



PLANTING YOUR SCHOOL GARDEN

GARDEN SPACE:

Once the garden beds are filled with soil and ready to plant, you may want to utilize the practice of square foot gardening. Square foot gardening is a perfect way to pair math lessons with the garden, allowing students to map out and mark with strings each square foot. This grid will help students visually organize and pair their plantings. Students can use graph paper to map their garden plan and record the maps as a garden record for future classes to reference as they map their own garden beds.

PLANTING DEMONSTRATIONS:

For many students, this may be the first time they have had the chance to plant a garden. It is important for them to feel ownership over the garden space. While in the garden or in the classroom, spend some time showing students:

- How deep to place a seed in the soil. Have the students identify where on the seed packet it recommends how deep the seed should be planted. Consider having the students mark rulers at the depth the seed should be planted.
- Lightly cover the seed with soil. Do NOT pack it down.
- If transplanting seedlings, demonstrate to the students how to gently pull the seedlings out of the trays by pulling the stem at its base, and tap or push the soil from the bottom of the tray upwards.

- Watering the garden beds after planting so that the soil is well moistened but not soaking. Ensure that the hose is not on an intense stream setting, and a light water flow is used so that the new seeds and transplants are not stressed.

ORGANIZING STUDENTS FOR GARDEN WORK:

It is important that before planting, students are well-organized. Breaking the students into groups of five or six would be ideal. Before venturing to the garden make sure all of your tools and materials are prepared so that each group of students has what they need to make their planting experience successful.

Each time your students go to the garden for a lesson or maintenance, ensure they understand the jobs that must happen and how they are properly carried out:

- Watering- Show students how to turn on the hose and how it should be shut off after each use, how to coil the hose properly when watering is finished, correct settings for the spray nozzle; checking for adequate moisture levels in the garden bed.
- Weeding- Explain to students what a weed is and what the desirable plant looks like; encourage them to ask an adult if they are unsure whether or not it is a weed. Remind them that a weed is taking nutrients, space and water from the intended plants. When weeding, they should remove the roots also, not just the tops.
- Thinning- If seeds were planted too close together and they don't have enough room to grow, it will produce a smaller plant. When thinning, students should remember to be careful not to disturb the healthy plants next to them.