



Taste It--We Grew it Ourselves!

**Next you will want to consider SAFETY.** Your county health department will be very relieved if you use the Product Quality Assurance School Garden Checklist. The checklist needs to be completed weekly and kept on file. Find it at: [www.ode.state.or.us/wma/nutrition/snp/gardenschecklist.doc](http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/nutrition/snp/gardenschecklist.doc)

**School Gardens are a relatively new thing and there are currently few or no regulations in place to ensure the safe production of produce. BE PROACTIVE and follow the list so you have DOCUMENTATION that your produce is safe.**

Each County in Oregon has an OSU Extension Service office that can be of help in providing SOME assistance to your garden. Volunteers can technically instruct and teach (but not do the physical labor), and will be able to answer a lot of questions particular to your area in your gardening planning. Find your office by going here: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us>

When you're done, successful school gardens have had a great partnership with the school cafeteria. When I was a School Foodservice Director I bought produce at fair market value (contact your local produce distributor for a price list) and served it in the cafeteria. There usually wasn't a large amount of produce after the classroom activities were done with the produce, but it was a huge deal for the kids to be able to eat items from their own garden. Important: treat the produce a little differently, as there will no doubt be more dirt and bugs associated with the items. It will be necessary to double or even triple-wash the produce!

#### Helpful Resources:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/>

[www.ode.state.or.us/gof2sgardens](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gof2sgardens)

[www.schoolgardenwizard.org](http://www.schoolgardenwizard.org)

<http://www.csgn.org/> California School Garden network.

<http://www.schoolgardenproject.org> Site considerations, funding needs, plant choices, etc. Check out the "how to" tab.

GrowLab: a complete guide to Gardening in the Classroom; Eve Pranis

How to Grow a School Garden; Bucklin-Springer and Pringle

Edible Schoolyard; Alice Waters

Garden Rhythm; Liz Dent et al. Available through OSU extension. Tells you what to grow when in Northwest gardens.

# School Gardens

## Some tips on starting a teaching garden at your school



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Adapted by Square Blue Team, Linn Benton Master Gardener Trainees with permission from the author. May 2013



Earth,water,air,seeds and YOU!

**Considerations for starting a school garden:** There are typically a few areas that will contribute to the garden succeeding or failing.

**Irrigation.** How are you going to water the garden? Hose/sprinkler, drip watering, soaker hose, rain water collection systems, hand watering.. there are a lot of choices. Many different plants do well with specific watering systems. Some systems are inexpensive, some are very expensive.

**Grass/weed control.** Weeds are tough to control. The most important advice I've found is this: establish a tolerance level you can live with! If you have lots of free labor (kids!) it is a nice project to keep up on weeding. Weeds that are left alone can take over the garden and make it difficult to re-establish a nice gardening area if left unattended. Herbicides are NOT recommended. Same advice for bugs. In my garden, I try to eat more than they do!

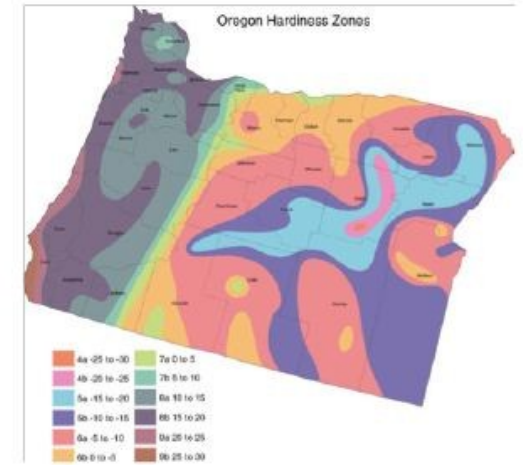
**Labor.** What are you going to do with the garden when school is out and no one is around? Making this problem worse is the fact that our peak growing time is actually in the summer when school is not in session. Usually schools have volunteers that will work and keep an eye on the garden during the summer months.

**Starting small!** It's not uncommon to have acres of surplus area that schools have access to. A big problem is starting out too big, and not being able to manage the entire garden. A good rule of thumb is to start out small and you could always expand as your experience grows.

**Lead Gardener.** Also, a school will typically enlist a parent to be the "Lead Gardener," and when the Parent's kid graduates from that school, the Parent typically leaves as well, leaving the school without anyone to carry on with the project. I know of a large school district that had 17 school gardens. The City's Garden Coordinator would not assist or help in establishing a school garden until it could show that there was a plan for the first three items, plus a plan for sustainable leadership for that school's garden.

**Another factor is layout.** There is awesome diversity in Oregon, and not all areas are the same. As you can see by the chart below, there are very distinct differences in

growing areas. Some are arid, some are wet. Some have very nice soil, while some areas go "clank" when you drive a shovel in the earth...



Oregon Hardiness Zones

