

Community Gardens

Community gardens offer youth the opportunity for expression and exploration in a supportive and healthy environment and provide hands-on science education.

Age Appropriateness:

- 5 and up

Key Topics:

- Gardening
- Agriculture
- Public Space

Skills:

- Critical Thinking
- Research
- Planning
- Design
- Experimentation

Materials:

- Paper and pencils
- gardening supplies

Action Time:

- 3 hours (Planning)
- 4-6 hours (Planting)
- 1 hr. per day (Care)

Resources:

www.gardenmaster.com

www.kidsgardening.com

www.communitygarden.org

<http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org/index.php?page=storyline-school>

OBJECTIVES

- Youth will utilize research and critical thinking skills to learn information about plants, gardens, and communities.
- To provide environmental education through gardens.



Preparation

Community gardens can take a lot of planning and upkeep. Have youth thoroughly research community gardens from multiple sources including the internet and books. Have them look into sources for procuring plants, tools, and other materials. One option is to work with starter seeds and then transplant them when the beds are finished. The students can build the garden themselves, or hand over their plans to adult volunteers to build. Work with the youth to come up with plants that best suit your garden conditions and native habitat.

Action

The following activities, when completed, will form a comprehensive knowledge of completing a research project and setting up the design and implementation of a community garden.

Ask Youth:

- What kind of garden do they want to create--vegetable, flower, trees, a combination?
- Who will the garden serve other than the youth? (i.e. seniors, neighbors, insects, animals, etc.) If applicable, what will be done with the produce?

Choose a well-organized garden coordinator—look for master gardeners or non-profit expertise. Develop a garden design, including a planting schedule and maintenance plan. Plant your garden!

Reflection

Help the youth start designing and planning projects, science experiments, and games that can be done using the new garden space. Have them reflect on the growing conditions in the garden. What adjustments or changes need to be made to the maintenance plan or plant selection? How have the youth or the local habitat changed since the garden began?