

Capital Growth Training Handout

Growing in Schools



Growing in Schools Overview

This factsheet provides some basic information to help you plan your school based food growing project. It includes some basic questions you need to consider when planning to grow food in a school as well as ideas on different seasonal activities showing that food growing is not just a fair weather activity.

For more information on running your school garden get in touch or attend one of our training sessions. You can see all our coming training sessions here.

Garden Clubs vs. Outdoor Classrooms

There is a difference between a 'garden club' and an 'Outdoor Classroom' as follows

- 🌱 A garden club often takes place outside of learning time and is a self-selecting groups, whereas outdoor classrooms are where the use of the garden is integrated into the curriculum.
- 🌱 It is relatively straightforward setting up the former – the latter takes years to embed into school life, but is a wonderful way to use your school food growing space

Food growing in schools is part of the bigger picture of outdoor learning – i.e. working with students in a wide range of settings outside the classroom itself. Both food growing and outdoor learning are beneficial. Considerations when thinking about setting up a food growing space in your school includes:

- 🌱 Is there a general awareness of the benefits of outdoor learning and food growing in the school ethos?
- 🌱 Is the language of 'outdoor learning' regularly used?
- 🌱 What do you need to do to engage school staff in outdoor learning?

Design of your Growing Space

- 🌱 Which other educators could use the space?
- 🌱 Can you include any props to help them teach, e.g. a whiteboard, seating etc.
- 🌱 How can you create opportunities for other educators to come outside?
- 🌱 Can you plan your space so that pupils can work independently?

Planning

- 🌱 How can you lock into other teachers' planning cycles? Do you know when they plan? Do you know, for example, when is the first brainstorming around topics to cover?
- 🌱 Establish expectations that they need to come outside, not leave it to you.
- 🌱 Can you involve teaching assistants?
- 🌱 What about less-obvious opportunities, e.g. maths. Can you work with maths co-ordinator to promote outdoor opportunities?
- 🌱 Can you save planning so that future teachers can use it?
- 🌱 Can you take opportunities to train up the staff – INSET, after-school training?
- 🌱 Do teachers know how to contact you if they need support?



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Tasks throughout the year

Winter

- 🍷 Bug hunts
- 🍷 Make bird feeders – milk cartons etc
- 🍷 Planning for spring – what do you want to see growing, where should it be grown etc
- 🍷 Fruit tree pruning
- 🍷 Snow / footprints in snow
- 🍷 Sort tools, maintain and clean them
- 🍷 Textures in garden
- 🍷 Protect crops against frost with cloches, fleece tunnels and plastic bottles
- 🍷 Clearing beds
- 🍷 Christmas fair/decoration
- 🍷 Scarecrows
- 🍷 Take leaves / objects when frost is forecast then freeze for ice sculpture

Spring

- 🍷 Leave a wild patch and observe/ record its evolution throughout the year
- 🍷 Bug hunt – find, observe and record bugs around your garden
- 🍷 Seed sowing
- 🍷 Planting
- 🍷 Soil preparation- add more soil, break clumps, rake
- 🍷 Weeding and learn about common English weeds
- 🍷 Life cycles- pick one plant and observe it's evolution throughout the year
- 🍷 Pond observation
- 🍷 Bug house- create bug houses for beneficial insects (solitary bees, ladybirds and lacewings for example)
- 🍷 Nesting boxes – provide shelter for garden birds

Summer

- 🍷 Bees / honey – observe bees and other pollinators in the garden and link with plant reproduction and honey
- 🍷 Bug hunt – find, observe and record bugs around your garden
- 🍷 Cooking – create salads and no heat recipes like pesto and salsa using your produce
- 🍷 Harvesting
- 🍷 Weeding
- 🍷 Pest control – friend vs. foe. Should we kill them? Philosophy angle
- 🍷 Creepy crawly day
- 🍷 Selling off surplus plants



Autumn

- 🍷 Bug hunt – find, observe and record bugs around your garden
- 🍷 Green manures – talk about their use and plant a few different species to observe throughout the next few months
- 🍷 Fruit picking
- 🍷 Orchard visits
- 🍷 Apple printing – art work
- 🍷 Harvest festival
- 🍷 Planting bulbs: garlic, onion, flowers etc
- 🍷 Sowing sweet peas
- 🍷 Rake leaves
- 🍷 Apple Day
- 🍷 Looking at leaves
- 🍷 Making lavender bags
- 🍷 Sunflower – look at seeds
- 🍷 Making fruit leathers

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