

SUPPORTING LOCAL - SUPPORT PACKAGE

Lessons for the Garden



If you have a school garden, you may be wondering how to use this wonderful resource as a learning tool for your students. A school garden has so much potential - but how can you maximize the benefit of a garden for your students and make curriculum connections? Below you will find many ideas and plans to help with just that! You will also find reference to special environmental dates that can be used as a foundation to connect your lessons to the local and global community, such as World Soil Day and World Water Day. Outdoor activities in the garden connect students to the world using some of the most fundamental human experiences, such as using the senses and hunger! Gardening can integrate multidisciplinary education and offers something for all ages and stages of development. These lessons can contribute to a better understanding of wide-ranging topics such as biology, economics, ecology, evolution, globalization, environmental awareness, subsistence farming, and climate.

The garden is a great place to play and learn. Investigate anything and everything! What is a harvest moon? What are the Fibonacci numbers and what do they have to do with plants? The garden is a place for boundless study and inspiration. All year long, even in the heart of winter, we can be learning from nature and making observations in the garden. You can use a thermometer and measure temperature, test soil or water for acidity, and have a soil test completed. The garden is a wonderfully wholesome starting place for many subjects and ways to learn about humans, nature, and our place in the universe.

Action Plan

Step 1- Host a virtual engagement with your local Green Schools Nova Scotia Engagement Officer on School Gardens, or use the [Gardening Slideshow](#) available on our website. Let's get excited about food and gardening!

Step 2- Browse the NS Department of Agriculture School Programs and Teacher Resources. There are opportunities for educational visitors, field trips, and projects.

Step 3- Plan a year in the garden with your students. This is an interdisciplinary learning experience, from cooking plans to math about yield and calculating area. Draw a garden map, and discuss what vegetables you want to eat, and what you will make with your produce. This activity is best undertaken as soon as there are signs of spring, such as the Equinox on March 21st. This is a great time to look forward to a "last frost date" which is used to determine when to start planting seeds outdoors. You can also start growing your seedlings indoors!

Step 4- Focus on different topics during each lesson about the garden. Explore the resources below, especially the NS Department of Agriculture School Gardens Guide, which has many curriculum-linked activities in



Appendix A. There are many rainy-day activities to learn about our food system such as the [Food Miles Game](#). Get started with the [Food & Energy Slideshow](#) as a foundation about the sources of food.

Step 5- Use a [Garden Journal](#) to keep track of your garden progress. Measure the plants as they grow. Count or weigh each harvest. These routine activities can be lessons in estimation, math, plant biology, and other important lessons about farming and food sovereignty.



Step 6- Play in the garden, as well as doing the work. This is a time for exploration and discovery. Student-led inquiry may lead to new lesson ideas. As the possibilities grow with the warming weather, you could start to designate one period each week to the garden. Perhaps it will be possible or necessary to assign garden or seedling care as a chore for students. Learning to be a producer, as well as consumer, is fundamental for youth.

Step 7- Plan for succession: What happens to the garden when students are dismissed for the summer holidays, and what about next year? Secure volunteers on an ongoing basis to maintain a fruitful garden rooted in the community. Try setting up a birdcam or routine photography to track to progress of the garden through the seasons, and share on social media or in a newsletter. These are rewards the strengthen the community.

Step 8- Celebrate your garden’s success with an annual event such as a Harvest Meal, Barbeque, Corn Boil, Pumpkin Carving, or other event. This can be combined with a work party to “put the garden to bed” and prepare for the dormant season. It’s helpful to have photos of the journey to document the hard work and to thank volunteers, parents, teachers and students. Gardening is a great example of continuous learning. Every season we build more knowledge!

Resources

[Green Schools NS How to Grow a School Garden Support Package](#)

[Green Schools NS Harvest Meal Support Package](#)

[Green Schools NS Tree Planting Support Package](#)

[Green Schools NS Garden Resources](#)

[Green Schools NS Food Miles Game](#)

[Green Schools NS Microgreens Activity](#)

[Green Schools NS Seed Paper Activity](#)

[Green Schools NS Vermicomposting Activity](#)

[Green Schools NS Vertical Garden Activity](#)

[Green Schools NS Octopus Rain Barrel Activity](#)

[Nova Scotia School Garden Resource Guide](#)

[Agriculture In the Classroom Canada](#)

[Garden Journal - from The Garden Classroom \(book for purchase or free online excerpt\)](#)

[Native Plant Database - Evergreen Canada](#)

[Department of Agriculture - Educational Resources](#)

[Owlcation Classroom Activities About Plants](#)

[Resources for Rethinking](#)

[WWF or CWF](#)

[Tree Canada](#)

[Nova Scotia Farm & Food Events Calendar \(NS Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Nutrients For Life](#)

[International Composting Awareness Week](#)

[Open Farm Day](#)

[World Food Day](#)

[Take Me Outside Day](#)

[World Soil Day](#)

