

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

Active Gardeners

Source: Vancouver School Board 2007. Turning the earth. A month-by month guide to your school garden

Primaries	
<p>Exploring Seeds <i>How can we compare seeds?</i></p> <p>Plants for Eating <i>What do you see? What do you eat?</i></p> <p>Growing Plants <i>What do plants need to grow?</i></p> <p>Tops, Tails, and Bulbs <i>Do all plants grow from seeds?</i></p> <p>How does your garden grow? <i>What is the life cycle of a plant?</i></p> <p>Weeds! Weeds! <i>What is a weed?</i></p> <p>Plants and Light <i>Why is high important?</i></p> <p>Green in the Garden <i>How many green colours do you see in the garden?</i></p>	<p>Making Observations <i>What did I see in the garden today?</i></p> <p>Perspective <i>Bending down to the level of the fragrant earth</i></p> <p>Outside - Inside <i>What will I find inside the plant?</i></p> <p>Parts of a Plant <i>What is the purpose of each plant part?</i></p> <p>Parts of a Flower <i>What is the function of a flower?</i></p> <p>Plants that We Eat <i>What plants do we eat?</i></p> <p>Lifecycle of a Plant <i>What are the stages of growth of annuals, biennials and perennials?</i></p>

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Children's Garden Themes

Modified from: Learning in the garden guide. <http://www.schoolgardenwizard.org>

ABC Garden

- Have students plant an alphabet garden that includes one plant whose name begins with each letter of the alphabet. They make and decorate alphabet letters to put in the garden.

Canadian History Garden

- Create a garden using plants that were once used for cloth or dyes
- Using plants from the garden, learn how to dye cloth
- Learn about plants that are native to Canada or BC
- Plant a garden using heirloom vegetables
- Plant a Kitchen Garden with heirloom vegetables, herbs, and flowers used by settlers for food, medicine, fragrance, and economic value

Art Garden

- Grow plants that can be used for art projects (i.e., dried flowers, flowers for pressing, interesting seed pods, and gourds)
- Sell items made with garden products to raise money for the next garden season
- Create a garden mosaic of student designs on a garden wall
- Have students take sketchbooks out in the garden and draw plants and bug life

Asian-Canadian Garden

- Create a garden using plants that are native to or used frequently in Asia
- Learn to cook typical Asian foods and have the students taste the products
- Have students write and share Haiku poems to explore Japan
- Using a map or globe have students research what countries make up Asia and connect geography to vegetation, culture, and food
- As an indoor winter project, have students create miniature bonsai or ikebana flower arrangements and research the symbolism in each

Butterfly Garden

- Have students research plants that attract butterflies
- Discuss the butterfly life cycle and the role of pollinators
- Read "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle (ISBN#0399226907)
- Raise and observe the development of butterflies
- Create butterfly journals to record development of classroom butterflies
- Check out the Monarch Butterflies in the Pacific Northwest

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Intermediates	
<p>Habitat, Niche and Ecosystem in the School Garden <i>What is the relationship between an organism and its environment?</i></p>	<p>Greening your Neighbourhood <i>How can we encourage more green space in our neighbourhood?</i></p>
<p>Observing in the Garden <i>What can I observe in the school garden?</i></p>	<p>Small Urban Garden <i>What are the advantages of gardening in the neighbourhood?</i></p>
<p>Observing Organisms <i>How can I find answers to my questions by observing in the garden?</i></p>	<p>Beginning to Plan <i>How do we make our decisions?</i></p>
<p>Observing at a Snail's Pace <i>What do I know about snails?</i></p>	<p>A Visit by a Landscape Architect? <i>How can an expert help us?</i></p>
<p>Introduction to a Snail <i>What kind of organism is a snail?</i></p>	<p>Documenting my Garden Site? <i>What is the best site to develop?</i></p>
<p>How Snails Move <i>How fast is a snail's pace?</i></p>	<p>The Garden Design <i>What are the benefits of my small urban garden?</i></p>
<p>Snails Eating <i>What and how do snails eat?</i></p>	<p>Community Greening, Active Citizenship <i>How green is your neighbourhood?</i></p>
<p>A Snail's World <i>What substances are snails attracted to?</i></p>	<p>Getting Started <i>How should we recognize good urban gardens?</i></p>
<p>Habitat, Niche and Ecosystem <i>What do snails need?</i></p>	<p>Media Promotion: A visit from a Writer <i>What is effective promotional writing?</i></p>
<p>Planning a Report <i>How will I share my knowledge?</i></p>	<p>Writing and Designing <i>How can we design a promotional poster for our project?</i></p>
<p>Choosing a Report Topic <i>What topic am I interested in?</i></p>	

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Tea Garden

- Create a garden using plants commonly used in herbal teas such as chamomile and mint
- Learn about the history of teas
- Learn about different types of tea ceremonies throughout the world
- Make herbal tea
- Have a classroom tea party
- Discuss the differences between herbal tea and black tea
- Read "The Boston Tea Party" by Steven Kroll (ISBN 0-8234-1557-0) and grow an "alternative tea plant" used by settlers

Tops and Bottoms Garden

- Read "Tops and Bottoms" by Janet Stevens (ISBN#0-15-292851-0)
- Have students design a classroom garden using plants in "Tops and Bottoms" (above book about plants that grow above and below ground)

Vegetable Snack Garden

- Encourage children to grow vegetables that they would like to taste, favorites as well as new items
- Incorporate nutrition lessons
- Grow a Pizza Garden that includes plant ingredients on a pizza
- Grow a Salsa Garden that includes plant ingredients found in salsa
- Have students keep a food journal to record what plants they eat
- Build and observe a compost bin in your school garden
- Discuss when to plant/harvest vegetables in the garden
- Learn about plant life cycles
- Read "The Reason for a Flower" by Ruth Heller (ISBN# 0-448-41091-5)

Wildlife Garden

- Install a birdbath or birdfeeder outside a classroom window
- Have your students research plants and flowers that specifically attract hummingbirds, butterflies, or moths
- In winter months, create a variety of bird snacks to hang in the garden as a cold-season snack
- Use plants with seed heads that will naturally provide snacks for birds, such as sunflowers and millet

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

Fungi and Mushrooms

Explore fungi through topics such as edible vs non-edible mushrooms, lifecycle of mushrooms, part identification and dissection, and fungi's environmental impact.

Pollinators, Insects

Learn about the lifecycle and anatomy of honey bees, understand honey bees as an important pollinator, explain how bees support the function of a hive

pH Basics and Acids

Test the pH of household substances and soil samples to understand the importance of acidity to plant growth

BC First Nations

Explore the worlds of BC First Nations and learn how they lived in harmony with Earth for hundreds of years

Characteristics of a Seed

Identify different characteristics of seeds and learn how to relate the characteristics to the method of seed dispersal.

Measuring a Pumpkin

Use pumpkin or other winter squash to explore the difference between qualitative and quantitative data

How to Harvest

Learn what the term ripe, overripe and underripe mean and the benefits of eating food at their peak ripeness. Veggie hunt for produce in different stages of development

Seed Saving

Learn about seed dispersal and how and why we must save seeds from the garden

Dehydrating and Drying

Learn about preserving garden produce by dehydrating and drying

Composting

Learn about biodegradable materials

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

Herb Garden

- Learn how to make herbal teas from plants in the school garden
- Discuss cultural uses of herbs through history
- Discuss the difference between herbal tea and black tea
- Make herbal vinegars, oils, or sachets for Mother's Day gifts
- Dry herbs from the school garden and sell at Pocket Markets to raise money for next year's garden materials
- Harvest fresh herbs to chop and mix with cream cheese to serve for a class or school event

International Garden

- Have students research a particular part of the world or specific country and choose plants that are representative of that region to grow in your garden
- Have students observe, make predictions, and then research to determine how the plants are specially-adapted to their native region
- Find out your student's' cultural background or ethnicities and use plants from students' native countries
- Incorporate student art that reflects a particular country or region of the world
- Use plants that are native to a country or region that you are teaching concurrently in a social studies unit
- Create a "school garden recipe book" with recipes that use items from the school garden and that students have collected from their native countries

Jack and the Beanstalk Garden

- Plant "Giant"-type sunflowers
- Read "Jack and the Beanstalk" in the garden
- Dissect a bean seed.
- Read "Bean and Plant" by Christine Back & Barrie Watts (ISBN 0-382-24014-6)
- Make a bean seed necklace

Kinder Garden

- Plant an ABC Garden using plants that start with each letter of alphabet
- Plant a rainbow garden
- Use plants with large seeds that are easy for little fingers to handle, such as sunflowers, cucumbers, garlic, potatoes and squash or gourds
- Sunflowers and gourds grow very quickly—use them as the basis for a "measuring garden" where young ones learning to measure can practice measuring a couple of times each week

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

Kitchen Garden

- Create an edible garden using plants that the children like to eat or have never tried before
- Create a garden with vegetables for each different plant part—roots, stems, flowers, fruits, and seeds and learn about plant parts using foods we eat
- Grow a salad garden that will be ready to harvest before school is out for the summer
- Plant a fruit and veggie garden featuring “vegetables” such as lettuce, carrots, and spinach as well as “fruits” (anything with a seed) such as squash, cucumbers, or eggplant

Latin-American Garden

- Create a garden using plants that are native to or used frequently in Latin countries, such as tomatoes, tomatillos, cilantro, and peppers
- Learn to cook typical Latin foods and have the students taste the products
- Using a map, show children where the Latin countries are located and tie geography to vegetation, culture, and food

Literacy/Reading Garden

(garden incorporating a cozy nook for a class to sit and read)

- Feature garden story books to be read in the garden each week
- Use plants found in children’s literature such as “Peter Rabbit,” “The Ugly Vegetables,” or “Growing Vegetable Soup”
- Create a reading circle in the garden
- Have students construct nature journals to record garden development and collect seeds and pressed flowers
- Have students write stories or poems about gardening or plants in the school garden
- Read seed packets
- Create a school garden newsletter or blog to share with parents and the community
- Have children write stories about the garden in books that they make
- Use the garden as the context for new vocabulary words or for writing from different perspectives (their own, a bird flying overhead, a beetle on a leaf, a worm underground, etc.)

Math Garden

- Have the children estimate number of seeds they will need in a row based on row length and seed spacing information on seed packet
- Do the Percent Seed Germination Activity in the classroom
- Have children chart seedling growth
- Create a square-foot garden

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

First Nations Garden/Colonial Garden

- Learn about the Three Sisters Garden tradition
- Create a garden using plants that are native to Canada/BC or plants traditionally used by First Nations
- Make corn seed necklaces
- Learn about plants used for dyes
- Discuss medicinal plants; learn how First Nations and settlers used plants as medicine
- Read "Corn is Maize" by Aiki (ISBN 0-06-445026-0) to learn about the history of corn

Nutrition Garden

- Plant fruits and vegetables in different sections that represent a wide range of vitamins (i.e., The Vitamin C section, Vitamin A section, etc.)
- Plant plants of every colour of a healthy diet

Outer Space Garden

- Create a garden using "outer space" sounding plants such as Tomatoes
- Learn more about growing plants in outer space

Peter Rabbit Garden

- Have students read Peter Rabbit and create a garden with plants mentioned in the story (cabbage, carrots, lettuce, etc.)
- Have students create a Peter Rabbit play to act out in their garden
- Create a "nest" space in the garden where students can sit and read Peter Rabbit and other books

Pizza Garden

- Grow a garden that has all the ingredients for pizza: wheat (or ancient grain), tomatoes, peppers, oregano, basil, onions, garlic, etc.
- Learn about the history of pizza
- Grow mushrooms in your classroom
- Make a classroom pizza using produce from your garden
- Use the pizza garden as the basis to launch a study on Old World and New World plants (Did you know that the first "pizzas" were Old World and did not include tomatoes, which are a New World plant?)

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Garden

- Research what plants are native to BC
- Discuss ways in which First Nations and settlers used plants in BC
- Learn about endangered native plants in BC
- Read plant folklore stories
- Hold a "seed-saving" day in the fall; collect seeds and create a seed bank

Salsa Garden

- Create a garden with all of the plants you might find in salsa (tomatoes, cilantro, onions, peppers, and garlic)
- Have students create a salsa recipe to make and share with other classrooms
- Make salsa to share at Pocket Markets

Sensory Garden

- Use plants you can feel, smell, taste and hear
- Do a lesson or activity where students can use their five senses
- Use edible flowers such as pansies, nasturtiums, borages, etc.
- Have students find ways they can use their five senses in the garden and then combine this with activities and lessons in art
- Have a garden concert using musical instruments made out of garden tools, seed pods, branches, gourds, grass blades, or flower pots
- Use plants that will have winter interest such as grasses, shrubs, and trees with colored or exfoliating bark, evergreens, and plants with seed pods that will persist into winter

Shakespeare Garden

(plants from Shakespeare's classics)

- Create a garden using plants mentioned in Shakespeare's works
- Discuss the mythical or medicinal uses of Shakespearean plants
- Research the meaning or significance of plants or flowers found in Shakespeare's work

Storybook Garden

- Have students design a garden with plants found in storybooks
- Incorporate a Jack and the Beanstalk bean teepee
- Incorporate a poppy field as found in Wizard of Oz
- Incorporate a Peter Rabbit section including cabbage, carrots, etc.
- Have students write their own fairy tale
- Have students make and write their own books

Terrariums

Learn the process in the water cycle by observing and creating a miniature terrarium

Making Nests

Learn about different nest types match bird species with nest types, and explain why nests are important to birds.

Vertical Garden

Experiment with climbing peas to observe the plant's use of tendrils. Students could build trellises for the garden

Mason Jar Soil Test

Learn about soil texture by identifying soil particles, understanding soil texture helps to understand soil physical and chemical fertility for crops.

Sensorial Soil

Explore different soil samples, asses and describe soil composition through touch

Soil Permeability

Learn about soil water holding capacity of different soil

Garden Critters

Explore the garden as a habitat and investigate both beneficial and pest species that call the garden home

Spiders in the Garden

Explore the anatomy of spiders and explain how a spider weaves a web for survival

Adopt a Tree

How do season affect lifecycle of living things?

How is the life cycle of a tree different from that of a vegetable?

Rotting away

How can I take advantage of natural cycles in the garden?

Why doesn't the forest floor fill up with dead trees?

What happens to plants and animals when they die?

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