



School Garden Leadership Training

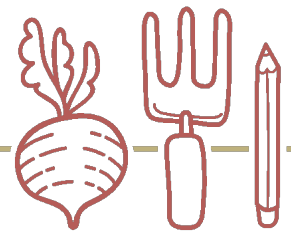
Florida School Garden Planner

Welcome to the Florida School Garden Planner! This resource is designed to help you create a seasonal plan for your school garden program step-by-step. Gather your garden leadership team or dedicate time for a solo planning session to clarify your goals and develop a blueprint for how to achieve them throughout the school year. The planner is organized such that each section builds upon the last, but you are free to skip around if that suits you. We recommend completing the planner on an annual or seasonal basis to guide your school garden program.

For additional information on planning your garden successfully, see the many resources found on the [UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions website](#), or reach out to your local [UF/IFAS Extension office](#).

Table of Contents

Create a Vision for Your School Garden	2
Build Your Garden Team	4
Set Seasonally Appropriate SMART Goals	5
Create an Action Plan	7
Outline Student Engagement and Curricula Connections	8
Discover Kid-Approved Crops	9
<i>Radish, Kale, Collard, Lettuce, and Bean</i>	
Select Your Garden Crops	15
Map Your Garden	16
Schedule Your Planting and Harvest Dates	18
Maintain Your Garden	19
Harvest Your Garden Crops	22
Celebrate with a Tasting Event	24
Reflect on the Growing Season	28



Create a Vision for Your School Garden

Every successful garden begins with a vision. Articulating a vision for your school garden will guide programming decisions, help you advocate for community support, and communicate the successes of your program. Using the prompts below¹, consider your garden's unique purpose and context to craft a vision statement.

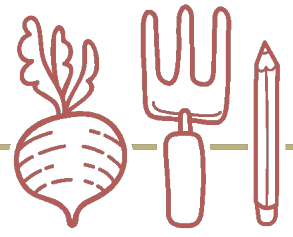
- *Who are the gardeners?* (Is it for a certain grade level or class? Will teachers and parents help to garden? Will certain grade levels be assigned to specific parts of the garden?)

- *Where will the garden take place?* (What is the school location? Where is the garden located on school premises and does this dictate the vision in any way?)

- *When will the garden remain in operation?* (Is the garden project time-bound in any way and does this dictate the vision? Will you only garden during the school year?)

- *Who is the food being grown for?* (Will students take food home? Will it be served in classroom taste tests? Will food be served in the school cafeteria?)

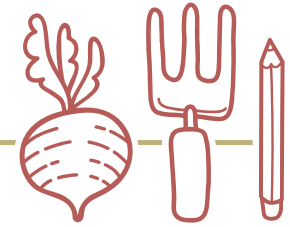
¹ Adapted from Joy, L. (2017). *Start a community food garden: The essential handbook*. Timber Press.



- *What will the garden accomplish?* (What are the outcomes you hope for?)

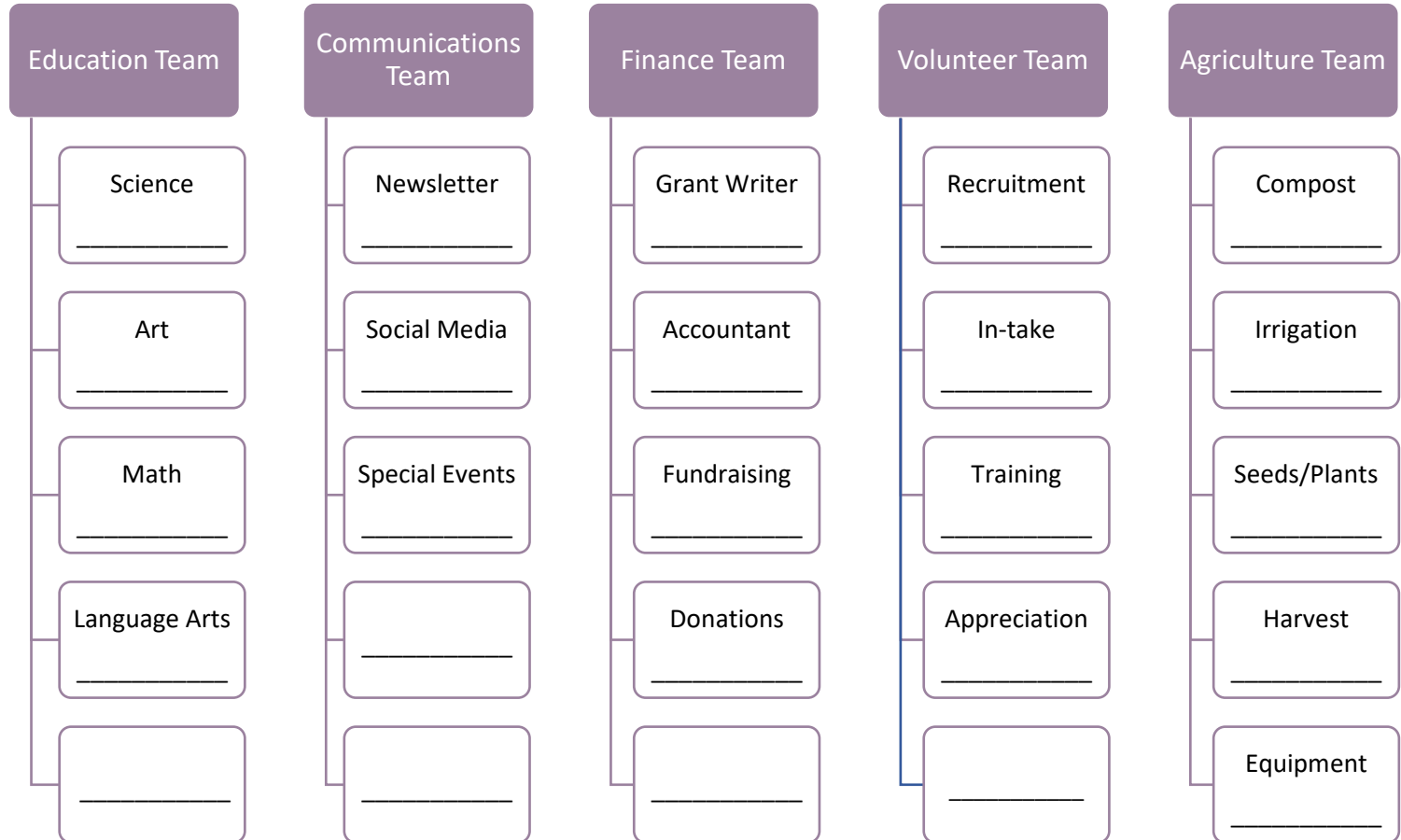
- *Why do you want a garden program?* (Why do you want the outcomes mentioned above?)

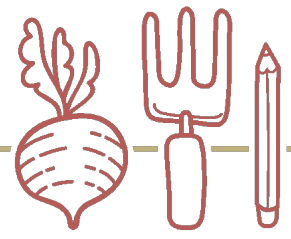
Thread your answers together to craft a vision statement for your garden.



Build Your Garden Team

Use the chart below to delegate support roles for your garden team. Consider all the gifts and skills adults and students can contribute!





Set Seasonally Appropriate SMART Goals

Create SMART goals to guide your school garden program throughout the season².

Specific. Ensure your goal is specific enough to know when you've achieved it. To set a specific goal, try to answer the six "W" questions: Who, What, Why, Where, Who, How.

Measurable. Being able to measure your progress will help you stay on track. Attach values or amounts to your goals as much as possible.

Achievable. Set realistic goals for yourself and for your students. Small wins will encourage you to strive for bigger goals next time, so set goals that are within reach.

Relevant. How does your goal advance your garden's mission? What is important to you and your students?

Timebound. Classroom projects have a natural timeline, dictated by the school year. This will help you when you set out your objectives for the garden project. What do you want to have accomplished by the time June rolls around?

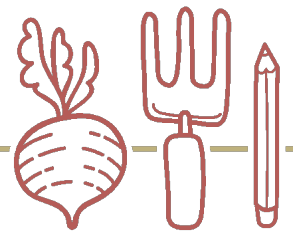
Consider aligning your goals to the three spheres of sustainability: gardening knowledge, curricula connections, and leadership skills.

Example SMART Goals:

Annual Objective: *Plant at least one garden crop this fall to try in a classroom taste test in December.*

1. **Gardening Goal:** *Apply square foot gardening techniques to plant 1 raised bed with kale in October.*
2. **Leadership Goal:** *Take photos of the school garden once every two weeks to post on a bulletin board in the hallway and in the parent newsletter.*
3. **Curricula Goal:** *Connect at least one lesson per week to the school garden, whether through indoor or outdoor activities.*

² SMART Goal descriptions from Green Bronx Machine. (n.d.). *Setting your goals.* Grow Your Classroom (Garden)! Retrieved October 17, 2022, from <https://guides.co/g/how-to-grow-a-classroom-garden%20/50625>



Annual Objective:



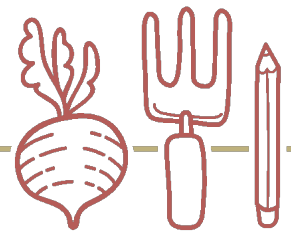
Gardening Goal



Leadership Goal



Curricula Goal



Create an Action Plan

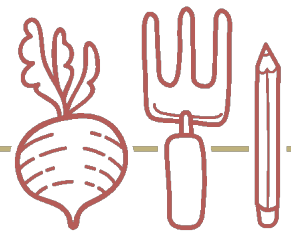
Use this template to outline the specific steps needed to accomplish your goals.

Goal:

Example: Apply square foot gardening techniques to plant 1 raised bed with kale in October.

Action Steps What needs to be done?	Deadline When should this step be completed?	Resources Needed What resources can you use to complete this step?	Potential Challenges Are there any potential challenges that may impede completion?	Potential Support Who can support you to complete this step? What can they do?	Result Was this step completed? Were any new steps identified in the process?
<i>Ex. Acquire seeds</i>	<i>Ex. Sept 15</i>	<i>Ex. Big box store or online store donation</i>	<i>Ex. Preferred variety may not be available</i>	<i>Ex. Parent employee at store can share donation process</i>	<i>Ex. Yes! Set annual meeting with store for donation request</i>

Consider repeating this exercise to create action plans for additional goals.



Outline Student Engagement and Curricula Connections

Students can play a meaningful part in all aspects of your school garden program. Brainstorm how they can engage in each of the areas below.

Materials purchasing and acquisition	<i>Ex. Ask students to write thank you letters to donors.</i>
Communications and promotion	
Garden installation	
Planting	
Seasonal Maintenance	
Harvest	
Event Planning	

Connecting your school garden program to standards-based and other lessons is a great way to enhance student learning. Complete the prompts below to incorporate the garden into your lesson plans.

Grade Level:

Subject:

Topics	Related Garden Task	Lesson & Resource Provider	Teaching Location & Notes
<i>Ex. Parts of a plant, how plants respond to stimuli, soil classification</i>	<i>Ex. Direct seeding (planting)</i>	<i>Ex. Garden in a Glove from FAITC</i>	<i>Ex. Indoor/Classroom; teach lesson during same week as planting with leftover seeds</i>

RADISH



WHY WE LOVE RADISHES!

- FUN, EASY CROP FOR KIDS AND BEGINNER GARDENERS
- RADISHES GERMINATE QUICKLY, REACH HARVESTABLE SIZE WITHIN WEEKS.
- RADISHES COME IN MANY FLAVORS, SHAPES, SIZES, AND COLORS.

WHEN TO PLANT IN FLORIDA

RADISHES PREFER COOLER TEMPERATURES, AND MOST VARIETIES CAN SURVIVE A FREEZE. IN WARMER TEMPERATURES, RADISHES CAN DEVELOP A BITTER, PEPPERY FLAVOR.

IN FLORIDA, THE BEST TIME TO GROW RADISHES IS SEPTEMBER THROUGH MARCH.

- NORTH FLORIDA: SEP-MAR
- CENTRAL FLORIDA: SEP-MAR
- SOUTH FLORIDA: OCT-MAR

SEED OR TRANSPLANT

- DIRECT SEED
- SOW SEEDS IN ROWS DIRECTLY INTO THE SOIL. TRANSPLANTING RADISHES IS NOT RECOMMENDED AS IT DISTURBS THE GROWING ROOT.

PLANT SPACING

- DEPTH: ¾ INCH DEEP * SOW SHALLOWLY
- PLANTS: 1 INCH APART
- ROWS: 6 INCHES APART

GARDEN DESIGN

- CONTAINERS - YES
- IN GROUND - YES
- RAISED BED - YES
- HYDROPONIC - NO

DAYS TO HARVEST

- QUICK GROWING
- 20-30 DAYS DEPENDING ON VARIETY
- LONGER FOR DAIKON VARIETIES

FLORIDA VARIETIES

- CHERRY BELLE
- SPARKLER
- WHITE ICICLE.
- CHAMPION
- FOR HIGH PRODUCTION, CHOOSE DAIKON OR CHINESE RADISH VARIETIES.

MAINTENANCE & NOTES

- SOIL & FERTILIZER: RADISHES GROW BEST IN LOOSE, PH-NEUTRAL SOIL. HOWEVER THEY ARE GENERALLY FORGIVING OF A WIDE RANGE OF SOIL.
- THINNING & WEEDING: ONCE SEEDLINGS APPEAR, THIN RADISHES TO APPROPRIATE SPACING TO PREVENT CROWDING
- IRRIGATION: RADISHES GROW BEST WHEN EVENLY WATERED, ENSURING THE SOIL IS REGULARLY MOIST, BUT NOT SOAKING WET. DRY SOIL CONDITIONS WILL CAUSE A MORE HARSH BITTER FLAVOR
- PEST & DISEASE: RADISHES ARE VULNERABLE TO MANY OF THE SAME PESTS AND DISEASES AS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CABBAGE FAMILY. WHITEFLIES, APHIDS, MITES, CATERPILLARS, NEMATODES, AND ROOT ROT OCCUR OCCASIONALLY. CHECK FOR PESTS EACH TIME YOU WATER. REMOVE INFESTED LEAVES AND PLANTS, AND YOU'LL STAY AHEAD OF THESE EASILY.

HARVESTING & TASTING

- HARVEST RADISHES ON THE YOUNGER SIDE, 20-30 DAYS AFTER SOWING. LARGER VARIETIES MAY TAKE LONGER TO DEVELOP.
- DAIKON RADISHES SHOULD BE HARVESTED AFTER 7 WEEKS IN SPRING OR AFTER 10 WEEKS IN FALL. DON'T LEAVE RADISHES LONGER IN THE GROUND, THEY WILL OVER-RIPEN AND BECOME TOUGH AND BITTER.
- ROOTS START TO LIFT OUT OF THE GROUND AS THEY DEVELOP. ONCE YOU CAN SEE THE ROOTS, HARVEST ONE TO CHECK IF THE DESIRED SIZE HAS BEEN REACHED. IF YES, HARVEST THE REST OF THE CROP.
- PULL RADISHES OUT OF THE GROUND WHOLE OR LOOSEN THE SOIL AROUND THEM FIRST WITH A DIGGING FORK.
- FUN CLASSROOM TASTING TIPS: ENJOY IN SALADS, EAT RAW ALONGSIDE A FUN DIP, OR MAKE PESTO WITH RADISH TOP LEAVES!

KALE



WHY WE LOVE KALE!

- RICH IN VITAMINS AND MINERALS, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS A "SUPERFOOD"
- LEAVES CAN BE HARVESTED AS NEEDED, PROVIDING A STEADY SUPPLY OF GREENS.
- VERSATILE CULINARY USES - USE IN SOUPS, LASAGNA, EGGS, STIR FRIES, SAUTES, AND KALE CHIPS, OR ADD RAW TO SMOOTHIES, SALADS, PESTOS

WHEN TO PLANT IN FLORIDA

KALE CAN BE GROWN DURING THE WINTER MONTHS IN FLORIDA. IN A SUNNY SPOT AND WATERED REGULARLY.

- NORTH: AUG-FEB
- CENTRAL: SEP-FEB
- SOUTH: SEP-FEB

SEED OR TRANSPLANT

- EASILY SURVIVES TRANSPLANTING
- KALE CAN BE STARTED FROM SEED ANYTIME FROM SEPTEMBER THROUGH JANUARY OR FEBRUARY.

PLANT SPACING

- DEPTH: ¼ - ½ INCH DEEP
- ROWS: 18 INCHES APART (1.5 FEET)
- PLANTS: 8-12 INCHES APART (1FOOT)

GARDEN DESIGN

- CONTAINERS - YES
- IN GROUND - YES
- RAISED BED - YES
- HYDROPONIC - NO

DAYS TO HARVEST

- 50-70
- 70-80 DAYS FROM SEED
- 55 DAYS WHEN STARTING WITH TRANSPLANTS

FLORIDA VARIETIES

- VATES DWARF BLUE CURLED
- TUSCAN (LACINATO)
- WINTERBOR
- REDBOR

** ORNAMENTAL TYPES ARE EDIBLE, BUT NOT VERY TASTY.

MAINTENANCE & NOTES

- SOIL & FERTILIZER: KALE IS NOT A PARTICULAR PLANT AND THRIVES IN A WIDE RANGE OF SOILS.
- IRRIGATION: WATER REGULARLY AS LEAVES THAT DRY OUT WILL BECOME TOUGH AND BITTER
- PEST & DISEASE CONCERNS AND TREATMENTS: TO ENSURE SUCCESS, PICK FLORIDA-FRIENDLY VARIETIES, SCOUT REGULARLY, AND WASH INSECT PESTS OFF OF LEAVES WITH A STEADY STREAM OF WATER, OR REMOVE INFESTATED LEAVES AND PLANTS.

HARVESTING & TASTING

- WHEN LEAVES ARE PICKED INDIVIDUALLY AS THEY BECOME READY, KALE CAN BE ENJOYED THROUGH SPRING AS A "CUT-AND-COME-AGAIN" VEGGIE.
- HARVEST LOWER LEAVES, BUT NO MORE THAN 1/3 OF THE PLANT AT ONE TIME.
- FUN CLASSROOM TASTING TIPS: ENJOY IN PESTOS, SMOOTHIES, SALADS, PASTA, SOUP, EGGS, SAUTE, OR BAKE INTO KALE CHIPS!

COLLARD



WHY WE LOVE COLLARDS!

- COLLARDS ARE AN EASY TO GROW, NUTRITIOUS MEMBER OF THE CABBAGE FAMILY
- LARGE COLLARD LEAVES ARE GREAT FUN FOR CHILDREN TO SEE GROWING!

WHEN TO PLANT IN FLORIDA

IN FLORIDA, COLLARDS CAN BE GROWN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, THRIVING OVER A WIDE RANGE OF GROWING CONDITIONS AS THEY ARE BOTH COLD AND HEAT TOLERANT. COLLARDS GROW BEST DURING COOLER MONTHS OF THE YEAR, HOWEVER, AND PRODUCE THEIR BEST QUALITY WHEN PLANTED IN THE FALL AND HARVESTED IN EARLY WINTER.

- NORTH: AUG-FEB
- CENTRAL: SEP-FEB
- SOUTH: SEP-JAN

SEED OR TRANSPLANT

- EASILY SURVIVES TRANSPLANTING
- KALE CAN BE STARTED FROM SEED ANYTIME FROM SEPTEMBER THROUGH JANUARY OR FEBRUARY.

PLANT SPACING

- DEPTH: $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ INCH DEEP
- ROWS: 24-36 INCHES APART (2-3 FEET)
- PLANTS: 6-18 INCHES APART (.5-1.5 FEET)

GARDEN DESIGN

- CONTAINERS - YES
- IN GROUND - YES
- RAISED BED - YES
- HYDROPONIC - YES

DAYS TO HARVEST

- 60-70
- GREENS ARE READY FOR USE 2 MONTHS AFTER PLANTING.

FLORIDA VARIETIES

- GEORGIA
- GEORGIA SOUTHERN
- TOP BUNCH
- VATES

MAINTENANCE & NOTES

- SOIL & FERTILIZER: RESPONDS WELL TO FERTILE SOIL CONDITIONS, AND NITROGEN FERTILIZER. LIBERAL AMOUNTS OF COMPOSTED PLANT OR ANIMAL MANURE WORKED INTO EACH ROW 2 OR 3 WEEKS BEFORE PLANTING WILL GREATLY BENEFIT COLLARDS.
- IRRIGATION: DURING FLORIDA'S SUMMER RAINY MONTHS, AVOID EXCESS WATERING AS THE GROWING POINT OF THE PLANT WILL BECOME MUSHY AND THE PLANT WILL DIE
- PEST & DISEASE: SOME COLLARD PESTS INCLUDE THE CABBAGE LOOPER THAT CHEWS LARGE AND SMALL HOLES IN THE LEAVES. OTHER CATERPILLARS SUCH AS THE IMPORTED CABBAGE WORM, DAMP-OFF DISEASE AND NEMATODE PROBLEMS ARE BEST CONTROLLED BY SOIL FUMIGATION PRIOR TO PLANTING

HARVESTING & TASTING

- HARVEST LOWER LEAVES; NEVER REMOVE MORE THAN 1/3 OF THE PLANT AT ONE TIME.
- FUN CLASSROOM TASTING TIPS: ENJOY IN PESTOS, USE COLLARD GREENS AS A FUN WRAP INSTEAD OF A TORTILLA, OR SAUTE COLLARD GREENS IN YOUR FAVORITE

LETTUCE



WHY WE LOVE LETTUCE!

- LETTUCE COMES IN MANY FUN VARIETIES OF COLORS AND LEAF SHAPES
- LETTUCE PAIRS DELICIOUSLY WITH ALMOST ANYTHING IN A SALAD.
- GREAT FOR CLASSROOM TASTINGS, REQUIRING MINIMAL EQUIPMENT

WHEN TO PLANT IN FLORIDA

LETTUCE IS A COOL SEASON VEGETABLE AND GROWS BEST IN FLORIDA WHEN PLANTED FROM SEPTEMBER THROUGH MARCH. WARM TEMPERATURES CAN CAUSE BOLTING AND BITTERNESS.

- NORTH: JAN-FEB; SEP-OCT
- CENTRAL: SEP-FEB
- SOUTH: SEP-FEB

SEED OR TRANSPLANT

- EASILY SURVIVES TRANSPLANTING
- YOU CAN SOW LETTUCE SEEDS DIRECTLY IN THE GARDEN, OR USE TRANSPLANTS. IF PLANTING LATE IN THE GROWING SEASON IN FLORIDA, BEGIN WITH LETTUCE PLANTS INSTEAD OF SEEDS.

PLANT SPACING

- DEPTH: ¼ INCH DEEP * SOW SHALLOWLY BECAUSE SEEDS NEED LIGHT TO GERMINATE.
- ROWS: 18 INCHES APART (1.5 FEET)
- PLANTS: 8-12 INCHES INCH APART (1 FOOT)

GARDEN DESIGN

- CONTAINERS - YES
- IN GROUND - YES
- RAISED BED - YES
- HYDROPONIC - YES

DAYS TO HARVEST

- 60-80

FLORIDA VARIETIES

- **LOOSE LEAF:** SIMPSON TYPES, SALAD BOWL, RED SAILS, NEW RED FIRE, OAK LEAF, ROYAL OAK
- **ROMAINE:** PARRIS ISLAND COS, OUTREDEGEOUS
- **CRISP HEAD:** GREAT LAKES
- **BUTTERHEAD:** ERMOSA, BIBB, TOM THUMB, BUTTERCRUNCH

MAINTENANCE & NOTES

- **SOIL & FERTILIZER:** LETTUCE GROWS BEST IN SOIL WELL SUPPLIED WITH NITROGEN AND NUTRIENTS. 3-6 WEEKS BEFORE PLANTING, INCORPORATE COMPOSTED COW MANURE OR SOIL AMMENDMENTS, ALLOWING A FEW WEEKS FOR PH LEVELS TO STABILIZE BEFORE PLANTING. A FEW WEEKS AFTER GERMINATION, ADD MORE COMPOST TO THE SOIL.
- **THINNING & WEEDING:** ONCE SEEDLINGS REACH 3 INCHES IN HEIGHT, THIN TO APPROPRIATE SPACING TO PREVENT CROWDING. REMOVE WEEDS IMMEDIATELY TO AVOID COMPETITION AND SHELTERING OF PESTS AND DISEASES.
- **IRRIGATION:** WATER LETTUCE PLANTS THOROUGHLY. WATER UNTIL THE SOIL IS MOIST 6 INCHES BELOW THE SURFACE. CONSISTENT MOISTURE LEVELS ARE CRITICAL FOR LETTUCE HEAD DEVELOPMENT. PRIOR TO SEED GERMINATION, SPRINKLERS ARE AN EFFECTIVE IRRIGATION METHOD. AFTER GERMINATION, DRIP IRRIGATION USES LESS WATER.
- **PEST & DISEASE:** MANY INSECTS CAN BE SERIOUS PESTS OF LETTUCE HOWEVER MOST GARDENERS CAN GROW LETTUCE SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT SPRAYING. TO DISCOURAGE MOISTURE-RELATED DISEASE AND SOME PESTS, WATER IN THE MORNING SO PLANTS CAN DRY BEFORE NIGHTTIME. IF SLUGS ARE PREVALENT IN YOUR REGION AVOID MULCHING WITH STRAW.

HARVESTING & TASTING

- HARVESTING YOUNG LETTUCE LEAVES AS SOON AS THEY ARE READY ALLOWS LESS TIME FOR PESTS AND DISEASES TO ATTACK.
- TO GATHER MULTIPLE HARVESTS FROM EACH LETTUCE PLANT THROUGHOUT THE SEASON, HARVEST THE OUTER LAYER OF LEAVES EVERY FEW WEEKS. THIS WILL ALLOW THE CENTER LEAVES TO CONTINUE GROWING AND DEVELOP AS A NEW LAYER OF OUTER LEAVES FOR HARVESTING IN A FEW WEEKS. HARVEST INDIVIDUAL LEAVES BY BREAKING THEM OFF WITH YOUR HANDS OR CUTTING WITH SCISSORS 1 INCH AWAY FROM THE BASE. HARVEST OUTER LEAVES STARTING FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE PLANT, AND MOVING UP OVER TIME. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN CUT THE WHOLE PLANT AT BASE, HOWEVER, IT WILL NOT REGROW
- FUN CLASSROOM TASTING TIPS: ENJOY A DELICIOUS SALAD WITH A DRESSING AND ANY OTHER FRUITS, VEGETABLES, HERBS, AND PROTEIN OF CHOICE!

BEAN



WHY WE LOVE BEANS!

- DUE TO THEIR LARGE SIZE, BEAN SEEDS ARE GREAT FOR PLANTING WITH KIDS!
- BEANS ARE EASY TO GROW, EVEN IN POOR SOIL
- BEANS ARE AMONG THE EASIEST SEEDS TO SAVE FOR REPLANTING NEXT SEASON.

WHEN TO PLANT IN FLORIDA

IN FLORIDA, BEANS ARE A WARM SEASON CROP AND CAN BE PLANTED TWICE A YEAR.

- NORTH: MAR-APR; AUG-SEP
- CENTRAL: FEB-APR; AUG-SEP
- SOUTH: SEP-APR

SEED OR TRANSPLANT

- DIRECT SEED
- BECAUSE BEAN PLANTS HAVE WEAK ROOT SYSTEMS, SOW YOUR POLE BEAN SEED DIRECTLY INTO YOUR GARDEN. TRANSPLANTING THEM COULD DAMAGE THEIR ROOTS.

PLANT SPACING

- DEPTH: 1- 1½ INCHES DEEP
- PLANT SPACING - BUSH BEANS = 2-4 INCHES
- PLANT SPACING - POLE BEANS = 3-5 INCHES
- ROW SPACING - BUSH = 18 INCHES
- ROW SPACING - POLE = 36 INCHES

GARDEN DESIGN

- CONTAINERS - YES
- IN GROUND - YES
- RAISED BED - YES
- HYDROPONIC - NO

DAYS TO HARVEST

- BUSH BEANS:
45-60
- POLE BEANS:
50-70

FLORIDA VARIETIES

- **BUSH SNAP:** BUSH BLUE LAKE, CONTENDER, ROMA II, PROVIDER, CHEROKEE WAX
- **BUSH SHELL:** HORTICULTURAL, PINTO, RED KIDNEY, BLACK BEAN, NAVY, CARBANZO
- **BEANS, POLE :** MCCASLAN, KENTUCKY WONDER, BLUE LAKE

MAINTENANCE & NOTES

- SOIL & FERTILIZER: FERTILIZE AT 1/2 THE RATE USED FOR OTHER VEGETABLES; TOO MUCH NITROGEN LIMITS PRODUCTION. AVOID APPLYING EXCESSIVE NITROGEN; THIS WILL INCREASE FOLIAGE BUT DECREASE YIELDS.
- THINNING & WEEDING: BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL NOT TO DISTURB THE SOIL DEEPLY WHEN YOU WEED.
- IRRIGATION: AS WITH ALL NEW PLANTS, IRRIGATION IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO BEAN SEEDS. KEEP THE SOIL CONSISTENTLY MOIST UNTIL YOUR SEEDS SPROUT. AFTER THEY HAVE A SET OF TRUE LEAVES, WATER WHENEVER YOU NOTICE THE SOIL SURFACE HAS DRIED OUT.
- PEST & DISEASE: PLANT RUST RESISTANT VARIETIES FOR BUSH AND POLE
- NOTES: POLE BEANS REQUIRE TRELLISING TO SUPPORT VINES. BECAUSE BEAN PLANTS HAVE WEAK ROOT SYSTEMS, INSTALL THE TRELLIS OR SUPPORT STRUCTURE BEFORE YOU PLANT. BUSH BEANS MATURE EARLY AND DO NOT NEED STAKING.

HARVESTING & TASTING

- HARVEST MATURE BEANS REGULARLY TO KEEP YOUR PLANTS PRODUCING
- HOLD THE VINE WITH ONE HAND, WHILE SNIPPING ENTIRE POD OFF THE VINE WITH YOUR OTHER HAND
- FUN CLASSROOM TASTING TIPS: ENJOY IN SALAD, WRAP, SAUTE, PASTA DISH, OR EAT BY ITSELF OR WITH A DELICIOUS DIP!

TOMATO



WHY WE LOVE TOMATOS!

- TOMATO PLANTS ADD HEIGHT AND BEAUTY TO A GARDEN LANDSCAPE
- TOMATOES COME IN MANY VARIETIES OF SHAPES, COLORS, AND FLAVORS DELICIOUS TO EAT ALL BY THEMSELVES, OR ADDED TO SALSAS, SALAD, SANDWICHES, WRAPS, PASTA, EGGS, STIR FRY

WHEN TO PLANT IN FLORIDA

TOMATOES ARE A WARM-WEATHER CROP, AVOID PLANTING IN THE GROUND UNTIL DANGER OF FROST HAS PASSED.

- NORTH: FEB-APR; JUL-AUG
- CENTRAL: JAN-FEB; AUG-SEP
- SOUTH: AUG-FEB

SEED OR TRANSPLANT

- EASILY SURVIVES TRANSPLANTING
- TOMATOES CAN BE DIRECT SEEDED IN THE GARDEN, OR TRANSPLANTED AS SEEDLINGS

PLANT SPACING

- DEPTH: $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ INCH DEEP
- ROWS: 48 INCHES APART (4 FEET)
- PLANTS: 18-32 INCHES INCH APART (1.5- 2+ FEET)

GARDEN DESIGN

- CONTAINERS - YES
- IN GROUND - YES
- RAISED BED - YES
- HYDROPONIC - YES

DAYS TO HARVEST

- 60-100
- TOMATOES GENERALLY TAKE 2-3 MONTHS OR LONGER, DEPENDING ON VARIETY

FLORIDA VARIETIES

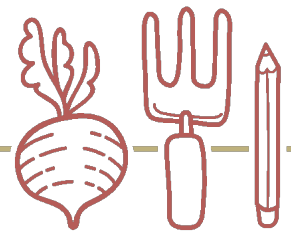
- **LARGE FRUIT:** CELEBRITY, HEAT WAVE II, BETTER BOY, BEEFMASTER, BHN444-SOUTHERN STAR, AMELIA, BHN 640, TASTILEE
- **SMALL FRUIT:** SWEET 100, JULIET, RED GRAPE, SUN GOLD, SUGAR SNACK, SWEET BABY GIRL
- **HEIRLOOM:** GREEN ZEBRA, CHEROKEE PURPLE, EVA PURPLE BALL, BRANDYWINE, MORTGAGE LIFTER, DELICIOUS

MAINTENANCE

- **SOIL & FERTILIZER:** PLANT TOMATOES INTO SOIL THAT HAS BEEN AMENDED WITH FERTILIZER
- **THINNING & WEEDING:** FOR INDETERMINATE VARIETIES, REMOVE THE FIRST FEW SIDE BRANCHES AS THEY APPEAR, A PROCESS KNOWN AS "SUCKERING." LEAVE TWO TO THREE MAIN STEMS.
- **IRRIGATION:** TOMATOES WILL NEED WATERING WITH ABOUT ONE TO TWO INCHES OF WATER PER WEEK, WITH HEAVY SOAKINGS ONCE A WEEK BEING PREFERRED TO SEVERAL LIGHTER SPRINKLINGS WITH THE HOSE.
- **PEST & DISEASE:** SERIOUS PROBLEMS INCLUDE BLOSSOM-END ROT, WILTS, WHITEFLY, AND LEAFMINERS. THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT SMALL PROBLEMS FROM BECOMING MAJOR ISSUES IS TO CHECK YOUR PLANTS REGULARLY FOR EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF INSECT INFESTATION AND DISEASES AND REMOVE PESTS AND INFESTED PLANT PARTS.
- **NOTES:** STAKE YOUR TOMATO PLANTS TO KEEP THE FRUIT OFF THE GROUND AND HELP CONSERVE SPACE. AS THE PLANTS GROW, TIE THEM TO THE STAKES AT A FEW DIFFERENT HEIGHTS JUST BELOW FRUIT CLUSTERS. YOU CAN ALSO USE TOMATO CAGES TO TRELLIS YOUR PLANTS.

HARVESTING & TASTING

- PICK TOMATOES AT FIRST BLUSH TO PREVENT PESTS EATING THEM BEFORE YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO PICK THEM.
- TOMATOES STOP PRODUCING FRUIT WHEN TEMPERATURES ARE ABOUT 85°F. ONCE PRODUCTION DECLINES, REMOVE TOMATO PLANTS FROM GARDEN TO AVOID PLANTS BECOME DISEASED DURING SUMMER MONTHS
- **FUN CLASSROOM TASTING TIPS:** ENJOY IN SALSA, SALAD, PIZZA, TOMATO SOUP, LASAGNA, MAKE A HOMEMADE PASTA SAUCE, OR EAT ALL BY ITSELF OR PAIRED WITH OLIVE OIL, SEASONING, OR A DIP!



Select Your Garden Crops

Use the Kid-Approved Crops profiles above and the [UF/IFAS gardening calendar resources](#) to select the crops you would like to plant in your garden this season. Consider the timing of planting and harvest, your region, and the capacity you have for crop management.

If you are newer to gardening, it is best to start with a few garden crops, and gradually add more each season as you gain experience. There is so much to learn about each different plant species, that selecting 1-3 types of crops can provide a wealth of learning opportunities! When selecting crops, consider the space available in the garden. Choose fewer crops for a smaller space or if the crops you would like to grow are very big. Below list the crops you wish to plant for the season.

Crop 1

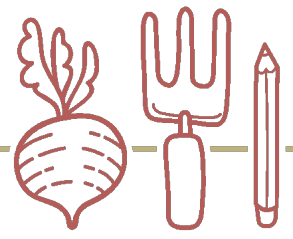
Crop 2

Crop 3

Crop 4

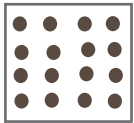
Crop 5

Crop 6

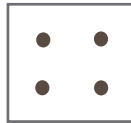


Map Your Garden

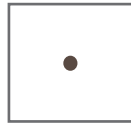
Use the sample raised bed grid below to draw the plant spacing for your selected crop(s). The squares with dots demonstrate the number of plants per square foot for each of the five featured crops when using the square foot gardening method. Draw your selected plant spacing in the 4 ft. by 8 ft. raised bed grids to create a blueprint for your garden!



Radish



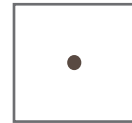
Leaf
Lettuce



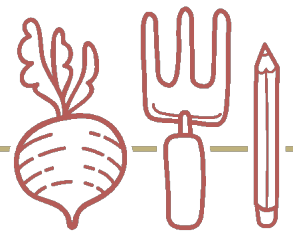
Cherry
Tomato



Green Bean
(bush)



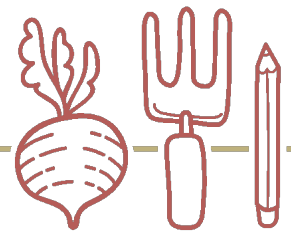
Kale/
Collards



Draw Your Own Garden

If square grids are not your style or if you have a more complex school garden design, use this page to create a free form drawing of your garden site with appropriate proposed plant spacing.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a free-form drawing of a garden site.



Schedule Your Planting and Harvest Dates

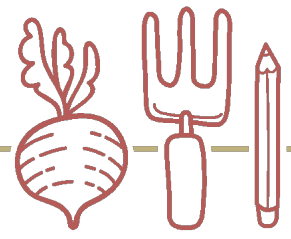
Scheduling both your expected planting and harvest dates early in your planning process helps ensure you will not miss out on harvesting your garden crops.

To determine planting and harvest dates, you will need to know the days to maturity for each of your selected garden crops. This refers to the number of days a crop requires to mature and become ready for harvest after being planted from seed. This information can be found on seed packets, plant labels, or researched online. The Kid-Approved Crop profiles above, [UF/IFAS Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide](#), and the [FAITC Rainbow of Nutrition Planting Guide](#) also include the days to maturity.

***Note:** Although using days to maturity allows us to calculate expected harvest dates, conditions can vary, and your crop may become ready slightly earlier or later than expected. You can use days to maturity to estimate timing; however, you will also need to look for visual cues to identify when your garden crops are ready to be harvested.

After writing your garden crop(s) in the table below and referencing their days to maturity, use this information to calculate your dates. If hosting a December harvest party is your priority, indicate your preferred date in that column then count backwards using the days to maturity to calculate the appropriate planting date. If the planting date is more important, count forward to estimate the harvest date and mark your calendar so you know when to watch for maturing veggies.

Garden Crop	Direct Seed or Transplant	Planting Date	Days to Maturity	Harvest Date <i>(plus optional taste test date)</i>



Maintain Your Garden

After planting, careful garden maintenance is necessary for your crops to reach maturity. Use the below checklist for weekly surveys of the garden to assess its overall status and prioritize the tasks needed to ensure crop vitality. You can do this yourself and/or delegate this task to volunteers with horticultural knowledge, like Master Gardener Volunteers with the UF/IFAS Extension county office.

Maintenance activities are also a great way for students to engage with the garden. Print the pages below, attach them to clipboards, and give them to students to conduct structured garden observations. Then delegate the tasks they identify to complete among the group.

Garden Maintenance Observations

Name: _____

Date: _____

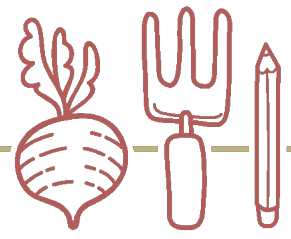
Please observe the garden space to assess the garden's overall status and identify management needs.

Watering/irrigation

Weeds

Mulch application

Pests and disease



Fertility and nutrient needs

Plant spacing and support (e.g., thinning, pruning, staking, trellising)

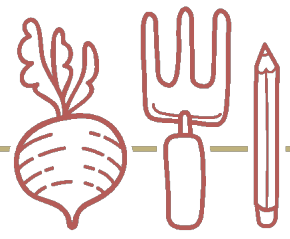
Harvest readiness

Seasonal transition: remove spent plants and plant new crops

Other timely considerations

Does the garden have a compost pile, fruit trees, or other components? If so, please note any comments or recommendations about their maintenance here.

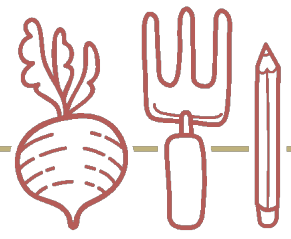
What improvements or changes have been made since your last garden observation session?



Submit images of your observations.

- Younger students: Draw an observation made in the garden while completing this worksheet below.
- Older students and adult volunteers: Take photos and upload them to a shared online location.

Photo Tip: Your or assigned students can take a picture once a week of each garden crop to track the progress of growth over the season. You can create a colorful poster for the classroom, as shown in this example from [The Great Garden Detective Adventure](#), or post your pictures each week on social media, etc. Have fun being creative!



Harvest Your Garden Crops

Harvesting Tips

Pay attention to Days to Maturity.

Remember, you can use days to maturity to anticipate the date your crops should be ready to harvest, however, due to the variability in nature, it is possible your crop may become ready slightly earlier or later than expected. Look for visual cues to identify when your garden crops are ready to be harvested.

When it looks recognizable, pick it!

If your garden plants are at a stage where the crop looks like the vegetable you are familiar with eating or seeing at the store, go ahead and harvest it.

Harvest promptly to reduce pest damage.

The longer your plants stay in the garden, the longer time period other organisms have an opportunity to eat or interact with your crops before you do.

Discard any diseased or insect damaged produce or plant material you harvest.

This will help prevent the other plants from becoming infected with the disease or exposed infested with the insects. Do not compost diseased plants.

Not sure it's ready? Pick one and give it a taste test!

If you aren't sure whether one of your crops is ready for harvesting, don't be afraid to pick one or two samples of that garden crop to inspect and test whether the rest are ready for harvesting.

For crop specific harvesting instructions, refer to the Kid Approved Crops section for guidance, and these helpful resources for additional details:

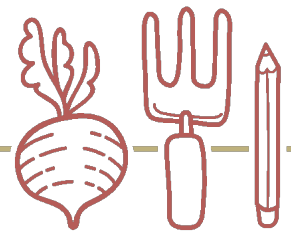
- [UF/IFAS Grow to Learn Guide](#) (pages 21-27 of the Appendix)
- [Clemson Cooperative Extension Harvesting Guide](#)
- [Vegetable Planting and Harvest Tips from The Growing Classroom](#)
- [Collective School Garden Network](#)

Food Safety Best Practices

Ensuring food safety is critical when planting, maintaining, and harvesting from the garden, especially in school settings.

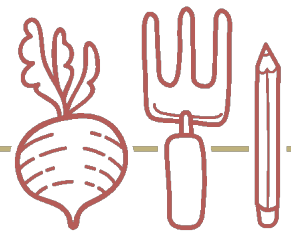
General food safety practices when harvesting from the garden include the following:

- Wash hands before and after harvesting with warm water and soap for 30 seconds.



- Before and during harvest, use clean and sanitized tools, gloves, harvest containers, and work surfaces.
- To sanitize tools and containers, use either pure white vinegar or diluted bleach (1 teaspoon in 4 cups of water) in a spray bottle.
- Be aware of what hands and tools have touched before moving to another task that involves edible plants, especially picking, and wash hands or sanitize tools as appropriate between tasks.

Additional information on harvesting safely from the garden can be found in USDA's ["Food Safety Tips for School Gardens"](#) which provides safety guidance on growing and harvesting produce, as well as on page 55 of the [UF/IFAS Grow to Learn Guide](#).



Celebrate with a Tasting Event!

Invite!

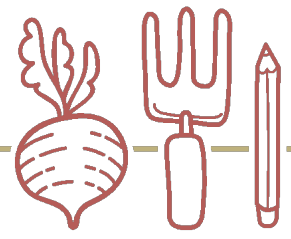
Invite a farmer, chef, parents, caregivers, or a local community group to attend and celebrate the garden season, and the garden harvest! Create your guest list below.

Educate!

A tasting event is a great way to continue garden-based learning. Students can identify the part of the plant they are eating, creatively describe their sensory experience, and even prepare a recipe from a culture or time period of study. Think about how to connect your lessons to the tasting event.

Topic	Featured Crop	Lesson & Resource Provider	Teaching Location & Notes
<i>Ex. Plant families; nutrition</i>	<i>Ex. Kale</i>	<i>Ex. A Rainbow of Nutrition Lesson from FAITC</i>	<i>Ex. Indoor; Use kale from school garden and supplement other vegetables with photos or models</i>

If your event involves the wider school community or other visitors, you can let the students become the teachers! Plan for students to share presentations (pictures, stories, and reports) about what they



learned. Students can provide tours of the garden for parents, community, and media visitors. Brainstorm what to include in your “student showcase” below.

Taste!

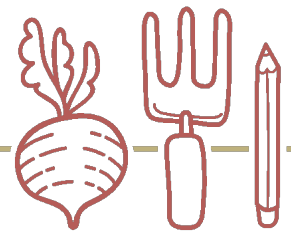
Prepare a recipe, or stations of freshly harvested fruits and vegetables from the garden for tasting. Remember to practice food safety protocols!

Encourage students to be a “Good Taster” when trying new foods. Guide them to use positive, descriptive language when sharing their opinions. Praise students for trying the food even if they didn’t like it. If a student does not like what they tasted, they can say, “No, thank you” or “I will try it again someday.” Just because they didn’t like the food, they don’t need to yuck someone else’s yum!³

Gather student feedback on what they tasted. One easy way to do this is to create a poster like the sample chart shown below and giving each student a sticker to place on the poster to indicate whether they “Tried it,” “Liked it,” or “Loved it.” For more tasting tips and guidance for facilitating an event, refer to the [Florida Crunch Event Toolkit](#).

TRIED IT	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
LIKED IT	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
LOVED IT	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

³ UF/IFAS Extension Family Nutrition Program. (n.d.). *Florida Crunch Event Toolkit*.



Share!

Plan to have a designated photographer, or plan to take one or two group pictures. Discover more ideas for [celebrating your school garden here](#).

Recipes

When celebrating the garden harvest with a tasting event, garden crops can be featured in a recipe along with store-bought foods to complete the recipe ingredients, or the garden crops can be tasted and celebrated on their own without being incorporated into a recipe. Below are some ideas.

Pesto Party!

Pesto is a versatile option to include many green garden crops in a tasting recipe, and requires only a blender for equipment. Students can help wash and add items to the blender. Below are some ideas for garden crops which can be incorporated into pesto:

- Herbs: parsley, cilantro, basil
- Greens: spinach, kale
- Veggie Tops: beet tops, radish tops, carrot tops

Salad Party!

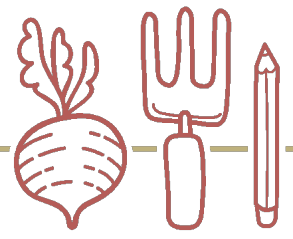
Salad is another versatile dish and can incorporate many garden vegetable ingredients in the salad, and herbs can be blended into a dressing, or used as garnish. Almost any fruit or vegetable can be combined into your salad and will taste delicious with a great dressing!

- Herbs: any herbs can be chopped into a salad, or used to make dressing
- Greens: lettuce, arugula, baby greens
- Veggies: beans, carrots, beets, radishes, tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, potatoes, and more!

Salsa Party!

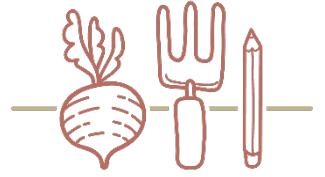
Many garden vegetable ingredients can be incorporated into a salsa. Make sure to add onions, garlic, some crunchy fruits and or vegetables, some citrus, and salt, and be creative!

- Herbs: cilantro, chives, onions, garlic
- Veggies: peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes
- Fruits: mango, strawberry, peach
- Citrus: lemon, lime, orange



Create your own recipe card to plan how to prepare and serve your featured crop(s)!

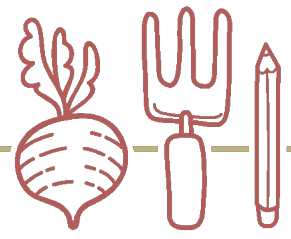
Recipe for _____



Garden Crop

Directions

Ingredients



Reflect on the Growing Season

Taking time to stop and reflect helps us learn from our actions and integrate insights into future plans⁴. Set aside time quarterly or annually to consider these questions in relation to your school garden program.

Act (what happened?)

What goals did you set for your school garden program?

What significant things happened in your school garden program this year?

Who was involved and what did they do?

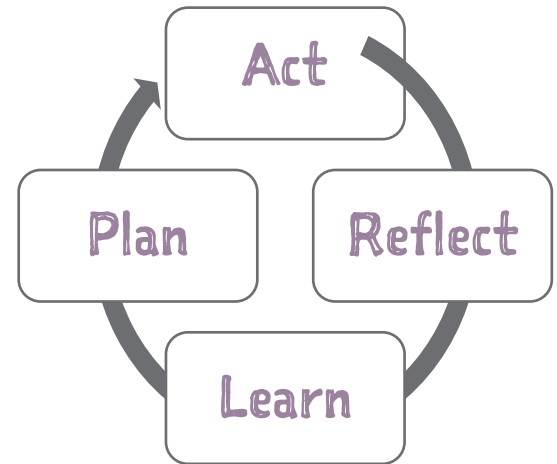
Reflect (how did it go?)

What went well? What goals were achieved?

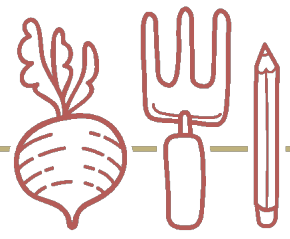
What didn't go well? What goals were hard to achieve?

What were the challenges?

What was your approach to overcome the challenge(s)? What helped and what hindered?



⁴Adapted from Kemp, E. (2019, July 18). *The Action Learning Cycle: How to learn consciously by taking action*. Mobenzi Blog. <https://blog.mobenzi.com/2019/07/18/the-action-learning-cycle-how-to-learn-consciously-by-taking-action/>



Learn (what are the lessons learned?)

What did you learn and what new insights did you gain?

What would you have done differently?

What guidance do you need for the future?

Plan (what's next?)

What does this mean for your school garden program?

What steps will you use to build these new insights into your practices?

What are you going to do differently?

Take the Next Action!

Use this document as a starting point for setting your goals and planning for the next garden season. Incorporate lessons learned as you develop your future plan. When you are ready to put your vision and goals on paper, here are some [resources](#) to use for next season.