.
- Identify activities related to having a garden or farm and identify everyone who contributes to these jobs in your community.

Contact your Healthy Schools nurse or dietitian to discuss your school gardening needs.



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