

Youth Gardening

Why Should Your School Have A Garden?

What we feed our children and what we teach them about food in school, shapes how they learn, how they grow, and how long they will live.

- In the last 30 years, the percentage of American children who are overweight or obese has tripled
- 23% of all American children face food insecurity
- Only 2% of all children eat enough fresh fruits and vegetables
- The typical elementary school student receives just 3.4 hours of nutrition education each year.

In the face of these challenges, school garden programs can help children grow healthier.

- Children who grow their own food are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables and be more knowledgeable about nutrition
- They are also more likely to continue healthy eating habits throughout their lives

Benefits for Your School and Your Children

School garden programs not only promote healthy lifestyles in children, but have also been shown to improve their attitudes and appreciation for the environment. Gardens serve as great outdoor classrooms for any number of subjects, including science, ecology, math, creative writing, and art. School gardens are wonderful spaces for kids with different learning styles and abilities to work in groups and engaging hands-on, cross-disciplinary education.

Information Courtesy: WHOLE KIDS FOUNDATION

Resources

Here are a few of the resources the *Garden Project* can provide your group:

- In late winter, we offer a series of [Garden Leader's Trainings](#).
- We can provide site visits, consultations, and a connection to the Youth Garden Coalition
- Resources; including tools, tilling, compost, seeds, plants, and volunteers

Our Garden Project encompasses over 125 community gardens, over a third which are youth gardens.

A Few Great Websites for Gardening with Kids:

- <http://ecoliteracy.org/downloads/getting-started>
Downloadable, getting started guide
- <http://schoolyards.org/design.schoolyard.html>
Tons of pictures, organized by topic
- [Organic Gardening Magazine's: Dig-Plant-Grow & OAEC: Handful of Seeds](#)
Free, quality downloadable curriculum
- <http://www.lifelab.org/>
One of the *Garden Project's* all-time favorites
- <http://gardening.cce.cornell.edu/>
Plus their blog on how to organize a youth garden program & lessons for educators



Local Organizations That Support Youth Gardens

Allen Neighborhood Center
& HUNTER PARK
GARDENHOUSE
Boys & Girls Club
Greater Lansing Food Bank
GARDEN PROJECT
Lansing Public Schools
MSU Children's Garden
MSU Master
Gardener Association
MSU Extension & 4-H
Northwest Initiative
Southside Community Coalition
Village Summit
Youth Garden Coalition

KID FRIENDLY PLANTS

Spring:

Carrots & Radishes
Peas & lettuce

Summer:

Basil
Cherry tomatoes
Lemon cucumber
Popcorn, squash, & pole
beans (aka: The 3 Sisters)

Flowers & Herbs:

Borage
Calendula
Comfrey
Lavender
Marigolds
Milkweed
Mint
Sage
(both culinary &
perennial varieties- esp.
Pineapple sage...great for
hummingbirds)