

What do we do over the summer when school is not in session?

MY OWN FOOD CHAIN PROGRAM (K-2)

Summer Sustenance

(This is only necessary if the class planted plants that need to be harvested in the fall. If the garden consists only of early-harvest plants, the class may not need to worry about summer care!)

Overview

This curriculum explores the relationship between people and the food they eat. It aims to give children in grades K-2 a basic understanding of the flow of energy through the food chain, and the place of people in the food chain. If teachers complete the entire curriculum, their classes will explore food chains in nature, focusing on its individual links and looking at the flow of energy as a whole. Students will then look at the place of people in the food chain, and discover how people have appropriated nature's systems in agricultural practices – making the food chain our own. Classes will compare traditional and sustainable agricultural practices.

Sustainable Agriculture, for the purpose of this curriculum, shall be defined as "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 kindergarten through second grade levels. The topics covered can be built upon in complexity throughout that age range.

Approximate Time

Each family will need to commit to coming for about 2, 60 minute sessions during a specific summer week.

Objectives

1. The students will maintain their garden over the summer so that the plants are still alive in the fall.

Activity Abstract

This activity sets up a summer garden care schedule, then gives the students and their families instructions as to how to care for the garden over the summer.

Materials

- garden care forms (see Appendix)
- shoe-box sized plastic bin
- pencils
- notebook



- garden care tools, such as gloves, a weed remover tool, a trowel, and a watering can and/or hose
- water hook-up (spigot)
- rain gauge for garden

Procedure (Session 1)

1. **Tap prior knowledge.** Ask class to remember the garden chores they talked about earlier. Who will do them over the summer?
2. Explain to the class that they will have to help with these tasks, even though they will not be in school. They will take home a sign-up sheet to choose one week when they will help in the garden.
3. Send home the sheet and wait for responses. Call families who don't respond to get answers!
4. Create a master schedule of which families will care for the garden each week.

**Teacher note:
Sample forms
to send home
are in
Appendix A!**

Set-up

Inside the plastic bin, put the notebook, pencils, a copy of the master schedule and garden care instructions, and the garden tools. Put it in a protected, safe place in the garden. Plant the rain gauge in the garden in a sunny area (not under any plants).

Procedure (Session 2)

1. Pass out the master schedule to the students, along with a garden care instruction sheet (Appendix B) that has their dates on it.
2. **Hands-on experience.** Take the class out to the garden. Walk through a summer care session as you would if you were coming with your family, so the students know what to do. Answer any questions.
3. During the summer, call or email to remind families when it is their week. Visit the garden periodically to make sure nothing is amiss and help families take care of problems that arise.
4. Period fertilizing during the summer will be required. For first year gardeners, it's probably best that the teacher takes on this task.

**Teacher note:
Invite parents to
walk through the
summer care
procedure with the
class! You can hold it
in the evening or after
school if that works
best for parents.**



Appendix A: Sample garden care forms.

This year, your _____ grade child participated in a Sustainable Agriculture program where their class planned and planted their own garden to be harvested this Fall. Next school year the children will harvest their produce and sell it.

Between now and mid-August the garden will need care. 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 - 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:



Garden 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 9 _____

July 7 _____

Aug. 4 _____

June 16 _____

July 14 _____

Aug. 11 _____

June 23 _____

July 21 _____

June 30 _____

July 28 _____



SUMMER GARDEN CARE INSTRUCTIONS

FAMILY NAME _____

SUMMER CARE WEEK _____

1. Review the Garden Journal to determine the extent of care during the last visit.
2. Check the rain gauge. Record any precipitation in the Journal.
3. Feel the soil and look at the plants. Do they need water? Are they happy?
4. Water the plants during your week, so they receive an inch total of water. 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.
5. Remove weeds around plants and in the paths. Place the weeds in the weed pile for composting at a later date.
6. Watch out for any bugs that are eating the plants. If you find any, please contact _____ as soon as possible!
7. Thin plants as necessary. Notes on thinning will be provided in the Journal by _____.
8. EAT ANY PRODUCE THAT IS READY TO EAT!!! This will keep most plants producing.
9. HAVE FUN!!! WRITE A STORY, POEM OR DRAW A PICTURE IN THE GARDEN JOURNAL.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL:

