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School Gardens in Guilford County



GC School Garden Network

Why School Gardens?

A school garden is an outdoor classroom: a living laboratory where gardeners of all ages learn by observing and doing.

Gardening offers real world, problem-based learning opportunities in every discipline, including the natural sciences, math, language arts, and nutrition.



What are the Benefits of a School Garden?

Inquiry-based learning: School gardens are learning labs that can enrich every part of a school's curriculum.

Community: Build school pride through taking ownership. Involve whole families; this is for gardeners of all ages!

Health: Kids are more likely to eat something that they have grown, and gardening exposes kids to a variety of new food! Gardening also decreases stress and increases physical activity.

Life Skills: In addition to a wealth of plant growing information, gardening teaches cooperation, responsibility, perseverance, and hard work.

Entrepreneurship: Some schools fundraise by selling produce or seedlings that they grow.

Nature: Connect with plants, pollinators, birds, and life cycles in the garden.

Guilford County School Garden Network

The Guilford County School Garden Network brings together community stakeholders to create and sustain school gardens in Guilford County.

Networking with other educators

- Connect to others providing garden-based education to share successes, best practices and questions on the SGN Facebook page and in person at events.

Professional Development & Workshops

- Seasonal gardening information and growing techniques.
- Specific garden curriculum and integrating the garden with standards.

Bi-weekly E-Newsletter

- Receive grant opportunities, garden-related curriculum and activities.
- Notice of upcoming events.





Steps to Success

1. Gather your Team

- Build a leadership team of 5 to 10 people, including support from teachers, students, administration, and families.

2. Integrate the Garden

- Ask: Why is a garden right for us? What are our goals? Will the garden connect to specific standards?
- Who is our garden for? When in the school day will it be used?

3. Find a Garden Site (and Permission!)

- Easily visible and accessible for teachers and students, 8 hours of direct sunlight, and close access to water.
- Work closely with your school's facilities department and administration about permits or other requirements.

4. Develop the Garden

- Design the garden with students and teachers! Start small and build on success. Developing in phases is a good way to go.
- Identify partners who can help with resources and funding. See listed grant opportunities.
- Plan: How will the garden be maintained? Will each class have their own plot, will it be a communal garden, or some combination? Develop leadership roles and garden guidelines.

5. Build Community Year-round

- Hold school-wide workdays, workshops, and garden celebrations.
- Share successes with the School Garden Network Facebook page!

Resources at Extension

Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteers (EMGV) offer school garden mentors who can provide the following services:

Site visit and Consultation

- Garden site selection and planning.
- Advice on garden team development.

Gardening Questions

- Garden construction and planting plans.
- Garden advice on how to plant, water, weed, mulch, harvest, etc.
- Information on where to get materials.
- OR Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Infoline, to answer garden questions: (336)641-2404 or guilfordmg@gmail.com.

Seed Donations

- *Seeds to Share* is an event for school and community gardens to receive free herb, vegetable, and flower seeds for their gardens. The event is the first Saturday in February in Greensboro and the second Saturday in February in High Point.
- Guilford County Cooperative Extension keeps a supply of seeds for donation year-round. Ask Quina Weber-Shirk!



Gardening and Nutrition Curriculum

- *Guilford County 4-H*: standards-aligned, hands-on classroom curriculum for K-12 (some with rentable kits), contact our office at (336) 641-2400
- *Junior Master Gardener*: curriculum K-5 and 6-8, imgkids.us/curriculum/
- *Life Lab*: www.lifelab.org/for-educators/
- *Edible Schoolyard*: lessons for 6-8, edibleschoolyard.org/curriculum
- *Nourish*: curriculum and videos for K-12 about food and food systems, www.nourishlife.org

Up-to-Date Grant Opportunities

- *Guilford County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer School Garden Micro-grant*, every fall—contact Guilford County Cooperative Extension.
- *Gardening with Kids*: kidsgardening.org/grant-opportunities/
- *North Carolina Environmental Education Center*: web.eenorthcarolina.org/core/item/topic.aspx?tid=85010
- *National Farm to School Program*: www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-grant-program
- *National Environmental Education Foundation Grants*: www.neefusa.org/grants



Get Involved!

Support or start a School Garden

- More than 70 school gardens have been started in Guilford County!
- Call County Extension Agent Quina Weber-Shirk, and she will connect you with a garden.

Request a Garden Workshop for your School or Attend Free Gardening Classes offered by Guilford County Cooperative Extension and Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteers.

- List of classes at guilfordextension.com, under "Free Gardening Classes".
- For more information, call Guilford County Cooperative Extension at 336-641-2400.
- Don't see your topic listed? Contact Quina Weber-Shirk to plan!

Join the School Garden Network

- *SGN Facebook page*: www.facebook.com/gccoopextsgn/
- *Bi-Weekly E-Newsletter and Events*: email Quina Weber-Shirk with your name, school, and email to get added to the list.