



## PROMOTING OREGON SUMMER SQUASH

Feature Oregon summer squash in your cafeteria using one or more of the following ideas. Kids are more likely to try a food that you promote.

### **Easy Marketing with Oregon Grown For Schools**

Display this poster near the serving line. Offer copies of this poster to classroom teachers the month you are promoting Oregon summer squash in the cafeteria. As students come through the serving line, point out the Oregon summer squash dishes. Offer praise and encouragement to students who take vegetable dishes or visit the salad bar.

### **Invite a Gardener or Farmer to Lunch**

Feature a local farmer or gardener as the VIP in the cafeteria. Connect with your school garden, community garden, gardening club or nonprofit to find your VIP. Invite him or her to eat school lunch with students or provide a presentation. They could also display different varieties of summer squash and squash blossoms.

### **Take Oregon Produce to the Classroom**

Partner with teachers to support nutrition education at your school. Find out when your school's staff meeting is held and ask to make a short announcement. Tell teachers and staff that you would like to support nutrition education by making a short presentation in their classes. Work with individual teachers to determine the focus of your presentation. Possible presentations include the importance of Oregon-grown foods, a cooking project, new dishes in the cafeteria, or taste testing Oregon fruits or vegetables.

### **Student Survey**

Trying to figure out how to prepare Oregon fruits and vegetables to appeal to students? Ask them! Students love to provide their opinions. Provide a survey online, on paper or casually in person in the cafeteria or classrooms. If using an online or paper survey, ask teachers to help you distribute the survey and collect student

responses. Once you find out the results, be sure to highlight the changes you're making in the school newsletter or with signage in the cafeteria. For more ideas see *Fruits & Vegetables Galore* "Meal Appeal" at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/fv\\_galore.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/fv_galore.html)

### **Find Out More**

Visit the Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs at [www.ode.state.or.us/services/nutrition](http://www.ode.state.or.us/services/nutrition)

Look for Oregon Farm To School and School Garden Program under Associated Topics.

## **OREGON HARVEST FOR SCHOOLS CLASSROOM ELEMENTS**

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

#### **Creating a Pollinator Garden**

Did you know that one out of every three bites of food we eat is made possible by a pollinator? By creating a garden or even a few containers that lure pollinators, students can experience the connection between pollinators, plants and people.

- **Choose a Site**

You don't need a lot of space to start a pollinator garden. Even a few containers can attract perusing pollinators. If you don't already have a garden site, have the class scope out a location that receives at least six hours of full sun each day. If your school has a school garden, consider interspersing pollinator-attracting flowers among the fruits and vegetables.

- **Plant Nectar and Pollen-rich Flowers**

Different pollinators prefer flowers with different shapes and colors, so plant a variety, including native plants. Trumpet or cup-shaped flowers, such as cardinal flower, honeysuckle, and bee balm, attract a wide range of pollinators. Pollinators with shorter tongues, such as small native bees and wasps, feed on tightly packed clusters of small flowers, such as those found on milkweed, zinnia, phlox, and mint. Hummingbirds feed on red, purple, or orange flowers with lots of nectar, such as bee balm, fuchsia, sage, and nasturtium.

Vegetables such as summer and winter squash, cucumbers, melons, peas, beans and tomatoes require pollinators to transfer pollen within flowers or between flowers. Plant these so students can observe the connection between pollinators and the foods we eat.

- **Provide Water**

Pollinators such as butterflies will gather and sip at shallow pools, mud puddles, and bird baths; bees can use mud as a home-building material.

- **Avoid using pesticides and herbicides**

Many can be harmful to pollinators as well as pests. If you feel that you must control pests, judiciously use homemade remedies such as garlic spray, or pesticides derived from plants or microbes. Apply them only after sundown, when most pollinators have stopped their rounds.

- **Provide Sites and Materials for Overwintering**

Leave cut plant stems exposed, turn flowerpots that have drainage holes upside down, and leave twigs and brush in small piles. Students can build nesting structures for certain types of bees and bats.

For details on this project as well as classroom connections and other resources, visit [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com)

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Creating Herb Gardens

These aromatic plants can be a fascinating focus for a classroom. They're easy to raise and have a multitude of uses. Consider using an herb garden to bring literature to life, or inspire craft projects. It can also become a lens for studying people/plant connections in different historical eras or regions.

- **Plan Your Vision**

Wherever you're raising herbs — outdoors in the garden or containers, or in the classroom — you and your students should consider what role you want them to play. Here are a few ideas:

#### Colonial Herbs

Students can have fun learning how herbs were used in “olden” times. For instance, rosemary was believed to calm naughty children and sage was used to color gray hair! Thyme, oregano, parsley, and savory might also be found in the Colonial garden.

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#### Spaghetti Herbs

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#### Herbal Teas

Students may want to dry, bag, and sell their own herb teas, or simply enjoy drinking them. Chamomile, lemon balm, peppermint, and spearmint are tasty (and safe) candidates.

## **Fragrant Herbs**

Consider these particularly aromatic candidates: basil, rosemary, mints, lavender, thymes, lemon verbena, oregano, chamomile, savory.

## **Container Herbs**

If you plan to raise herbs in containers, you might try these easy-to-grow plants: thymes, mints, parsley, basil, sage, marjoram, oregano.

### **• Prepare the Soil**

Most herb plants require similar growing conditions: a minimum of six hours of sunlight per day and moderately rich soil with good drainage. If you are planting in an area with nutrient-poor, dry, heavy, or poorly-drained soil, add some organic matter, such as compost, before planting.

### **• Plant Seeds or Seedlings**

If you want to get a jump on the season, you can start herb seeds indoors under lights or on sunny windowsills and later transplant them to the garden. Use the same types of containers and soilless potting mix that you would use for other indoor seedlings. You can purchase many herbs from nurseries as young plants, or dig up shoots or sections of mature perennial plants in the spring. Some herbs can also be started from stem cuttings. How you lay out your planting will depend on the plants you choose and on your theme. Herbs, like most plants, stay healthier if there's good air circulation, so space them to allow for the mature size of each plant. (Catalogs, seed packets, and nursery containers give spacing requirements.)

### **• Harvest!**

You can harvest most herbs continually as soon as the plant has enough foliage to sustain growth. Harvest herbs grown for seeds, such as dill, caraway, and coriander, as the fruits change color from green to brown or gray but before they scatter to the ground.

For details on this project as well as classroom connections and other resources, visit [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com)

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Creating a Three Sisters Garden**

Native peoples from different parts of North America have used a wide range of agricultural techniques. Perhaps the best known is the interplanting of corn, beans, and squash together in a trio often referred to as the “three sisters.” Cultivating these companions in your school garden, a small patch near the building, a barrel, or even indoors, can inspire studies of Native American customs, nutrition and folklore. As students dig in, investigations of plant growth and relationships will also flourish.

Each Native culture that grew the three sisters garden had a unique planting system. Here we feature guidelines for one type of setup.

- **Plan and Select a Site**

Plant your three sisters garden in late spring once the danger of frost has passed. Choose a site that has direct sunshine for most of the day and access to water. Once students have determined their site's dimensions, challenge them to plan their three sisters garden on paper.

- **Prepare the Soil**

First, break up and rake the soil. Next, build a mound about 12 inches high and between 18 inches and 3 feet in diameter. If you're in a dry area, flatten the top of the mound and make a shallow depression to keep water from running off. The number of mounds your students create depends on the size of your growing area. Mounds should be 3 to 4 feet apart in all directions.

- **Plant Corn**

Soak four to seven corn seeds overnight and then plant them about 6 inches apart in the center of each mound. You'll eventually thin to three or four seedlings

- **Plant Beans and Squash**

After a week or two, when the corn is at least 4 inches high, soak and then plant six pole bean seeds in a circle about 6 inches away from the corn. You'll eventually thin to three or four bean seedlings. At about the same time, plant four squash or pumpkin seeds next to the mound, about a foot away from the beans, eventually thinning to one.

- **Consider Other Additions**

Consider planting other traditional crops, such as sunflowers, potatoes or sweet potatoes around at the edge of the three sisters garden. Let your students' creative juices flow as they create a unique scarecrow; a number of Native culture's gardens incorporate these familiar figures.

Maintain your traditional garden.

As corn plants grow, weed gently around them and mound soil around the base of each stem for support. If beans aren't winding their way around the corn, move tendrils to the stalks. To allow room for corn and beans to grow, gently direct squash vines into walkways, garden edges, or between mounds.

For details on this project as well as classroom connections and other resources, visit [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com)