

GROWPORTLAND



Grow Portland supports schools and communities by facilitating hands-on garden experiences that foster connections to food, nature and each other. Working at the intersection of food, education, and environmental equity, Grow Portland is dedicated to providing access to affordable environmental and food justice education for all students.

Interested in Garden School at your school?

Grow Portland invests in strong, long-term relationships with schools, PTA, teachers, cafeteria staff, administrations, and families. Leadership staff will sit down and meet with the above parties to explore the integration of Garden School programming with your school.

An Overview of what we typically offer each school partner:

- Serve all K-5 classrooms, inclusive of SPED-specific classes: at least one 45-minute monthly lesson for each classroom during the school day. (*We can also serve Pre-K upon request.*)
- Curriculum supports teachers in meeting Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) & Common Core learning objectives.
- Partnership on site planning, maintenance, work party coordination.
- Age-specific curriculum themes include soil science, basic botany, water conservation, food systems, pollination, and ecology with an emphasis on exploration and hands-on gardening.
- Cafeteria connections; harvests going directly to schools & distributed to families.



What is included?

- 45 minutes of education for each class/month by our professional Garden Educators.
- Garden and teaching supplies for programming (trowels, seeds, plants, clipboards, picture books, scavenger hunts, etc.).
- Staff supervision, support, and curriculum development.
- Educator professional development on equity, inclusion and outdoor teaching pedagogy.
- Harvests given to cafeterias (as harvest amounts permit).
- Additional staff time to coordinate harvests, garden maintenance, administrative communication with schools, community outreach events such as work parties, etc.
- Program evaluations soliciting feedback from principals, teachers, and students.
- Administration of contracts, supplemental funding, and program coordination.





School Partner fees

- Grow Portland asks that each school pay a portion of the cost for Garden School Programming (typically in partnership with PTA).
- Total program cost depends on # of classrooms and # of days of programming each month (*Minimum of 3 days/month and a maximum of 5 classes/day*).
- Partner fees are offered on a sliding scale, based on Free/Reduced lunch % (25% for Title 1 schools and up).
- Grow Portland will assist in providing resource information for fundraising options.

What we ask of schools partners

- Garden site in place or viable site identified with adequate planting and gathering space & storage.
- Ongoing parent engagement (volunteers, work parties).
- PTA or other committee to support garden maintenance, fundraising, etc.
- Principal and administration support in coordination and communication.
- Supportive teachers who are present and engaged during garden lessons.
- Partnership with school cafeteria and/or food pantry when harvest amounts allow.



Values:

We acknowledge that many we work with face persistent injustices and we strive to create equitable space for each participant to grow, learn and thrive.

- Our actions are grounded in environmental justice, equity, and accessibility to ensure meaningful engagement of all students, families and school personnel connected to our programs.
- Our school programs are designed to promote the well-being of children aligned with each child's personal learning style, nurturing their connection to the living world and fostering curiosity, compassion, and care for all living things.
- The joys of exploration and self-discovery drive what we do and how we do it.
- Relationships matter. We believe that our relationships with schools, students and communities form the core for successful collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness.



Garden School Program Overview

Garden Agreements

1. **Be kind to all living things.**
2. **Be safe:** walking feet and ask to pick.
3. **Be responsible.**
4. **"Don't yuck my yum!"**
5. **Be brave and try new things!**



Program Goals & Learning Objectives

Academic Learning: Students will engage in hands-on environmental science learning and practice observation skills connected to classroom learning objectives (i.e. life cycles, plant parts and functions, soil properties, pollination, water cycle, weather patterns & seasons, habitats and ecosystems, and the impacts [positive and negative] of humans on the natural environment).

Social Emotional Learning: Students will engage in collaborative and independent gardening activities to encourage community building, mindfulness, and respect for all living things.

Gardening Knowledge: Students will demonstrate understanding of basic gardening skills such as planting seeds, weeding, watering, harvesting and the needs of plants.

Connection to Nature: Students will spend time outdoors and become familiar with their local, natural environment, building awareness and connection to Nature.

Receptive to trying new foods: Students will show positive attitudes toward and willingness to try new vegetables in the garden.

Monthly Curriculum Themes (may shift annually)

September- Welcome to the Garden!

October- Signs of Fall & Garden Stewardship

November- Soil: The Health and Science Beneath Our Feet

December- Water: The Key to Life

January- Local Birds: Adaptations & Garden Ecosystems

February- Food Systems

March- Plant Parts & Functions

April- Insects & Pollination

May/June- Garden Celebrations and Summer Planting!





Program Assessments: Quantitative assessments of learning:

Teacher end-of-year online survey (2022):

- 95% of teacher respondents thought that Garden School “connected students to environmental science concepts that supported classroom learning”.
- 94% of teacher respondents felt that Garden School “supported students in developing tangible science skills such as making meaning of real-world observations, making connections between cause and effect, ability to theorize, and critical thinking.”
- 94% of teachers felt that Garden School provided their students with “an opportunity to practice and demonstrate understanding of basic gardening skills such as planting seeds, harvesting, weeding, and watering.”
- 95% of teacher respondents felt that Garden School “promotes enthusiasm towards learning and fosters an engaging school environment.”
- 95% of teacher respondents felt that Garden School “encourages understanding of and respect for the natural world.”

Student end-of-year reflections (2019):

- 65% of students reported trying a new vegetable in the garden this year.
- 89% of students think gardens are important.
- 93% of students love being outside.
- 92% of students said they know how to plant a seed.
- 90% of students said that Garden School taught them something new about Nature.



“I love Nature and this is the only time I get to interact with it. Garden School is actually how I got brave enough to sit in the grass.”

“You know what the best thing in the school is? The garden. That is precious. We have to keep the garden forever.”

