



CULTIVATING NUTRITION & LEARNING
THROUGH IDAHO SCHOOL GARDENS



Connecting School Gardens to Academics

There are a variety of ways to integrate school gardening with classroom curriculum. Below are ideas on how to incorporate a variety of curricular topics into your school garden.

SCIENCE

Science is the most common subject area connected to the school garden. School gardens provide an opportunity for students to observe scientific processes first hand.

- ▶ Observing
- ▶ Measuring
- ▶ Comparing
- ▶ Predicting
- ▶ Testing
- ▶ Concluding
- ▶ Interpreting Data
- ▶ Forming Hypothesis
- ▶ Soils
- ▶ Seeds
- ▶ Temperature
- ▶ Weather
- ▶ Plant Growth
- ▶ Plant Anatomy
- ▶ Food Webs
- ▶ Classifying
- ▶ Sunlight
- ▶ Water Usage

SAMPLE SCIENCE ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- ▶ How does a plant grow? Observe the life cycles of plants using fast-growing plants in your classroom.
- ▶ Create a garden weather station. Record daily measurements and compare conditions with plant growth.
- ▶ What is pH? How does it affect plants? Use litmus paper or a test kit to test the pH of different soils. Investigate how plants respond to soils with different pH levels.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Plants and food are important parts of Idaho and world history. The school garden provides opportunities to teach topics from food storing to specific historical events.

- ▶ Cultures
- ▶ Historical Events
- ▶ Current Events
- ▶ Agricultural Occupations
- ▶ Eating and Food Practices of Different Cultures
- ▶ Ag Economics

SAMPLE SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- ▶ Research and report on cultural or ethnic differences in food consumption and gardening practices.
- ▶ Study the contribution of Native American foods and other cultures' foods to our history and diet. Grow samples in the school garden.
- ▶ As a class, develop garden rules and then vote on them.

ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS

Language arts can be incorporated into the garden in a variety of ways and provide students with the opportunity to critically think about gardening and their experience in the school garden.

- ▶ Listening
- ▶ Speaking
- ▶ Interviewing
- ▶ Dramatizing
- ▶ Questioning
- ▶ Restating
- ▶ Summarizing
- ▶ Letter Writing
- ▶ Journaling
- ▶ Fictional Writing
- ▶ Recording Observations



SAMPLE LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- ▶ Write letters to local merchants explaining the school gardening project and asking for donations.
- ▶ Write step-by-step instructions for common garden activities.
- ▶ Keep daily garden journals documenting observations, weather conditions, and classroom activities.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Nature can be very inspiring for young artists. Nature and the school garden can spark creativity in your students.

- ▶ Singing
- ▶ Instrumental Music
- ▶ Drama
- ▶ Charcoal Rubbings
- ▶ Pen & Ink
- ▶ Puppets
- ▶ Garden Gifts
- ▶ Vegetable Printing
- ▶ Vegetable Dyes
- ▶ Natural Collage
- ▶ Painting
- ▶ Sketching

SAMPLE ART ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- ▶ Make prints using paint and stamps made from various plant parts.
- ▶ Use leaves to make crayon rubbings or fossils in clay.
- ▶ Paint a class garden mural to hang in the hallway for parents' night.

MATH

School gardens provide a wide variety of opportunities to practice basic math activities. The garden helps make math relevant when students implement concepts they have learned in the classroom in a real-life garden setting.

- ▶ Geometry
- ▶ Computation
- ▶ Estimating
- ▶ Weighing
- ▶ Measuring
- ▶ Volume
- ▶ Area
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Plant Growth
- ▶ Recording
- ▶ Logging
- ▶ Graphing
- ▶ Charting

SAMPLE MATH ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- ▶ Measure the growth rates of plants and display results on different types of graphs. Make predictions regarding future growth. Use standard and non-standard units of measurement.
- ▶ Plan backward from a desired harvest date to determine when each crop should be planted.
- ▶ Measure your garden parameters and calculate the area. Use graph paper to make a map to scale of your garden.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

School gardens have been shown to have a positive impact on student health. Use the school garden to encourage students to make healthy food choices and be physically active.

- ▶ Nutrition Education
- ▶ Foods and Diet
- ▶ Tool Safety
- ▶ Being Outdoors
- ▶ Walking
- ▶ Lifting
- ▶ Carrying
- ▶ Digging
- ▶ Planting
- ▶ Raking
- ▶ Dexterity and Balance

SAMPLE HEALTH ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- ▶ Study the nutritional value of the various crops in your garden.
- ▶ Keep food journals that highlight how many fruits and vegetables are eaten and describe any new produce tried.
- ▶ Have students estimate their calories burned while working in the garden.

