

School Garden Guide

Gulf Islands SD64

FOUR SEASONS IN THE SCHOOL GARDENS

AUTUMN (September to November)

Growing and Harvesting Food

- Identify parts of various plants to learn about the diversity of roots, stems, leaves, flowers and seeds
- Collect and save an abundance and diversity of seeds for next year
- Plant garlic (ideally in October)
- Sow or transplant vegetables for fall planting season; Replace finished summer plants with cool season crops such as kale, spinach, radishes, lettuce, or mustard

Living Soils

- Autumn mulching (such as leaves, straw, bark/wood chips...)
- Clean out composters and dig compost into garden beds for overwintering; Save some leaves to add to the compost during the year
- Plant cover crops/green manure (such as winter rye)
- Prepare lasagna/layered garden beds

Ecosystem Science (focus: pollination)

- Plant flower bulbs (such as daffodils, tulips and hyacinths)
- Transplant and prune perennial herbs, shrubs and trees
- Explore various native plants, their uses and advantages

Community Art and Culture

- Create student garden journals to record activities and observations in the gardens: What grew well over the summer? What did not?
- Explore various names and uses of plants in different languages and cultures

Garden Coordination & Maintenance

- Coordinate monthly garden work parties (with parents, students and community members) to help with fall harvesting, prepare for the winter and plant winter cover crops and bulbs in the school gardens
- Organize autumn harvest lunch/festival
- Facilitate class tours to local farms or conservation societies
- Arrange for student/class participation in the Fall Fair

WINTER (December to February)

Living Soils

- Keep filling the compost, ready for spring use

Growing and Harvesting Healthy Food

- Winter pruning of hardy fruit trees (apples, plums, figs, cherries), grapevines and shrubs
- Start seeds indoors/greenhouse for cool-season transplants such as: Asian Greens, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chard, Collards, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Nasturtium and Onions
- Sow seeds directly into garden beds for early spring planting, such as: Beets, Calendula, Carrots, Fava Beans, Garlic, Grains, Nasturtium, Onions, Peas, Radish, Spinach and Potatoes.

Pollination

- Plan for garden pollination (plant native species, diversity of flower shapes and colors, continual blooming periods, habitats and clumps)
- Build Bug Hotels or Mason Bee condos

Art and Culture in the School Gardens

- Discuss winter solstice and lengthening days, and add colour to the garden with ribbons or paintings (more needed here).

Community Building for the School Garden

- Coordinate monthly garden work parties (with parents, students and community members) to prepare for spring planting.
- Invite local garden resource person/elder/expert to present and facilitate discussion on gardening topic of choice
- Arrange for student/class participation in the Seedy Saturday/Sunday

SPRING (March to May)

Living Soils

- Add some soil to the compost and turn regularly
- Prepare garden beds for planting in March/April: Add compost to the planting beds when thawed.
- Composting and mulching of perennials
- Refill wood chips in garden pathways, play areas and gathering areas
- Discuss how water flows through the garden: from watering, to percolation through the soil, to absorption by plants and evaporation

Growing and Harvesting Healthy Food

- Sow seeds directly into garden for warm season crops, such as Amaranth, Corn, Pumpkins, Shelling Beans, Snap Beans, Squash, Sunflowers and Dill.
- Plant warm season transplants into garden during late Spring or early Summer (May-June), such as: Basil, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Melons, Onions, Peppers and Tomatoes for harvest when returning to school in September.

Pollination

- Transplant perennial herbs, shrubs and trees
- Care for garden perennials with compost and mulch
- Observe insect, bird and animal pollination in spring flowers

Art and Culture in the School Gardens

- Mosaic stepping stones. (need more here)

Community Building for the School Garden

- Coordinate monthly garden work parties (with parents, students and community members) to help with garden projects and prepare for spring harvest festival.
- Facilitate class tours to local farms or conservation societies.
- Invite local garden resource person/elder/expert to present and facilitate discussion on relevant gardening topic.
- Earth Day!

SUMMER (June to August)

Living Soils

- Keep compost healthy by stirring it frequently and cover with leaves to reduce the smell and keep out the flies; if the compost looks dry, add some water.

Growing and Harvesting Healthy Food

- Starting in June, harvest vegetables that were planted in the autumn (such as garlic, grains) and early spring (such as peas, spinach, beets, radishes, lettuce)

Pollination

- Explore ecosystem approaches to gardening such as permaculture

Art and Culture in the School Gardens

- Cob benches and other garden infrastructure.

Community Building for the School Garden

- Organize spring harvest festival
- Visit farmers markets, market stands and/or community gardens
- Coordinate summer water schedule with available families