

**Wellness
Principle:
Promising
Practice:**

Nutrition Education & Health Education

School Garden

Aim: School gardens encourage healthy food choices and are considered an effective way to engage students in active learning because they offer hands-on, real life applications for academic content.

**School Garden
Getting Started
How To's :**

1. PLANNING THE GARDEN

- ❖ **Establish the Team:** School gardens rise and fall on the relationships of the people who make them happen. Form a committee of students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. Begin fundraising and seek donations.
- ❖ **Site Selection:** Select a garden site with at least six hours of direct sunlight, access to water and visibility from classrooms. The garden should be accessible to all garden participants, including those with special needs.
- ❖ **Design:** plan the location of the garden bed areas, the tool shed/storage area, the compost area, the outdoor instruction area, the greenhouse/cold frame area, and the water system.
- ❖ **Purchase:** tools and materials

2. BREAKING GROUND

- ❖ Organize a community workday
- ❖ Do a preliminary soil test
- ❖ Order seeds/plants
- ❖ Build garden beds
- ❖ Cultivate soil

3. MAINTAINING THE GARDEN

Plant seeds in containers	Cultivate garden beds	Weed and mulch beds
Add soil amendments	Plant and transplant	Maintain compost area
Water plants as needed	Prune plants	Plant cover crops
Test garden bed soil	Harvest crops	Watch for pests and harsh weather

4. MANAGING THE GARDEN

- ❖ Schedule class use of the outdoor classroom
- ❖ Post garden maintenance tasks
- ❖ Develop a work schedule for volunteers

- ❖ Plan a holiday and summer maintenance program
 - Create a supply-ordering system
5. **GARDEN COST:** School gardens range from a few plantings to elaborate programs. Cost will depend on the scope of your program and if you choose to employ staff. [Download](#) this School Garden Materials and Resource Guide to help you create a budget of school garden program supplies.
6. **GARDEN CHALLENGES:** Have a plan to overcome some potential garden challenges.
- ❖ Summer Care: offer parents and volunteers picking rights and designate an area for them to grow food in exchange for summer volunteer hours. Or plant spring and fall but not summer harvest crops.
 - ❖ Space Limitations. Straw bale gardening (using a series of bales with 6 inches of soil on top as a raised bed and containers (like Earthbox) provide options for schools with extremely limited space.

Keys to Success: When starting your new garden project, plan on starting small the first year to work out garden use and maintenance logistics. A smaller garden is easier to manage and increases the likelihood of success.

More Information: California School Garden Network
www.csgn.org
 LSU AgCenter
http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/lawn_garden/master_gardener/school_gardens/
 USDA Team Nutrition
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>

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