



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Use your School Grounds to Teach

Growing Healthy Schools Month is a great opportunity to engage students and the school community in hands-on learning using the school grounds. Whether your school has a vibrant garden, a field, a rooftop, or a small patch of green space, school grounds are dynamic teaching spaces that will result in a rewarding, rich experience for all students. For schools and teachers with more experience teaching outside, we have included plenty of ideas to help take your program to the next level. Below are some recommendations on seasonally- appropriate activities and projects, now get outside!

Activity/ Project	Supporting Resources
Start or expand a school garden	Start small and build community support early on. This and more in the <u>Checklist for Starting a School Garden</u> . Also, <u>Apply for School Tree Planting Program</u> (Due November 1) or <u>Apply to be a RiverSmart School</u> .
Teach a lesson on your school grounds	Use these <u>Curricula Recommendations</u> to connect what you are doing in the classroom to the garden.
Serve garden produce in the cafeteria	Whether it's a simple taste test or incorporating garden produce into the school lunch any school garden program can make connections with the cafeteria. Learn more by visiting the <u>Slow Food USA Garden to Cafeteria Program</u> webpage.
Prepare for Strawberries and Salad Greens Day	Prep your strawberry bed now and you can expect a bumper harvest come May. Find out what to plant when <u>here</u> .
Know your soil	Collect soil samples <u>for nutrient and toxin testing</u> of your soil and amend it as needed. Fall is the best time to improve your soil for a successful spring growing season.
Develop new partnerships	School grounds are living classrooms, they require maintenance, experienced outdoor educators, and specific technical support. <u>Find a partner organization</u> that can support your program.
Start a school chicken or bee project	Egg-laying hens and bees are a great way to engage new students and add interest to your garden, learn more here about <u>chickens</u> and <u>bees</u> .

*If you would like assistance please contact Sam Ullery, School Garden Specialist at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education by emailing **Sam.Ullery@dc.gov** or visiting **http://osse.dc.gov/service/school-garden-program**.*