

SUPPORTING LOCAL - SUPPORT PACKAGE

Harvest Meal



As the weather starts to change in the fall, farmers begin the final harvest of the season. This has always been an important time of year in preparation for winter. The harvest season is part of many traditions and festivals which usually include a celebration of the abundance of food that has been produced. Harvest meals come in many different forms but the key ingredients are to cook the food you worked hard to grow, to give thanks, and to enjoy a meal with a community. As more Nova Scotian schools add gardens to their school grounds, the harvest meal tradition is making a comeback. Students, staff and larger communities are enjoying the many benefits, from building environmental connections to learning life skills. Why not host one at your school this fall?

Action Plan

What's on the menu? Look at your garden produce and decide what you could make. Salad? Soup? Veggies and dip? You may need to purchase some additional ingredients. Think about who gardens locally. Perhaps you can source those additional ingredients from staff, families of students, community gardens, or local farms. If you have no luck in your immediate community try your local farmer's market. Support local when you can to reduce your environmental impact. Ask community volunteers to get involved if you need help.

Harvest. Many hands make less work, so head out with a whole class to harvest the garden. Look for ways to cover some of your math or writing outcomes while you are at it. You will find lots of great resources below.

Prepare. Preparing food is an essential life skill. Make sure you choose age-appropriate tools and tasks. Young students can easily wash and pull off tops and roots while older students can handle the peeling and chopping. You could assign each grade part of the meal preparation process.

Make your meal. Encourage many students to get involved and again, choose age-appropriate tasks. It helps to have volunteers help with the preparations. Some schools have hosted a local chef or invited NSCC culinary students to lead the meal preparation.

Serve your meal. You could ask students to bring in reusable plates, mugs, utensils and napkins to use during their meal. Reducing disposable plastic items is an important way to look after the Earth so we can continue to grow healthy food. Don't be afraid to ask for community and parent volunteers to serve and enjoy the meal with the students and staff. Your local School Board Representative or Superintendent might want to attend. Invite anyone who contributed to your school garden program and harvest meal such as farmers and business owners.

Other ideas. 1) Link the harvest meal to your social-emotional outcomes and read Stone Soup in each classroom. Have the class prepare and add one ingredient to the Stone Soup.

2) Save your root vegetables for your school's Thanksgiving or Christmas meal.

3) Add a language arts focus and have each student write about their favorite part of the meal, or contribute a poem.





Resources

Garden Resources

[Green Schools NS Garden Resources Page](#)

[Green Schools NS Gardening Slideshow](#)

Ask your Engagement Officer for our Green Schools NS Support Packages on gardens and Preserving Winter Food

[Nutrients for Life](#)

[NS Department of Agriculture School Garden Resource Guide](#)

[NS Department of Agriculture Education Liaison Valorie Skinner](#)

[Farm to Cafeteria Canada](#)

[Nourish Nova Scotia](#)

Videos

[Stone Soup - by Jon J. Muth](#)

[Stone Soup - retold without the monks](#)

[How Did That Get in my Lunchbox - by Chris Butterworth](#)

Harvest Meal Stories from Green Schools Nova Scotia

[Hebville Academy 4th Annual School Garden Soup Day](#)

[Petite Riviere Elementary Stone Soup Day](#)

[Somerset and District Elementary School Harvest Meal Day](#)

[West Pictou Consolidated Garden Harvest Meal](#)