

How does the garden change over the summer?

EDIBLE GARDEN PROGRAM (6-8)

Summer Garden Care – It's a Family/School Commitment

Overview

The key question for this activity is, "How does the garden change over the summer?" And there is no better way for students to answer that than to grow and cook their own food. Using the garden and kitchen as the facilitators, they will inspire student inquiry and teach them about Sustainable Agriculture, specifically, local food production and consumption.

For the purpose of this curriculum sustainable agriculture shall be defined as follows: "Sustainable Agriculture is a system of food production, supported by consumers, where farming operations, practices and technologies *work in harmony* with the natural systems that sustain life on earth."

Suggested Grade Level

This curriculum is designed for middle school/junior high grade levels. The topics covered can be built upon in complexity throughout that age range.

Approximate Time

Each summer visit to the garden should last between 30 and 60 minutes.

Objectives

1. The students will tend the garden so that in the fall students can harvest the food for the "Preparing the Meal" activity.
2. The students will be exposed to change and growth in a biological system.

Activity Abstract

This activity details a method of having students and their families take turns caring for the garden over the summer.

Materials

- Garden gloves
- Garden journal and pen in a waterproof box
- Weeding tools
- Water bucket
- Hose
- Organic fertilizer
- Stakes/rope
- Weedwacker (nice, if available)

Procedure (Session 1)

The garden must be tended to over the summer while the students are out of school. Watering, weeding, fertilizing, staking and the like must be done. It is recommended that parent-student volunteers take care of this work. Leaving a Garden Journal at the garden will allow the volunteers to document the work they have done, so the next volunteer can determine what work to do. A sample volunteer sign-up form and summer care instructions are included in the Appendices.

Assigning a family or two per week to tend the garden is effective. Generally watering and weeding twice a week is adequate. One hour, two times a week is the expected time requirement. A teacher or designated adult should plan to fertilize when necessary during the first summer of the program. After the families and students become more knowledgeable this task can be taken on by the students.

EDIBLE GARDEN: Maintaining the Garden over the Summer

This spring your ___ grade child participated in a Sustainable Agriculture program titled the Edible Garden. The class planned and planted its own garden to be harvested this fall. In the fall the children will harvest their produce. The class will prepare lunchtime meals and use the produce for the social studies and science curriculum.

Between now and the start of school year the garden will need care. No-weed matting was put down before planting to control those beastly weeds, but certainly some weeding and much watering will be necessary. Please fill out the form below to select a week when you and your child are available to tend their garden. Plan to commit to tending twice during your week, an hour each visit - either a Tues. or Wed. and Fri. or Sat.

DETAILS ABOUT CARE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE GIVEN OUT WITH YOUR WEEK ASSIGNMENT. If you have any questions please contact:

EDIBLE GARDEN Family Volunteer Care Sign-up

RETURN TO CLASS BY

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

PLEASE PICK THREE WEEKS THAT ARE BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD TO TEND THE GARDEN THIS SUMMER, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE 1,2,3. ONLY ONE WEEK WILL BE ASSIGNED.

WEEK OF:

June 7 _____

June 14 _____

June 21 _____

June 28 _____

July 5 _____

July 12 _____

July 19 _____

July 26 _____

Aug. 2 _____

Aug. 9 _____

Aug. 16 _____

SUMMER GARDEN CARE INSTRUCTIONS

FAMILY NAME _____

SUMMER CARE WEEK _____

1. Plan to visit the class garden at least twice during you week, probably a hour of work each visit. You may need to visit more or less often depending on precipitation and number of weeds.
2. When you arrive at the garden to work, review the classes' Garden Journal to determine the extent of care during the last visit and the amount of precipitation or watering that has occurred.
3. Check the rain gauge. Record any precipitation in the Journal.
4. Feel the soil and look at the plants. Do they need water? Are they happy?
5. Water the plants during your week, so they receive an inch total of water (between precipitation and handwatering). An inch of water is equivalent to applying water so that if it could be contained at the garden perimeter it and wasn't absorbed it would fill the area one inch deep with water. The soil should be moist at 8 inches of soil depth.
6. Remove weeds around plants and in the paths. Place the weeds in the weed pile for composting at a later date.
7. Thin plants as necessary.
8. **EAT ANY PRODUCE THAT IS READY TO EAT!!!**
This will keep most plants producing throughout the summer and into the new school year.
9. **HAVE FUN!!! WRITE A STORY, POEM OR DRAW A PICTURE IN THE GARDEN JOURNAL.**
10. **IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL:**
_____.