

# Annual Planning Calendar for School Gardens

## January

- Collect feedback from steering committee, garden volunteers, administrator, teachers, maintenance and food service staff to inform the next gardening season.
- Assess garden designs for coming year, make any needed changes.

## February

- Based on garden designs determine which plants will be started from seed and which will be bought or will be donated as seedlings.
- Seed tally and seed order.
- Clean and oil garden tools.

## March

- Determine a planting schedule for the coming season based on your frost-free date.
- Plan spring garden activities with school staff. Set dates through the remainder of the school year.
- Start earliest seeds in classrooms. Read seed packets. Typically only onions, peppers, tomatoes, and some herbs and perennial flowers are started this early. *Unless you have a strong commitment from a teacher it is usually best to plan on buying these as seedlings just before planting time. If you do go this route be sure to plan for seedling care over Spring vacation.*

## April

- Secure plant donations for seedlings to pick up just before planting time.
- Order garden supplies such as fertilizer, wood for bed repairs (if any), garden infrastructure improvements such as stakes, trellises, netting, fencing.
- (end of April) Start later seeds in classrooms such as pumpkins, squash, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, and annual flowers.
- Plan for a school garden work day for as soon as the ground thaws to prep beds and surrounding grounds.
  - Remove mulch.
  - Add compost if needed.
  - Hook up irrigation.
  - Bed repairs and infrastructure improvements.

## May

- Harden off seedlings. (See 'General Gardening Tips' for hardening instructions).
  - Plant gardens:
    - Late April/Early May - Direct seed cool-loving, early season crops like peas, carrots, radish, potatoes, onions, mustards, lettuce...
    - Late May - When soil has warmed to a consistent 55-60 degrees and after last frost, plant warm-loving, late season crops like tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, summer or winter squash, melons. Direct seed beans, corn, and everything else.
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- Set up watering and weeding schedule through end of the school year and through the summer.
- Keep row covers accessible for early pest protection and/or for frost protection.

## June

- Set up weekly harvesting schedule.
- Begin scouting for pests. Look especially for flea beetles, cucumber beetles, squash bugs, aphids, and cabbage worms.
- Thin carrots, beets...
- Hill potatoes.
- Prune tomatoes.
- If you have not done so already, plan for staking anything that will be tall, heavy, or needs to climb.

## July

- Keep up with summer maintenance: weeding, harvesting (to include deadheading flowers and cutting bouquets!).
- Sow fall crops such as lettuce, carrots, beets, kale, collard greens...

## August

- Keep up with summer maintenance: weeding, harvesting (to include deadheading flowers and cutting bouquets!).

## September

- Plan with teachers and administrators for fall student involvement in harvesting, watering, and garden cleanup in October and November.
- Harvest with students.
- Recruit new garden steering committee members if needed.
- Plan for saving any seed such as the easiest ones: dry beans, popcorn, morning glory, calendula...

## October

- Prepare for frost protection on tomatoes, flowers, winter squash...
- Harvest all remaining crops before killing frost. Kale, parsnips, collard greens and Brussels sprouts actually improve flavor with frosts.
- Late October to late November -Plant garlic. (Clear a space and compost first. Mulch for the winter.)

## November

- Put gardens to bed (see 'End of Season Garden Clean Up' below).

## December

- Rest, and dream of spring!

## End of Season Garden Clean Up

To get the most from your garden wait until after the killing frost to clean up and put the gardens 'to bed' for the winter months.

- Harvest the last of the herbs for drying indoors and any other garden 'treasures' that made it through the frosts. You may find very interesting seeds in the flower garden!
- Remove all dead plants and weeds from the garden beds and add to garden compost. Do not add diseased plants to the compost, dispose of them in the trash or thoroughly burn them (off site).
- Collect all garden supplies and neatly store in the designated location.
  - Remove all stakes, remove twine. If reusable next year, brush off dirt clumps.
  - Collect all tools, clean and oil them.
  - Drain and coil hoses.
- Mulch the beds with straw or leaves to prevent erosion and/or winter weeds. Use pine needles for crops that like acidic soil such as fruit or roses.
- Tally seeds, fertilizers, twine, and other annual supplies to aid in spring planning. Seeds store best in a cool, dark place that does not freeze.