



GROW YOUR OWN

POWERED SCHOOLS & AFTERSCHOOLS



DEAR SCHOOL,



We are committed to working with you to support the health and wellness of the students, staff, and parents. In the work that we do with you, we use a model from the CDC that is student-centered and focuses on the importance of supporting the connections between health and academic achievement. Each quarter to we will be sharing toolkits with you on specific health and wellness related topics. These toolkits provide resources, learning tools, and reading materials. We ask that you share the information with your student body, staff, and parents. Hang and post this materials throughout the halls of your school to raise awareness for the topics shared.



This quarter our focus topics are: Farm to School and Gardening benefits and basics! The toolkit will focus on gardening resources, the benefits of gardening, gardening 101, types of gardens, lessons of the garden, the science behind plants, organization in the garden, and more!

The aim of this campaign is to educate, encourage and support students in where their food comes from. Grow Your Own also aims to promote more accessibility of produce for families, schools, and communities. Throughout this campaign, there will be opportunities for everyone including students, staff, and parents/caretakers--to engage in garden activities.

Best,

Nutrition Education Team
Community Food Bank of New Jersey





WHAT'S INSIDE

Page 3: Welcome Letter

Page 4: Benefits of Farm to School

Page 5: Gardening 101

Page 6: Types of Garden Options

Page 7: Organizing the Garden

Page 8: Learning in the Garden

Page 9: See You in the Garden!

Page 10: Science of Plants

Page 11: Flyers and Handouts

Page 12-13: Gardening Resources

BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL

Farm to school is a program that enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education settings.

School gardens come in all shapes and sizes, and counties with varying amounts of land are finding ways to establish gardens both within and outside of school grounds. Gardens can be as simple as a few containers on a windowsill or can cover many acres, and gardens can thrive in all climates. Your site can find that even small gardens help children gain familiarity and comfort with the fruits and vegetables at meal times.

School garden's products can be used in the cafeteria, from herbs to spice up a pizza, to serving garden-grown lettuce on the salad bar, to roasting vegetables as part of a reimbursable meal. Foods produced in a garden operated can be used in the meal service and can be used for educational purposes. School gardens are living laboratories that create teaching opportunities ripe for nutrition and agriculture education and experiential education across all disciplines.



STUDIES SHOW THAT COMMUNITIES CONSUME MORE FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WHEN THERE IS A LOCAL GARDEN ACCESSIBLE TO THEM.

GARDEN 101

WHAT DO YOUR PLANTS NEED?

- Sunlight/Artificial Lights
- Air
- Water
- Good quality soil
- Warmth/Good Temp
- Attention from students, staff, garden team, and volunteers.
- Nutrients from soil compost and fertilizer
- A secure location that is able to support a garden.

STAFFING

It takes more than one person to keep gardens growing strong. School nutrition directors can use program funds to help support garden personnel. Cooperation and partnerships between school personnel, teachers, students, non-profits, parents, volunteers (including AmeriCorps and FoodCorps members) and community members is essential for garden success.

FARM TO SCHOOL

- School gardens increase knowledge and expose students to ecosystems and the foods we eat as well as how they are grown
- Promotes healthy eating habits
- Allows the opportunity to introduce new foods
- Promotes physical activity
- Can improve community connectiveness, social skills, team work, mood moderation, etc.

FUNDING

- Funding diversity is key when planning a sustainable school garden. Here is some food for thought:
- Think local! Parent associations, healthy fundraisers, local non-profits and public agencies have all supplied resources to start and sustain school gardens.
- Determine the financial resources required to establish and maintain the community garden. Explore potential funding sources, such as grants, donations, sponsorships, or partnerships with local businesses or organizations.
- City Green Community Garden Grants
- Seed money garden grants
- Municipal support
- Go Fund Me / Fundraising
- Sustainable Jersey
- Charge a small membership fee

CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER

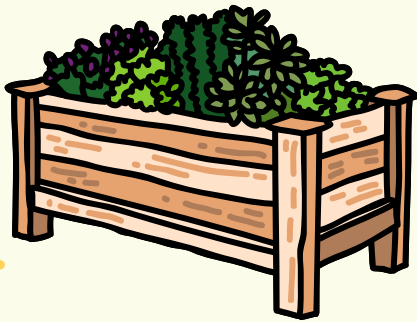
- Access to public property and limited space within your site, considering an indoor garden is always a possibility.
- Community gardens involve multiple participants, conflicts may arise over issues such as plot boundaries, water usage, shared resources, or maintenance responsibilities.
- Participants in community gardens may have different levels of dedication and involvement. Some gardeners may be highly committed and actively maintain their plots, while others may neglect their responsibilities.
- Finding resources and community support, sites and school should allocate time to setting up a garden team to help find volunteers, funding, tools or resources to continue their garden support and efforts.
- Don't give up! It can be challenging to sustain the garden over the years after initial enthusiasm dwindles or there is gardener turn-over. Continued garden upkeep includes weed pressure, adding new soil, mulch, and repairing raised beds over time.

TYPES OF GARDENS



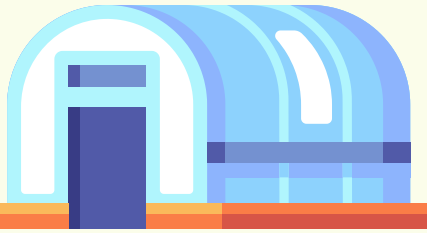
Community

Shared public space where individuals come together and plant various plants. Can be flowers or produce.



Raised-Bed

Garden that soil is above ground level and typically enclosed.



Green House

Built inside an enclosure to control the climate and environment for plants.



Container

Practice of keeping plants inside a pot or container while they grow instead of planting them in the ground.



Hydroponic

Method of growing plants without soil. It's a way to nurture a huge variety of edible plants (think herbs, veggies, even some fruits) indoors all year round.

ORGANIZING THE GARDEN

Label the garden

- Labeling is imperative in the garden! It will be helpful in identifying plants, tracking growth, communication between gardeners, etc. Keep a rolodex of seed packets to refer to for care and other information.

Create a task board

- A task board provides clarity about what needs to be done, what has been done, and what is getting done.

Create a rules board

- Provide rules to maintain the garden like “walk don’t rush”, “read garden labels before working”, “wash hands”, “be mindful of coughing”, “do not touch hair and garden”, “careful with garden tools”, etc.

Have a garden map

- A map makes it easier to identify and work your way around the garden, especially for volunteers and new or transitional staff.

Create goals and a season plan

- Set specific, measurable goals with clear obtainable objectives. Having a point person spearhead the garden will be beneficial to it’s organizational success.



LEARNING WITH THE GARDEN

FIVE SENSES

- Students can taste and smell different textures by smelling and chewing! Try hold taste tests!
- Students can touch fruits and vegetables different textures and skins.
- They can see the lifecycle of the plants garden.
- Use sense of hearing by playing music for plants and seeing how they grow with opera, pop, rock, and rap music.

GARDEN SAFETY

- Hand washing before harvesting and before consuming foods
- Washing fruits and vegetables before consuming.
- Integrate social emotional learning
- Review discipline policies to ensure equity

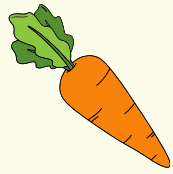
WHERE FOOD COMES FROM

- Student have the opportunity to learn about food being a resource.
- Teachers can use garden as a learning opportunity
- Students can learn parts of plant and lifecycle.

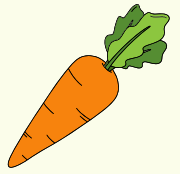
HOW TO COMPOST

- Recycled nutrients and how they prevent food waste and litter.
- What tools you need like a bin or a bucket
- What is a compost item and what creates compost.





SEE YOU IN THE GARDEN!



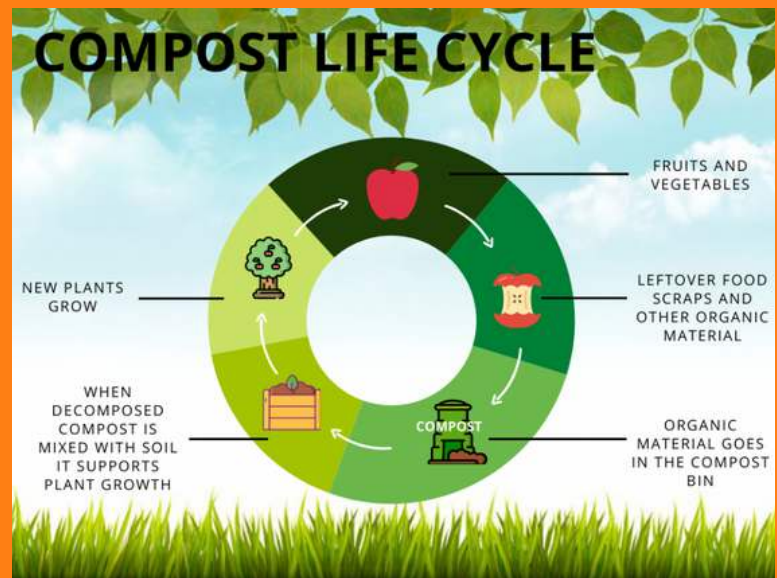
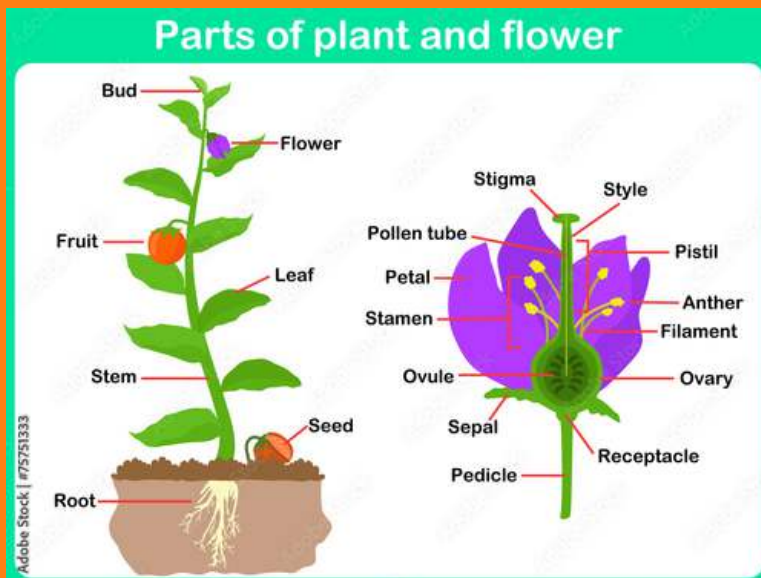
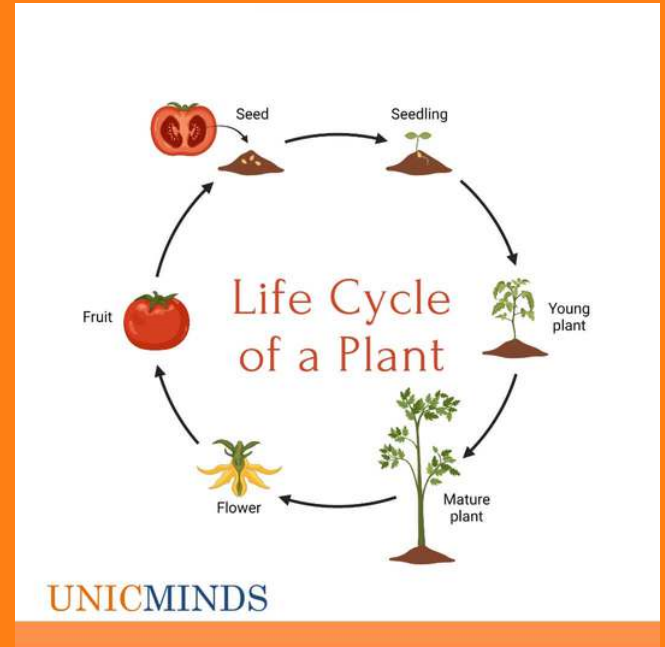
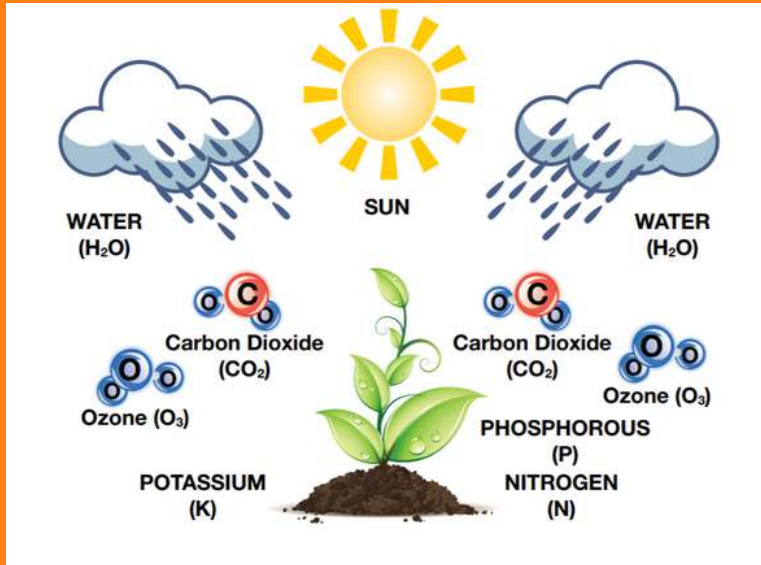
A community garden is a piece of private or public land in a rural, urban, or suburban space that is gardened by a group of people individually or collectively. It can be used for food production, to grow herbs and flowers. They create sustainable agriculture, helps increase access and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the community, improves mental health in school/community, improves air and soil quality, provides educational learning opportunities, promotes community engagement and fellowship, and even reduces crime in urban areas.



Photo above was provided by one of our HWPAs sites Acelero Learning Center in Freehold NJ. Thanks to the help of the garden package and from funding through The National Head Start program, they were able to plant tomatoes, cauliflower, sunflowers, and green beans. There were also able to put a watering system in their garden and a chicken coop with 4 chickens! Acelero plans to provide harvested goods from the garden to the families they serve.

SCIENCE OF PLANTS

Click any pictures from page 10-13 to be brought to main website



VIDEO GARDENING RESOURCES

