

School Garden Technical Documents Recommendations

This is a curated list of technical documents to assist schools, community based organizations, and LEAs when establishing and implementing a school garden program. Documents are categorically aligned to the [School Garden Assessment Tool](#). While the documents listed have not been formally vetted, the School Gardens Program has identified these documents as excellent resources for school garden programs. If you would like to recommend a document to include in this resource, please email [Sam Ullery](#).

The following links to external databases may be helpful with finding additional technical documents not listed below:

[National Gardening Association's Kids Gardening](#)

[The California Collective School Garden Network](#)

[The Edible Schoolyard Project](#)

	Description	Cost/ No Cost
Design	Asphalt to Ecosystems A compelling color guidebook for designing and building natural schoolyard environments that enhance childhood learning and play experiences while providing connection with the natural world. The book includes 500 color photographs with outstanding examples from 150 innovative schools in 11 countries. It is written for parents, teachers, students, designers, planners, school administrators, environmentalists, and other interested community members.	Cost
	DC School Garden Planting Calendar This planting calendar provides planting and harvesting dates for the most popular veggies found in DC school gardens. The document also provides recommended varieties that work well in school gardens, ranks each veggie based on how easy it is to grow, and includes a space for the user to write notes such as actual planting dates, pests, and other significant observations. In addition to the digital copy below, there are a limited number of poster-size calendar printed on paper that is semi-weatherproof and can be written on with a dry erase marker. To request this poster, please email Sam Ullery .	No Cost
	Design Guidelines for Outdoor Classrooms and School Gardens This document provides design guideline for outdoor classrooms and may be useful when developing an outdoor classroom may be the starting point for a school garden program, or it may increase the impact of an existing program by providing a suitable venue for instruction.	No Cost
	School Garden Safety Checklist This documents was created in partnership with the Department of Health to support schools with serving garden produce to students. This document serves as documentation that safe food handling practices are being followed.	No Cost
	What to do: A School Garden Calendar The purpose of this calendar is to provide a guide to help you manage and maintain a school garden. It is divided into administrative, community-based, curriculum-based and gardening tasks.	No Cost

Systems	Description	Cost/ No Cost
	Classroom Worm Bin How-To Guide A guide that includes instructions for building a simple vermicomposting bin as well as tips on harvesting, maintaining bin health, and storage.	No Cost
	National Wildlife Federation's Garden for Wildlife How to Guide This six-part guide walks through creating a schoolyard habitat. Topics include; butterfly gardening, native plants, curriculum connections, and site development.	No Cost
	NYC Master Composter Manual A complete guide to urban composting, includes a section on education and community outreach.	No Cost
	The University of the District of Columbia's (UDC) Environmental Quality Testing Laboratory Currently UDC is not able to service soil sampling needs, however they do offer support with collecting soil samples as well as references to nearby soil testing labs.	Cost
	Urban Farm Plans Compost Knox Plans Build the same rat-proof compost system used in many school gardens across the District.	No Cost

Program Organization	Description	Cost/ No Cost
	Checklist for Starting a School Garden While there are many useful guides for school garden, this checklist serves as a guide to developing new school garden programs in the District.	No Cost
	Getting Started: A Guide for Creating School Gardens as Outdoor Classrooms A comprehensive guide for creating schools gardens as outdoor classrooms. Topics include nurturing a child's curiosity, connecting the garden to the classroom, selecting and preparing a garden site, understanding nature's cycles, identifying the responsibilities of the garden coordinator and involving the community.	No Cost
	Growing Together: A Guide to Building Inspired, Diverse and Productive Youth Communities The result of a decade of The Food Project's success working with youth from diverse backgrounds and bridging urban and suburban communities through work on the land. Written in a clear, engaging style, Growing Together is an indispensable resource for youth coordinators, teachers, religious leaders, trainers, and community members who want an easily transferable and adaptable approach to creating dynamic, diverse, and productive communities.	Cost

	<u>Resources to Support Raising Chickens in District School Gardens</u> This document was created in response to the growing number of schools in the District that have requested guidance on caring for chickens in schools. While the benefits are many, chickens do require vigilant care and attention. This document provides basic guidelines created by OSSE and the Department of Health to assist District schools with establishing and maintaining chicken programs.	No Cost
	<u>School Garden Assessment</u> The District School Garden Assessment has been developed by OSSE to assist District School Garden Coordinators to evaluate their programs, to help focus and guide conversations with school wellness committees, and to reassess thriving garden programs or plan new programs altogether.	No Cost
	<u>School Garden Coordinator Framework</u> This framework is to help schools and organizations to better understand and develop a School Garden Coordinator position. The categories and tasks listed in this document can be used to create a job description or plan for the implementation of a school garden and farm to school program.	No Cost
	<u>School Garden Q&As: Memo SP 32-2009</u> This USDA's Food and Nutrition Service memo clarifies, among other things, that funds from the nonprofit school food service account can be used to purchase seeds and other supplies for starting and maintaining school gardens.	No Cost
	<u>Slow Food USA Garden to Cafeteria Program Manual</u> This manual provides guidance to garden coordinators and school food staff to establish garden to cafeteria programs in schools. Includes worksheets and step-by-step guidance.	No Cost
	<u>Slow Food USA Youth Farmers Market Toolkit</u> Provides educational opportunities by reinforcing traditional academics such as math and science and building life skills such as customer service, conflict resolution, and entrepreneurship. The model also supports nutrition education training so that families can see the advantages of eating the fresh produce in their daily meals.	Cost
	<u>Youth Farm Stand Toolkit</u> This toolkit is designed to help individual schools launch a Youth Farm Stand project on school grounds that is connected to the school garden. The YFS model can be used as a fundraiser for the gardens, provide locally-grown produce for a community and serve as a platform for education in healthy eating. The toolkit was based on ten-plus years of a successful model in Denver Public Schools in collaboration with Slow Food Denver and Denver Urban Gardens.	No Cost

Instruction	Description	Cost/ No Cost
	Evaluation of the District of Columbia Healthy Schools Act This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the District of Columbia Healthy Schools Act of 2010 (HSA; D.C. Law 18-0209), including trends in schools' compliance with the HSA over time and relationships between various school characteristics and HSA compliance. The report also examines relationships between school gardens and student outcomes including: academic performance, health knowledge, and attendance.	No Cost
	Impacts of School Gardens on Academic Success This is a carefully curated list of recent research-based articles directed toward the questions "What are the impacts of school garden on academic success?" This summary includes details, outcomes, and findings for each article.	No Cost
	OSSE School Garden Based Curricula Recommendations This is a curated list consisting of a wide variety of garden-based curricula for schools, community based organizations, and LEAs to consider when implementing a school garden program. While the curricula listed have not been formally vetted by OSSE, the School Gardens Program has identified these curricula to be of high quality with most being aligned to either Common Core Standards or Next Generation Science Standards	Cost & No Cost
	School Gardens in the City Does Environmental Equity Help Close the Achievement Gap? This paper examines whether creating more environmental equity in schools (as measured by the presence of school garden) improves academic achievement in the District.	No Cost
	School Garden Research USDA supports school gardens as a proved tactic for improving children's attitudes and consumption of produce, and for incorporating experiential nutrition and agriculture education into school curriculum. This document provides a list of research that indicates positive impacts associated with school gardens.	No Cost
	Teaching in Nature's Classroom Core Principles of Garden-Based Education A philosophy of teaching in the garden. Rooted in years of experience and supported by research, Larson presents fifteen guiding principles of garden-based education. These principles and best practices are illustrated through engaging stories from the field. The book features vivid paintings by mural artist Becky Redelings and connections to the research literature provided by Alex Wells and Sam Dennis of the University of Wisconsin Environmental Design Lab. OSSE has a limited number of paperback editions in English and Spanish available, email Sam.Ullery@dc.gov for information.	No Cost