Slow Food USA’s
School Garden Guide

Build. Grow. Learn.
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    - **Chapter Lead:** Gigia Kolouch, Slow Food Denver, CO
Hello Slow Food Garden Leaders and Volunteers—

I am very excited to finally share this School Garden Guide with the Slow Food community. The intent of the guide is to share among Slow Food chapters what has worked well elsewhere and to stimulate some ideas and new projects in your chapter. The vision for this guide came from the successful Seed to Table School Food Program of Slow Food Denver and the desire to share our successes from the school grounds in Denver Public Schools. Our goal was to bring together in one volume many of the similarly great school gardens efforts related to school gardens throughout the Slow Food community.

We also want to hear about your best practices so that we can add them to updated versions of the guide. We are (internally) calling this product School Garden Guide Version 1.0. I hope that you will take a look through it and provide feedback on its content and message, and even let us know what is missing. Our goal is to assimilate all your feedback and provide a 2014 Guide – version 2.0.

We recognize that there is a considerable amount of information and resources about school gardens available in the world, and we wanted to make sure this guide was additive to the considerable existing good work of our partners and friends. What sets this volume apart is that it was created by Slow Food chapter leaders and volunteers for Slow Food chapter leaders and volunteers. We explicitly sought to address the unique challenges to and opportunities for working on school garden projects under the Slow Food banner, from the importance of incorporating “good, clean and fair” into the garden, to the opportunity for growing Ark of Taste projects, to the challenge of executing school garden projects when everyone is an unpaid volunteer.

Since the scale of this effort was new to Slow Food USA, I would like to dedicate a portion of this introduction to explaining how this guide came together. The first step was to identify successful Slow Food-driven school garden work across the country. Slow Food USA staff and Regional Governors provided help in identifying chapters that could contribute great ideas and successes from their garden programs. After a series of phone interviews, I selected a total of 14 school garden leaders from across the country and invited them to come to Denver this past February to start the process of pulling together the guide.

These garden leaders came together for a two-and-a-half-day retreat organized by the Denver chapter that included intense discussions, idea sharing and content development for the manual. The Denver planning team ensured that the great conversation was intertwined with exciting food experiences representative of the Rocky Mountain region and that the meeting location was a setting that helped foster long-lasting relationships between the participants.

While it was very exciting to bring together these Slow Food leaders around the school garden projects, it was also very important not to fall into the Slow Food trap of too many social events around local foods and not enough concentration on the task at hand. To keep us Slow Foodies on track, we brought in an outside facilitator, Spark Policy of Denver, to facilitate the
meeting, to keep notes from all the sessions, and help to assimilate the massive amounts of ideas that were shared by all.

As the convening broke up and our guests started to head back to their homes, there was much excitement about the prospects of the guide and a strong desire to get to work on the contents. We had planned out nine chapters and agreed that each chapter would be led by one of the meeting participants, with other participants providing contributions from their own programs back home. Once we received the organized notes from Spark Policy, the task became one of finding time in our busy spring schedules to put our ideas and enthusiasm on paper. Everyone did the best they could while acknowledging that life events sometimes interfered with the ability to spend as much time as planned.

The group writing process was no doubt the most difficult part of this journey. Each person took on the task in their own way, and the degree of cooperative writing varied across chapters. There was no doubt that everyone enjoyed sharing their great ideas and the successes that they have experience in their school gardens. As the main ringleader for the writing process, I was overall impressed by how everyone responded to my requests for more content and to meet deadlines. The advantages of drawing valuable insights and experiences from such strong leaders far outweighed the occasional frustrations of delays and lack of materials that occasionally came up.

We were very lucky that one of our meeting attendees, Philip Lee from Slow Food Seattle, has tremendous experience in book publishing and content development. Philip helped us secure a copy editor and designer and then managed the process of turning the manuscript into a final product.

And now it is time to share the fruit of our efforts with all of you in the Slow Food school garden world. I hope that you enjoy the School Garden Guide and that you see the potential it has to strengthen school garden efforts across the Slow Food community. I look forward to working with your school garden programs and bringing more resources to support the amazing team of volunteers that drive them.

So I am excited to share the end result of this amazing process that has been in action for nearly a year.

Slow Regards,

Andrew Nowak
Slow Food USA School Garden Program Manager
Andrew@slowfoodusa.org
Acknowledgements

Kate Krauss and Jovan Sage at Slow Food USA joined our convening in Denver and provided helpful support and guidance along the way. Thanks also to the Slow Food USA Regional Governors, who helped us uncover pockets of excellent school garden work across the country.

Thank you to our friends at the Queen Anne Bed and Breakfast, which hosted our convening, and to Cook Street Cooking School, and Osterio Marco restaurant, all of which helped us lay the foundation for a very successful meeting.

Much appreciation goes to Jewlya Lynn and the team from Spark Policy for their very professional and skillful handling of a bunch of “Slow Food cats” as we tended to go into many different directions during the meetings.

Special thanks to Philip Lee, co-leader of Slow Food Seattle and owner of the publishing firm Readers to Eaters, for assuming the monumental task of taking all the content and putting it together into a coherent volume on a tight timeline. His leadership and expertise really made this guide come to life. Additional thanks to Jean McMackin, our tireless editor, and to our excellent designer Carol Bobolts of the firm Red Herring.

Finally, I want to acknowledge a group of people I refer to as the Denver team. It has been my extreme pleasure and honor to work with a small group of dedicated volunteers for 12 years in projects that have been very fulfilling and opened so many doors for me to explore. Gigia Kolouch has been the “yin” to my “yang” for all 12 years with Slow Food Denver as we have been garden and project partners from the beginning of Seed to Table. While we have approached the gardens from different philosophies, we have always come together to produce high-quality programs that have benefited an entire school district. I also have been fortunate to be supported by two strong chapter leaders over the years. Matt Jones was a co-founder of Slow Food Denver, then a Governor and now on the Slow Food USA Board. Matt brought the original vision of the Seed to Table program and then gave me lots of rope to go into the school cafeterias with projects. Krista Roberts followed Matt as chapter director and has built a very supportive environment in Slow Food Denver so that I could push the envelope and test the systems around school food. All I had to do was “keep her in the loop,” which allowed me to dive into some great relationships between school gardens and school food. Finally, we were fortunate to have Laurie Schneyer as part of the leadership team for a couple of years as she brought sense and order to our sometimes-chaotic methods. I could not imagine a more supportive team of volunteer leaders to work with for these past 12 years.
Contributor Bios

Christine Brinkmann, Slow Food Bluegrass
Christine studied oil painting and Scottish art history. She finished up school in Scotland and didn’t want to leave, so she turned to her other love to help pay the bills, cooking. She is self-taught and has always cooked and gardened and loved the Slow Food philosophy, without even knowing it. Christine now cooks in schools and has developed a Slow Food curriculum to bring to the kids.

Willard Brooks, Slow Food Buffalo Niagara
Willard is a native of western New York from a family of German farmers and Irish workers. He always had a big garden growing up and developed a lifelong interest in personal agriculture, the joys of the kitchen, and sharing these daily at table with friends and family. Willard is co-founder of the SSPP Edible Schoolyard, co-founder of Slow Food Buffalo Niagara, on the board of the Field & Fork Network, and chair of Buffalo Beer Week.

Judiann Carmack-Fayyaz, Slow Food East End
Five years ago, Judiann started the Bridgehampton Edible Schoolyard Project and subsequently formed the Edible School Gardens of the East End group to share information and practices with other schools and organizations in the region who were interested in promoting farm to cafeteria initiatives by starting school gardens and greenhouses. At present, Judiann teaches Environmental Design, horticulture classes, and Farm to Table classes at Bridgehampton High School. She studied Landscape Design at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx and has a bachelor’s and master’s degree in French Language and Civilization from New York University in Paris.

Linda Colwell, Portland, OR
Linda received her culinary training in Paris, France, and has worked as a chef, butcher and sausage maker, and commercial fisherman. Linda supports school food agencies and administrators to set and meet their goals in Farm to School and School Garden Education. Linda founded the Garden of Wonders, aka Abernethy School Kitchen Garden, a school garden education project in Portland, Oregon. She is lead developer and author of the eat. think. grow. School Garden Curriculum. As adjunct faculty at Lewis and Clark College, Linda leads professional development and continuing education courses in school garden education.

Lynn Hyndman, Slow Food Chicago
After graduation from Western Michigan University, Lynn moved to Chicago and taught for 36 years before retiring. For the last third of her teaching years, Lynn ran an elementary science lab program, focusing on using nature as a tool to educate students. In 1989, Lynn was recognized as one of the outstanding teachers of science by the National Science Foundation, the Illinois Science Teachers Association, and Illinois State University.
Kendall Kendrick, Slow Food Charlotte
Kendall represents Slow Food Charlotte in school garden policy. She is the project coordinator of childhood nutrition for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Food Policy Council where she partners with other organizations to bring a unified approach to awareness, education, and sustainability of school garden programs. She lives on an urban farm with 18 chickens, 4 daughters, and her husband.

Martina Rossi Kenworthy, Slow Food New York City
Martina is the co-founder of Gustiamo, Inc., an importer of fine, artisanal Italian food products, that caters to both wholesale and individual clients across the country. In 2010 Martina began a community program in the Bronx focused on cooking with children and instilling in them an appreciation for healthy foods. A board member of Slow Food New York City since 2010, Martina has led the recent urban gardening in schools initiative and works with Slow Food’s very own urban garden, Ujima Farm, in Brownsville, Brooklyn, where children from the community harvest and learn to cook their own food with the help of Slow Food volunteers and staff.

Gigia Kolouch, Slow Food Denver
Gigia is currently the Director of the Seed to Table Program at Slow Food Denver. Her work involves transforming people’s relationship to food and cooking in order to restore its prominent place in everyday life. She has been a cooking instructor for the past 25 years, a gardener for 40 years, and has increased her knowledge with a master’s in Nutritional Anthropology from the University of Colorado Denver.

Kate Krauss, Slow Food USA
Kate joined Slow Food USA in 2009 as Director of Development and then spent seven months as Interim Executive Director before assuming her current role. Prior to Slow Food, she worked for The Nature Conservancy, where she served as a fundraiser for the Conservancy’s China program and its climate change initiative. Kate began her career in television journalism, working in production for the ABC News programs World News Tonight and Nightline. She is a graduate of Columbia University.

Philip Lee, Slow Food Seattle
Philip co-founded READERS to EATERS in Bellevue, Washington, with his wife, June Jo Lee, in 2009 with a mission to promote food literacy. A native of Hong Kong, Philip moved to California as a teenager and attended UC Berkeley, where he started his publishing career working at the university bookstore. Philip developed his interest in food when he reported for a Seattle radio station on the connection between food and student learning and how we can build a community through food.

Wendy Levitz, Slow Food Miami
Wendy was raised in tropical Miami, Florida, and after a wonderful stint in New York City is thrilled to be back in the gardens of Florida. She is a Miami Dade Master Gardener and loves teaching children the lesson of where healthy food comes from. She feels blessed to be working with such a wonderful Slow Food team and, with their help, managed to plant 120 gardens around the Miami area.
**Jewlya Lynn, Spark Policy, Denver, CO**

Dr. Lynn and her colleagues at Spark Policy Institute specialize in helping stakeholders find sustainable solutions to complex problems at the local, state, and federal level. Dr. Lynn’s experience is in public policy, evaluation and real-time strategic learning for advocacy, collective impact, systemic change, and community mobilizing.

**Andrew Nowak, Slow Food Denver**

From 2001-2012, Andrew was the Project Director for Slow Food Denver’s Seed to Table (STT) School Food Program, leading the development of the Youth Farmers’ Market and Garden to Cafeteria programs. For the past five years, Andrew has been the community partner for Denver Public Schools and Jeffco Schools’ School Food Learning Lab (School Food FOCUS), helping with local procurement protocols and implementation of scratch cooking. On the National level, Andrew was one of 6 chefs invited to the White House in 2010 to help develop the Chefs Move to Schools Program.

**Henry Owen, Slow Food Charlotte, NC**

Henry has been a summer camp director, a 2nd grade teacher, and a mission and outreach director. He currently spends his time as Program Director for Friendship Gardens, a non-profit project growing fresh, healthy food for Friendship Trays, a meals-on-wheels program. Henry is a husband, father, environmentalist, local food advocate, garden nerd, worm composter, nature play advocate and backyard chicken raiser.

**Krista Roberts, Slow Food Denver**

Krista, a former management consultant and professionally trained cook is the President of Slow Food Denver. She leads the activities and community outreach of the organization and is active in all of its programs; including Slow Food Denver’s Seed to Table School Food program and Community Table events. Krista has been instrumental in creating a professional, focused organization that is poised for growth, while maintaining it’s grassroots character. She is passionate about supporting local producers, sustainable food systems and educating children about growing and cooking food.

**Jovan Sage, Slow Food USA**

Jovan joined Slow Food USA in 2012 and is a community organizer with over 10 years of experience grassroots organizing at national and community-based organizations. Her work focuses on enhancing the political education, self-knowledge and leadership skills of staff and volunteers, fostering a greater sense of community and fueling campaign-specific successes along the intersections of race, class, ability, gender and sexual orientation.

**Laurie Schneyer, Slow Food Denver**

Laurie is a lifelong gardener and learned to appreciate the Slow Food way of life during a year of college in France. She worked in Finance and Project Management for 19 years, but left the corporate world 3 years ago. Laurie loves working with kids, gardens and foods and being able to give back to my community through our programs at Slow Food Denver.
CHAPTER LEAD:
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Introduction

A Slow Food garden reflects the values and mission of Slow Food USA in that it:

1. accentuates food that is Good, Clean, and Fair
2. is available for all members of the school community to enjoy
3. incorporates design features to promote Taste Education
4. promotes awareness and growth of Slow Food’s Ark of Taste products

This chapter will give beginning school garden leaders the vision and tools needed to design and build a Slow Food school garden. Leaders will learn how to define the vision of their school garden program, how to keep the relationship between design and purpose in harmony, and how to build a garden tailored to the school’s special needs and strengths. The importance of geographic diversity and seasonality will be highlighted to ensure that the design is appropriate for a garden in your region. At the end of the chapter is a list of resources of other design and build considerations. After reading this chapter, a leader will know what it means to build a Slow Food garden and will have a plan for building a Slow Food school garden.

School Garden Committee

Successful school garden programs start with a core group of motivated parents, teachers, school staff, and community members who come together under the shared vision of providing students with hands-on opportunities to engage in Slow Food-based food programs. The Garden Committee will be essential for creating the initial vision for the garden program, designing the garden, and implementing the gardening lessons with the students. While the size of the Garden Committee can vary greatly, four to six committed garden team members is generally a good size to get the project started.

It is best to recruit garden team members with a variety of backgrounds and skill sets.

Below is a short list of qualities to look for in potential garden team members when recruiting for the Garden Committee.

- Local Slow Food chapter member or volunteer
- Leader or member of the school’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- School principal or other school administrator
- Schoolteacher or curriculum support staff member
- School parent volunteers with passion for gardening or specific skill sets (gardening, mentoring kids, culinary skills, etc.)
- Student(s) at the school interested in gardening
- Community or neighborhood volunteer
- Members of potential partner organizations such as FoodCorps, local farmers, community gardens, landscape architects, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, etc.

As a recruiting tool, consider writing a short description of the proposed garden project that can be used to recruit garden team members through the local Slow Food chapter (website, newsletter, etc.) and through the school’s volunteer recruiting process.
Defining the Vision of the School Garden Program

Once the Garden Committee has been assembled, the next step is to start defining the vision for the school garden program. A successful school garden project has the vision, goals, and program elements outlined even before the garden is built on the schoolyard. It should be noted that the vision, goals, and program elements may change over time as the capacity of the Garden Committee changes or the interests of the school community grow. The following questions should be considered by the Garden Committee when working on the vision and goals of the school garden program.

PROGRAM QUESTIONS:

What are the goals or mission of the garden? This can be a simple list. For example, “teach students where food comes from” or “use the garden as a way to teach other subjects, such as science or social studies.” It will be important to refer back to this list of goals when making programmatic decisions. It is helpful to rank these goals in order of importance. The goals: “grow as much food as possible” and “involve children in growing as much as possible” are both great goals but are usually in conflict. Educational opportunities in the garden don’t usually result in the highest yields from the garden. Five-year-olds don’t make the best gardeners! They plant things too close together, stand on plants while watering, and pull carrots too soon. But they are learning the whole time!

How will the students be involved in the garden? While there are many answers to this question, a priority should be given to the capacity of the Garden Committee. Whatever program elements are decided upon, the Garden Committee must run or at least support the garden program in order for it to be successful. Don’t expect that already overworked teachers will take their classes out to the garden each week without any support from the Garden Committee simply because it is there.

When will the students work in the garden? During the school day? As part of an after-school program?

What will the Garden Committee do to support students working in the garden? Who will teach the gardening lessons? Who is going to run the after-school garden club?

Will classes adopt beds, or will the garden be communally worked? Both approaches have been successful, but be careful not to force a teacher to take responsibility for one of the garden beds.

What will happen to the harvest? Can the students eat it in the classrooms for a snack? Can the harvest be given to the kitchen staff and be prepared for school lunch? Do you want to send some home with the students? Do you plan to sell some at a farmers’ market to make money for the garden program? Do you want to donate a portion to a local hunger-relief nonprofit agency?
How can everyone at the school touch the garden in some way?
How can the garden positively affect each adult and child in the school? Your school garden will be more successful if you invite each staff person to play a role within their program area. For example, get the art teacher on board to work with their students to paint plant-identification signs. Ask the physical education teacher to weave the school garden into their healthy eating unit. A great tool to help brainstorm this topic is the “Why a Garden” example and graphic worksheet designed by the National Gardening Association. It can be found in the resources list at the end of this chapter.

Why a Garden?

Participant Questions:
What age are your student gardeners? The grade level of the students involved in the garden will have an impact on the design of the garden program. An ideal garden for a high school does not look the same as an ideal garden for an elementary school.

Will your garden be a community garden, community-school garden hybrid, or simply a school garden? If you have enough space and community interest, a traditional, rental-plot-based community garden can work well paired with a school garden.
DESIGN QUESTIONS:
What space is available at the school? Is there a site at the school that is well-suited for a garden? (See “site requirements” section below.) What permissions do you need to proceed with the design phase of the garden program?

RESOURCE QUESTIONS:
What are your existing resources? Does someone on your garden team know anyone who owns a soil company? A hardware store? Does your team have any connections to expert gardeners or chefs?
Are there any similar programs nearby? There is no sense in reinventing the wheel. Do a little research to see if other schools in your district have successful gardens. Learn as much as you can from the success of others. Maybe you could form some sort of partnership or network that shares resources and information.
What organization can you partner with? Do a little research to learn if there is a local resource that helps start or maintain school gardens. You may find startup funding, design help, or an existing network of school gardens that you can join.

POLICY QUESTIONS:
What are the relevant local school district or city policies concerning school gardens? This is a great question to ask the organizers of other successful gardens or the principal at your school.

CASE STUDY
Saints Peter & Paul (SSPP)
Edible Schoolyard, Planning Process
WILLARD BROOKS, SLOW FOOD BUFFALO

The Edible Schoolyard project began when the proposal to build an Edible Schoolyard project at SSPP was accepted by the school board. Our announcement garnered several parent volunteers to help with the project. Our research included reading Alice Waters’ book, Edible Schoolyard. We also visited the program at the Giving Garden in nearby Hamburg, NY, at a K-6 school with one garden bed per grade and an educational classroom used for sprouting, transplanting, and various taste demos and educational workshops. Our original vision was to have a six-bed garden focusing on one bed for each of the Grades 3–7, with lower grades participating with in-classroom aspects and garden visits. After proposing various locations for the garden beds to our church/school management, we were assigned a limited area that decreased the scope of our plans. As such, we ended up with one large, raised bed in front of the school and church, with a lip that makes it easy for small kids to sit on. Parents who pulled together to build the structure one Saturday morning donated the wood for the bed construction. We were lucky that two of our parents were experienced gardeners and put a great deal of time into planning what to plant and the placement of plants. We purchased all of our seeds from Seed Savers Exchange and received a donation of several yards of organic compost blend to fill the bed. All of the focus on making the soil and seeds organic was a bit of a surprise to some, but everyone got on board with the decision.
Garden Design

Now that the Garden Committee has defined the vision of the school garden, it is time to work on the garden design. The following sections will walk you through the major design decisions the Garden Committee will need to make.

SIZE: HOW BIG SHOULD THE GARDEN BE?

In the cool, crisp days of early spring, everyone wants a large garden. In the harsh heat of late summer, a huge garden to tend to might not seem like the best idea. Remember that whatever size garden is built, someone will need to sustain it. To set the budding school garden up for long-term success, it is a good idea to start with a smaller garden area than is available to plant. It is important that the garden program has success in the first year and that the students, teachers, and volunteers celebrate the successes and see the possibilities of growth in the future. If the garden is too large the first year, the Garden Committee may throw up their hands and get discouraged, and the garden program may be abandoned because it is viewed as too much work. If the garden is too small the first year, there may be a little frustration with the lack of growing space. Just remember that the garden can always be expanded in the future. Be sure that there is room to expand the garden, but don’t expand until the school gardening program and volunteers can handle the increased workload. Keep the program within the capacity of the Garden Committee and its pool of volunteers to ensure success.

SHOULD WE BUILD RAISED BEDS OR IN-GROUND GARDENS?

Raised beds are usually built with wood or stone to create a small wall or container and then filled with soil that you purchase. In-ground gardens use the existing soil and have no wall around them (perhaps some edging to define the growing bed). In-ground gardens are created by simply removing the grass in a garden area and mixing in some sort of soil amendment (usually compost) to the existing soil. There are positive and negative reasons to both methods so choose the best solution for your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAISED BEDS</th>
<th>POSITIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High soil fertility in year one. Because the soil is “fresh,” it will be very fertile right from the start. There is a great chance of being very successful in year one.</td>
<td>More expensive. Buying soil and wood or rock to build the beds is more expensive than simply amending the existing soil.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less weed pressure. Because the soil is weed free and is contained by a short wall (the garden box), the weed pressure will be greatly reduced as compared with an in-ground garden.</td>
<td>The soil in raised beds tends to heat up to higher temperatures and will get compacted over a couple of years, thus affecting its ability to grow plants and produce food.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN-GROUND GARDENS</th>
<th>POSITIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s cheaper!</td>
<td>You will spend more time pulling weeds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very easy to expand or change your bed design.</td>
<td>You may not be starting with healthy soil. It may take several years of growing and adding compost to improve the quality of the soil.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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NOTE: If the choice is an in-ground garden, it is important to do a soil test to make sure the existing soil is not contaminated and that it is fit to grow food in. Most likely the state’s agricultural university or extension office will do a soil test for free or for a minimal price.
WHAT SIZE SHOULD EACH GARDEN BED BE?

Whether the choice is in-ground or raised-bed gardening, the size of each garden bed will be important for the success of growing food. Plants grow best in light, fluffy soil that has not been compacted by hundreds of little footsteps, so it is a good idea to make the garden beds small enough that students can easily walk around them instead of through them. Four foot by eight foot beds work well because students can easily reach to the middle from either side, and a small class of students can fit comfortably around the perimeter of the garden.

HOW SHOULD WE LAY OUT THE GARDEN BEDS?

Here the Garden Committee can choose to be really creative or simply line up the beds evenly in a grid fashion. This is a great place to gather input from students. Remember, some of the design/layout options will be limited by the space that is available. Here are a few examples of successful school garden designs.
THE DAWES SCHOOL GARDEN OF EATING
A Slow Food in the Schools Project

Evanston, IL

- Butterfly Garden
- Prairie Garden
- Sunflowers Bench
- Compost
- Raised Bed 8' x 4'
- Tables
- Shed
- Raspberry Patch
- Earthboxes
- Pumpkin Patch

Sample Plan: The Dawes School Garden of Eating

L.Hyndman
**TO FENCE OR NOT TO FENCE?**

Do you need a fence around your garden? How do you know? What are you trying to keep out? A deer fence looks different from a rabbit fence. Some schools may require that you install a fence with a locking gate from the beginning for student safety, liability, or security reasons. If there is no requirement to install a fence, it may be better to wait a growing season to see if you really need a fence. It is better to lose a few crops to rabbits in the first year than to pay the money for a six-foot deer fence that doesn’t keep rabbits out anyway. It is better to know what animals are threats to the garden and then design a fence to keep them out. Or, perhaps the first growing season may show that there is not much of an animal-pressure issue and no fence is needed.

**LOCATION OF THE GARDEN**

There are many considerations when looking at the available space on the schoolyard and trying to fit in a garden that will support the vision and goals of the Garden Committee. Like any decision with multiple variables, there needs to be a list of priorities that are more important to the Garden Committee, while some choices are less important. In the following discussion, some of the different factors affecting the placement of the garden in the schoolyard will be considered.

**Size.** There are a couple of approaches to deciding how large of a garden is needed. The first tactic would be to mark off the largest space available on the schoolyard for a garden with cones or string and then see how many beds can be fit into the space. Alternatively, draw up an ideal garden design on a piece of grid paper, determine its optimal size, and look at the schoolyard for a space that can accommodate the desired garden. In either example, involve some students in determining the size of the garden. Provide the students with some standard parameters (e.g., four foot by eight foot beds, three-foot pathways, compost area, work table) and allow them to fit these pieces into the marked-off space or on the grid paper. As discussed earlier, try to capture as much space on the schoolyard as possible so that the garden can expand in the future.

**Level.** Not only is it important to find a large enough space on the schoolyard for the garden but it is important to find a rather level area for the garden. Most schoolyards are flat, but it is possible that the proposed area is a patch that is not desired by the PE program or by athletics because of a slope. Gardens can deal with some slope, but try to minimize the amount of slope.

**Drainage.** Part of the consideration of slope is: how does the proposed space drain when it rains? Vegetables grow best in well-draining soil. Be sure to observe the prospective space after a rain to see if there are puddles or a temporary stream running through the space.

**Sunlight.** To have a very successful garden and the ability to grow all types of plants, you need a minimum of six hours of sunlight per day, while eight hours per day is preferred. If your only gardening spot gets slightly less than six hours of sunlight per day, you might still be able to grow leafy vegetables like lettuce and spinach that prefer cooler temperatures.

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Ask for student input in determining the design of the garden.
**Water access.** The availability of water access is often one of the largest determining factors in where to place a school garden. If the budget is limited, it will be important to pick a spot that is close to an exterior hose hookup at the school. Alternative water sources like rain barrels are possible in some municipalities, so check with your local water officials. Even if you are planning on installing a rain barrel (more on this later), you still need to have access to a hose that is hooked into the school’s plumbing in case your garden needs more water than the rain barrel holds or you experience a drought.

**Soil quality.** Since students are considered an at-risk population for health issues, it is advisable that any new garden site be tested for contaminants in the soil. Even if the plan is to install raised beds and add soil from other sources, a soil test will inform the Garden Committee of any risks from the soil.

**Safety issues.** School gardens have many inherent safety risks when you consider the major users will be young children and that the garden generates much activity. When designing the garden, go over the plans with the eye of a risk management officer to identify potential dangerous situations. Things to watch for include: sharp corners, exposed nails and screws, objects that can be climbed, uneven surfaces, holes, and places to hide.

**Current use.** What is the school currently using the space for that they would have to give up? In the school’s eyes, is the garden’s benefit worth the loss of this space for other activities?

**Access for all students.** The location of the garden needs to take into consideration the access for students with physical disabilities. Are there sidewalks to the garden space, and is the space relatively close to exits from the building? And once the garden is being constructed, proper materials on the pathways are affected by ADA rules. It is ideal to use materials like crusher fines for the pathways so that wheelchairs and crutches are able to traverse the pathways to different beds. See picture of a table bed at a Friendship Garden in Charlotte that meets ADA height requirements.

**Line of sight.** One of the responsibilities of the principal is to ensure the safety of all students when they are on school grounds. When considering the placement of the school garden, the principal will want direct lines of sight from the school building to all points in the school garden. The garden should not be tucked away behind the school parking lot or behind a berm or hill where students could hide or predators could conceal themselves.

**Permission.** Once the Garden Committee has found an ideal spot on the campus, the next step is to approach the principal for permission to use the space. The principal will likely have to go to the Facilities Department for the district to seek their blessing for the placement of the garden. Facilities will know about any five-to-ten-year plans for the school and whether there are construction plans for the schoolyard.
Additional Features for Your School Garden

Consider incorporating a few of these additional garden features in your design. They are not only great companion activities for garden activities with children, they can also be used as increased educational opportunities for the students. You can choose to add these features during the initial design and build or anytime in the garden’s life.

**Compost Pile.** What do you plan to do with plant refuse during the length of the growing season? Consider building a compost pile for your garden. Compost piles can be located in the shade or the sun. A corner spot in the garden works well. Materials used to make a compost pile can incorporate lessons such as recycling or re-using. Old pallets do a nice job as the walls of a three-bin compost system.

**Rain Barrel.** Installing some sort of rain collection system is a great option for school gardens. Before you do, be sure to check your local laws and city ordinances to see if rain collection is allowed (in Colorado, saving rainwater has not been allowed since water laws were created in the 1850s). Rain barrels reduce your water bill and can be used to teach kids about water conservation and water pressure. The easiest way to install a rain barrel at a school is to tap into a downspout from the gutter system. It is a good idea to build a small platform for your rain barrel. The higher the rain barrel, the more water pressure available due to gravity. The rain barrel will need to be as close to the garden space as possible to reduce the distance needed to haul the water.

**Irrigation System.** If you are installing a larger garden space or if no one will be around in the summer to water, it may be advisable to install a drip or spray irrigation system. Irrigation systems are not necessary but can make watering the garden much easier. You can choose to install a timer (added expense) or simply turn the system on and off manually. There are many different types of irrigation systems for gardens. Chances are your local hardware store will have drip irrigation supplies and someone who can walk a Garden Leader through the design/setup. Or do some online research to pick the right system for your garden.

**Season Extenders.** Season extenders are different pieces of garden equipment that can be used to make the growing season longer. Some season extenders allow for more time at the beginning of the growing season, and some provide more time at the end of the growing season. Examples include: row covers, cold frames, and greenhouses. Gardens in the South are able to grow almost year-round, so it may not be worth the investment in season extenders. In the northern climates with a short growing season, season extenders are a great option for making sure crops reach maturity. The Special Projects chapter will have a lengthier discussion of season extenders.
Garden sign. Consider making a sign for your garden. Along with the name of the garden, you could choose to include an email address or Web address for people interested in learning more or to volunteering. You might also want to include some sort of recognition that this is a Slow Food garden and thank any sponsors in some way. Consult with your school art teacher about the garden sign. Is this something their art class could make?

Tools. The garden program will need at least a few basic tools. As the garden grows, the Garden Committee may want to add more tools to the collection or ask volunteers to donate them. Here is a short, relatively inexpensive list that will get the garden project started.

- Gloves: you will need several pairs of various sizes
- Two or three long-handled shovels
- Five hand trowels for planting
- One flat metal rake (bow rake)
- One hose that easily reaches all areas of the garden
- Five or six watering cans. When gardening with young children, many watering cans is way better than one hose that gets fought over!
- One wheelbarrow

Tool Storage. A shed or large tool chest in the garden for storing tools is not absolutely necessary, but it is convenient. If the garden budget can’t afford tool storage at this point, use a rolling cart that can hold all the garden tools and can be stored in a closet inside the school building. Some school districts do not allow sheds to be built on school property. In this case, a large metal tool chest works well. Be sure the chest has locking capabilities so that the tools are safely tucked away from inappropriate use or can’t be stolen.
Finding Materials for Your Garden Build

Once the design of the garden is complete and all the initial features of the garden have been identified, it is time to construct a materials list for the garden project. Divide materials into several categories, including:

1. things needed for the garden build, including beds, pathways, and fencing
2. small pieces to be used in the garden, such as tools, tables, benches, cages, and planting supplies
3. educational materials such as workbooks, science kits, posters, and weather station

Of course, all these materials will put a stress on most garden budgets, so the Garden Committee needs to be creative in finding funding streams or donations to obtain the supplies. Here are some ideas of where the Garden Committee can look for the needed materials:

Any connections to local businesses on your school Garden Committee? Does anyone on the Committee know someone who works at a hardware store, lumberyard, nursery, etc.? Would they be willing to help negotiate a donation or discount?

Even if the Committee does not have a personal connection to a local store, it may still be beneficial to ask for an in-kind donation of supplies needed to build the garden. Often store managers at large hardware stores have a certain amount of discretionary gift certificates for small amounts that they can give away. If they can’t help with a donation, ask them for a discount. If they do give a donation or discount of some kind, be sure to follow up with them after the garden build with a thank you note and a picture of the garden. They will be more likely to help the garden project in the future.

Negotiate with a local business a standing discount for materials that will be used often. This is a great strategy for saving garden budget money on supplies needed each growing season, such as seeds and compost.

Buying in bulk when helpful. Depending on the size of the garden, it may be wise to purchase garden soil or compost by the pickup truckload or even dump-truck load. Several cubic yards of soil will be much cheaper purchased in bulk than purchased in bags. Soil companies can deliver using a dump truck but usually have a minimum amount and will charge a delivery fee. A cheaper way to go is to round up a bunch of friends with pickup trucks.

Be creative in finding funding streams or donations to obtain supplies.
Finding Volunteers for Your Garden Build

All of this work has now led up to the big day when the garden will be built. Unless there is a large budget to hire a professional crew to build out the garden, it will be necessary to bring in volunteers from the school community as the labor force. There have been many great examples of volunteers building successful school gardens. Below is a list of groups to approach about volunteering for the garden build day. Before beginning to recruit volunteers, estimate how many volunteers will be needed and divide the work project into shifts with specific skills and subprojects that will be completed in the designated time slots.

School garden team
The build day is a good way to get the spouses involved

Your Slow Food chapter
Members like the opportunity to volunteer on a one-day basis

Students at the school
Involving the kids will build buy-in to the garden program

School PTA
Volunteers and fundraising are their specialty

Nearby faith groups
also looking for one-time volunteer large group opportunities

Volunteer organizations in your town
sometimes have lists of businesses that are looking to engage their employees in volunteer opportunities

Other school partners?
The school may already have a church, civic group or business that provides volunteers for them.

Businesses that donated to the project
If a local business wants to donate supplies or funds to the garden build, ask them if they would like to supply volunteers as well. Many businesses want their employees to volunteer in the community as well as give in-kind or monetary donations.

Budget: How much is all this going to cost?

The budget for a garden project will depend on many different factors like the size of the garden, whether a fence is required, the amount of any donated materials, and if you are planning to include any additional features, etc. For a sample budget see the following page. There are two general categories for your garden budget.

ONE-TIME GARDEN BUILD COSTS

soil, wood, or stone (if building raised beds), fence (if needed), hose, tools, shed, etc.

RECURRING COSTS

compost, mulch, seedlings, water (the school may pay for this, but it is a good idea to confirm this in the planning stage). Recurring costs for a garden can be quite low, but it is a good idea to plan a small yearly budget to cover the costs.
## Estimated Costs

### Cooking Supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile food cart</td>
<td>$350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction burners (2)</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen supplies</td>
<td>$375.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper goods</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL KITCHEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1275.00</strong></td>
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</table>

### Gardening Supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeds/plants</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant propagation</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science supplies/soil test</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost bins</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propagation mats (2)</td>
<td>$70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow lights (one 3-shelf)</td>
<td>$175.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden tools</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelbarrow</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drip supplies</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL GARDEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1300.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>$500.00–$2000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence (30x50) installed price</td>
<td>$4000.00–$5000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulch</td>
<td>$100.00–$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manure</td>
<td>$75.00–$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL IMPROVEMENTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4675.00–$7700.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What should be grown in the garden?

Hooray! The garden is built, now what? It is time to decide what to grow. The crops that can be grown will depend somewhat on the local climate and growing season as well as the native soil structure. It is a good idea to do a little research about what typically grows well in the local area. Here is a list of some considerations when planning what to grow in the school garden.

**Slow Food USA Ark of Taste** (website link in the resources section at the end of this chapter). This is a list of over 200 delicious foods that are in danger of extinction. Help ensure that we don’t lose these varieties forever by growing a few of the vegetables on this list.

**Heirloom Varieties.** Heirloom varieties of vegetables usually taste much better than conventionally grown varieties and often look cooler, too! Kids will love to grow purple tomatoes.

**Ask the students what they want to grow.** Student gardeners will be more invested in gardening from the beginning if they get some say in what to grow. Let them choose what they like to eat or let each student pick one thing out of a seed catalog.

**Grow root crops.** By far the most fun thing for kids to harvest are root crops. Harvest day is like a treasure hunt! Plant potatoes, carrots, turnips, radishes, beets, etc.

Maintenance in the Garden

The garden will require regular maintenance throughout the year in order to flourish. Gardening is a seasonal activity. The growing season will be your busy time for garden maintenance and gardening lessons with the students. The winter will be your time to reflect on the successes of the last growing season and plan for the upcoming growing season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURING THE GROWING SEASON</th>
<th>DAILY OR EVERY OTHER DAY</th>
<th>WEEKLY</th>
<th>MONTHLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>watering, pulling weeds</td>
<td>harvesting, mulching (as needed)</td>
<td>replanting as needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summer vacation can pose a challenge for school gardens because a good chunk of the garden work needs to be done during the summer. Make sure that there is a plan for maintaining the garden through summer vacation and other breaks. The Garden Committee might want to engage a summer-school program at the school or recruit more community volunteers to help during summer break. School gardens in the South have the option of simply not planting a summer garden. Because of the South’s long growing season, school gardens can plant large spring and fall gardens and avoid the summer completely if need be.
Student Summer Watering Jobs ANDREW NOWAK, SLOW FOOD DENVER

Schools always seem to struggle with a solution to keep the gardens watered and weeded over the course of the summer when there is very little activity in the school. In most cases, the facility manager and his/her staff are not willing to water the garden in fear that they will do a poor job or just because they are busy with other duties inside the building. With no classes or activities at the school, trying to get someone from the school community to commit to a regular watering schedule seems daunting.

In Denver, Slow Food Denver garden leader Andrew Nowak solved the summer maintenance issue by using an incentive that tends to attract students of all ages. Andrew devised a summer schedule of two-week rotations that required at least one family to commit to watering and weeding the garden. To attract families to this job, Andrew posted in the school newsletter a job opportunity for students. For a $25 stipend, a student could sign up his/her family to care for the garden. Of course, the student had to get his/her parents’ permission and commitment to be involved. But in most cases, if the student expressed interest in the two-week position, the parents were willing to indulge the child’s wishes. Andrew has had this program in effect for five years, and each year more families sign up than are needed.

Andrew posts the job and stipend opportunity around mid-April with a signup deadline for mid-May. Families that sign up early get first pick for their two-week session. If more families express interest than are needed, Andrew selected a few to be backups in the event a family has to pull out. Once the summer season started, Andrew would conduct a training to show families how the watering system works, what kind of plants and their watering needs are found in each bed, and how to weed and compost the materials coming from the garden. Andrew estimates that a family will spend one hour per day in the garden completing these responsibilities.

Overall, the stipend program works very well. The families first complete their two-week session, and then the next family starts. Andrew then processes the cash stipend for the student and writes a thank you note to the family. The families are happy to help out and to be part of a valued program at school. In some cases, these summer families also later step out to volunteer for other garden needs. Andrew still checks on the garden from time to time during the summer, but with the stipend program, he does not need to be there every day.
ow that there is a school garden in the district being supported by a Slow Food chapter, what are the next steps to increase the number of gardens while not putting too much pressure on the Slow Food chapter? Many Slow Food chapters will share that once one school garden is having success, there will be other schools that will approach Slow Food to help get other gardens started. Like potato chips, it will be difficult to just have one garden.

Slow Food Denver had just this “problem” six years ago as the number of gardens in Denver Public Schools started to outpace the size of the Educational Committee within Slow Food Denver that was responsible for the Seed to Table School Food Program. Recognizing that the number of school gardens was going to put too much strain on the Educational Committee, members Gigia Kolouch and Andrew Nowak devised a new format to support school gardens. They formed the School Garden Alliance between Garden Committees and Slow Food Denver to allow a small number of Slow Food leaders to support a large number of school gardens.

The Alliance represented a shift in managing the school gardens from a direct “put Slow Food volunteers on the ground” approach to more of a Resource Approach and a membership format. Currently, the Seed to Table School Garden Alliance allows Slow Food Denver to provide resources such as workshops on how to garden and cook with students, free seeds, plants and materials from local businesses, a source of volunteers for garden projects, connections to the higher levels of District Administration (Food Service, Facilities), and community partners like Whole Foods and Chipotle.

Since the inception of the Alliance, the number of school gardens has grown to over 60 working with Slow Food Denver while the Seed to Table leadership fluctuates from two–three people. The Garden Leaders at each school are able to meet once a month at the Seed to Table workshops to be trained for different aspects of a school garden program, meet new volunteers interested in being involved, and to network with each other to hear Best Practices. The Alliance is able to provide seeds and transplants donated from local nurseries as well as arrange for wholesale-priced herb plants. Gigia has developed a team of culinary professionals who will be available for cooking classes in the school. Andrew works with Food Services to strengthen the Garden to Cafeteria program so that schools can use the garden produce in the lunch services. All of these benefits would be nearly impossible for a single Garden Leader to arrange on his or her own. The strength of the Alliance is the number of gardens, the strong connections to the District and community, and the networking across the different gardens.
Resources

Books


Websites
California School Garden Network www.csgn.org
The Center for Ecoliteracy: www.ecoliteracy.org
The Edible Schoolyard Project: www.edibleschoolyard.org
Friendship Gardens: www.friendship-gardens.org
Life Lab: www.lifelab.org
The National Gardening Association: www.garden.org and www.kidsgardening.org
School Garden Wizard: www.schoolgardenwizard.org
Slow Food USA: slowfoodusa.org
Square Foot Gardening: www.squarefootgardening.com
“Why A Garden” graphic from The Growing Classroom: Garden-Based Science
CHAPTER 2: Volunteers

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Lynn Hyndman, Slow Food Chicago, IL
Andrew Nowak, Slow Food Denver, CO
Henry Owen, Slow Food Charlotte, NC
Introduction

Volunteers are central to the success of any school garden program effort, particularly given that school districts are not able to fund paid positions to coordinate the garden activities. Within a school garden program, volunteers from the school community will be needed to support the teachers, as they will have not enough time to manage the needs of the gardens. Slow Food chapters can be a great resource for school garden programs by recruiting, training, recognizing, and rewarding volunteers who spend time in school gardens. Within the membership of a Slow Food chapter are potential volunteers who will have the talents and skills to be a benefit to school gardens. Since Slow Food chapters deal with volunteers on a regular basis for many of their programs and events, Slow Food can bring wisdom and experience to the volunteer needs of a garden program. For the garden program to be successful, it is essential to recruit and wisely use volunteers when beginning or continuing a program.

Whether a volunteer is a member of their school community or someone recruited by a Slow Food chapter, creatively utilizing these people is key to getting the work done while making the experience fulfilling for the volunteers. Ideally, the volunteers see value in their participation and will want to continue to support the garden program. This chapter provides advice on where to recruit volunteers, how best to use their energies, how to motivate and reward them, and potentially how to convert their position into a paid one.

Sharing the Goals of Slow Food and the Garden Program

Even before you start reaching out to prospective volunteers, it is very important to create the messaging behind the school garden project and the different organizations that are driving this effort. Prospective volunteers want to know why the project is important, who is going to be impacted by their efforts, and the human stories behind the work that is going to be done. Everyone’s time is valuable, and new volunteers want to know that their time will be respected and the experience will be rewarding.

In the cases where Slow Food is one of the partners of the school garden program, it is important that a good description of the Slow Food mission be shared with new volunteers. Thus a key piece in the recruitment of volunteers is for them to understand the mission of Slow Food as an organization. Have prepared statements that describe what Slow Food is all about and how our mission can be an important part of their lives. On the following page, is an example from Slow Food Denver that describes the Slow Food philosophy, especially as it pertains to school gardens.

Hopefully, the description of the Slow Food mission will be of interest to the new volunteers and they will want to learn what they can do to support the mission. If recruiting help for a school garden program, it is important to clearly lay out the goals of the program and how it will affect the children. In addition, the goals of the garden program should show how the volunteers will be important to the success of the program.

In addition to the Slow Food mission, it is important to have information specific to the mission of the school garden program. Since school garden programs represent the interests and capacities of the Slow Food chapters, the program description will be different across chapters. There should be some common themes that all school garden programs represent, so it will be useful to look at some examples. Here is a program description of Slow Food Denver’s Seed to Table School Food Program:
Slow Food Volunteer Info

Thank you for your interest in helping Slow Food Denver in our efforts to connect Coloradans to their food and build community. We thought you might want some more info about us.

What Is Slow Food?

Slow Food is an idea, a way of living, and a way of eating. It is a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. Slow Food USA leads the movement in the United States. With more than 250,000 supporters, 25,000 members, and 225 chapters nationwide, Slow Food USA advocates for food and farming policy and practices that are good for the public, good for the planet, and good for farmers and workers.

VISION

We are feeding ourselves, our families, and our community with easily accessible and nourishing food from our local gardens, farmers, and ranchers.

MISSION

Slow Food Denver cultivates the enjoyment of local food with all members of the community to create a more just and sustainable food system.

VALUES

Slow Food Denver is part of a global movement that believes everyone has the right to good, clean, and fair food. We value:

The Pleasure of Food

The pleasure of sharing food prepared with care from healthy plants and animals builds community.

Education

Educating people about the cultivation, preparation, and appreciation of food empowers democratic change in the food system.

Collaboration

Collaboration among diverse groups of informed producers and consumers creates a resilient, healthy, local food community.

Community Involvement

We value the passion and creativity of our members and supporters and encourage participation at all levels of our organization.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Hosting, planning, or helping with an event
Teaching gardening or cooking classes and tending gardens through our Seed to Table program
Tracking food systems policy and legislation
Reaching out to the community to develop greater awareness of Slow Food Denver

Contact us!

Send an email to info@slowfooddenver.org and we’ll get you started!
About Slow Food Denver’s Seed to Table School Food Program

WHAT WE DO
Slow Food Denver’s Seed to Table (SFD-STT) School Food Program creates meaningful relationships between young people and food in order to transform the school food system. By placing an emphasis on hands-on experiences, community interaction, and the pleasures of the table, SFD-STT projects help to strengthen the food communities of tomorrow by engaging youth today. We work closely with Denver area schools to teach students where their food comes from, how to prepare it, who grows it, the importance of food choices, and the pleasure of sharing with friends and family.

HOW WE DO IT

Where Food Grows
Students experience all aspects of food production through school gardens. We provide support and training to our member schools through the following methods.

- We provide a liaison between parents, teachers, partner organizations, and the school district. We help design appropriate vegetable gardens, help procure garden resources, recruit school-based teams, and train volunteers to provide programming.
- Lessons include plant botany, seed starting, saving, and transplanting, as well as gardening, vermiculture, and composting. We teach the cultural significance and history of food.
- Specific projects include the Wellness in the Garden After-School Program, the SFD Garden Activity Guide, and the Seed to Table Alliance of schools.

How to Prepare Food
The STT Program improves cooking skills of all community stakeholders: students, food service, staff, and parents through the following projects.

- We teach students how to cook culturally relevant fresh foods with our harvest classes and SFD Garden Activity Guide.
- Parents participate through the Youth Farmers’ Markets, school community events, and volunteer activities.
- Our work with food service includes the Garden to Cafeteria Project, where students harvest produce from their garden for use in school salad bars, as well as assistance in scratch cooking training, and recipe and menu development for food service employees. Our efforts have resulted in district-wide policy changes, including the implementation of Colorado Proud Day, celebrating local foods.

Who Grows Our Food
We work to increase local procurement both by the school community and food service. Participating schools design and run Youth Farmers’ Markets featuring school garden and local produce. Our partnership with district food service has increased consumption of Colorado produce and meat in school cafeterias. Local partnerships with producers and processors have allowed us to help the school district form value food chains and food hubs in order to minimize food processing while increasing the supply of cost-effective local foods.
Volunteer Recruitment

Recruiting volunteers for school garden programs is a multi-step process. First, identify the different ways to reach out to prospective volunteers using the Internet and social media, at large gatherings and events, through personal networks, and through the schools that are going to benefit from the gardens. With each of these outlets, the messaging of Slow Food’s mission and the goals of the school garden program needs to be shared. Just as important, provide the prospective volunteers with a means of corresponding back to Slow Food and the Garden Committee. With this two-way communication, barriers and conflicts can be addressed early so that they don’t grow and impede any progress.

FINDING PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEERS

Social Media

Examples: Facebook, Twitter, E-Blasts, Websites, School Calendar, School website, PTO/PTA email list, School E-blast list. There are numerous ways to connect with potential volunteers and share with them the many opportunities to get involved in a school garden project. The most obvious communication channels used these days are all the social media and Internet outlets. Here is an example of an email blast being used to update and thank volunteers.

Samuels has an orchard!

1 message

Samuels Garden <samuelsgarden2011@gmail.com>  Mon, Apr 22, 2013 at 4:28 PM
Bcc: seeotable@slowfooddenver.org

Earth Day was celebrated properly at Samuels Community Garden. Our students planted a beautiful array of apple, pear, plum, cherry and peach trees today. Their eagerness to dig right in was contagious, and their smiles rewarding.

Even when Mother Nature blew a great storm our way, the classes kept coming in rotation to tend to their school garden and contribute to the lovely orchard. It is a testament to the wonderful, hard-working teachers and children at Samuels that they were so dedicated to today’s project.

Thank you to the Cara Foundation for the generous donation that made it possible to buy 22 trees! Thank you to Councilwoman Peggy Lehmann for visiting this morning. Thank you to Whole Foods for donating organic fruit for our students to enjoy.

Samuels Community Garden is a reality today thanks to so many people from all walks of life and so much generosity from countless sources. It is a true grass-roots collective effort that is enjoying great success!

Thank YOU, for playing your part!

Slow Food Events

While social media allows a Slow Food chapter to reach a large range of potential volunteers, there are still many other ways to reach out to the community to recruit volunteers. At Slow Food events, make sure to have a prepared poster or table-top materials available so that interested people can have some information to take home. In addition to Slow Food events, ask your community partners to share volunteer opportunities with their patrons and mailing lists. Often our partners in the community have members who would be interested in the school activities that Slow Food supports.
**Slow Food Membership**

One of the many reasons people join Slow Food is for the volunteer opportunities. School gardens are a very popular project for volunteers, so be sure to list opportunities for the membership to get involved. In some cases, finding volunteers will be tough because the school garden programs tend to happen Monday–Friday when the children are in school. At the same time, the prospective volunteers will be at work. Try to have some weekend opportunities for volunteers so that they can get involved.

**Schools**

Perhaps the most logical place to start to recruit volunteers for school gardens is at the schools themselves. In general, the strength of a school garden program is dependent upon the support of the school community. If the school has a PTA/PTO, contact their leadership committee and ask to present at their next meeting the volunteer needs of the school garden project. Most schools have a weekly letter that is sent home via email or folder where volunteer opportunities can be shared. If the school garden already exists, then posting an announcement in the garden for volunteers or hosting a weekly coffee in the gardens after morning drop off will generate some interest in the opportunities in the garden project.

**School Events**

Be sure to be ready to set up a stand to talk about the garden, with signup list in hand at the following school events.

- Garden work days/Earth Day/Mother’s Day
- PTA/PTO events and Health and Wellness Fairs
- Back to school nights
- Teacher parent conference nights
- Holiday celebrations

Outside of the Slow Food and school networks, there are many other sources for potential volunteers. Below is a list of organizations that have supported school gardens in the past. In each community, this list will look different, so use these ideas as a place to get started. Look around your community for groups that may want to support school gardens.

**Other Sources for Potential Volunteers**

- **Universities and colleges** — fraternities/sororities, faculty groups
- **High school students** with community service requirements
- **Local gardening list serves**
- **Local service groups** such as Rotary and Lions Clubs
- **Local farming organizations**, like FFA (Future Farmers of America) and 4-H
- **Town government**
- **Nutrition organizations** (e.g., American Dietetic Association)
- **Local garden groups**, especially organic ones
- **Local community garden organization**
- **Faith-based community groups**, such as local churches, synagogues and mosques
- **Refugee communities**
- **Edible Schoolyard website** ([www.edibleschoolyard.org/](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/))
● **Partners** Use partnerships to connect with those outside of the school circle (producers, chefs). Whole Foods often looks for team building opportunities for their employees, and school garden projects lend themselves well to this need.

● **Corporate groups** often want to lend a hand, especially if they are in town for a convention. Connect with your local convention center to discuss the possibilities.

● **Internships and Apprenticeships** Look at local universities with nutrition programs, vocational schools with horticulture programs, 4-H, and FFA. Note that these volunteers will need more guidance and hand-holding both because of age and level of commitment. They would be expected to work x number of hours per week with supervision, for instance.

● **Walk-ins** Locate the garden in high traffic area with signage about how to connect with the garden leader.

### Communicating with Volunteers

One of the most important tools in a chapter’s recruiting of volunteers is to have a place where you can communicate with volunteers and where they can communicate with you. At a minimum, be sure there is an email provided on the chapter website where volunteers can let you know they are interested in helping out. Below is an example from Slow Food East End (Long Island) of their recruitment page. Their website is powered by Weebly.com. Free webhosting and many other services are also available from Grassroots.org (www.grassroots.org/services/free-website-hosting).
Volunteer Questionnaire

Once a Slow Food chapter has received a request from a prospective volunteer, gather some information from this person to find out their interests and general availability. Here is a sample of a questionnaire used by Slow Food Denver to assess interests of volunteers. This information is then entered into a database so that when volunteer opportunities arise, a quick search for potential volunteers can be easy to do.

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Seed to Table School Food Program
Volunteer Application

Name

Address

Phone Email

Areas of Interest

☐ I want to volunteer at a school near me*. Please put me in touch with a garden leader.
☐ I would love to be part of the monthly workshops. My expertise is in ____________________________________________
☐ Cooking classes in classrooms or farmers’ markets
☐ I am a chef (or just a good cook!) and would like to volunteer with cooking classes*
☐ Occasional garden help
☐ Volunteer Coordinator
☐ Run garden/cooking program at a school*. My experience is ____________________________________________
☐ Other Slow Food Events ____________________________________________

Available Times

☐ During school day (8:30 am – 3:00 pm) ____________________________________________
☐ After-school programs (3:00 pm – 6:00 pm) ____________________________________________
☐ Weekends ____________________________________________
☐ Summer ____________________________________________

Emergency Contact

Phone

May we share your contact information with schools that need help?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

The undersigned hereby agrees to accept all liability for any and all damages resulting from volunteer activities with Slow Food Denver. In addition, the undersigned agrees that images may be used in print or electronic marketing or other materials by Slow Food Denver.

*May require a background check, including fingerprints, before volunteer duties are assigned.

Signature

Date
SAMPLE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Community Garden
Volunteer Educator Survey

Directions:
Please check your response for each item, and write out your answers to the follow-up questions.
BE HONEST!!! (There is extra space on the back if you need more room to share your thoughts.)

I would incorporate aspects of the garden into my lesson:
〇 Weekly  〇 Once or Twice a Month  〇 Once or Twice a Semester  〇 Never

During class time, I would have students work in the garden/hold lessons in the garden:
〇 Weekly  〇 Once or Twice a Month  〇 Once or Twice a Semester  〇 Never

I am interested in being involved in running the garden  〇 Yes  〇 No  〇 Maybe

I am interested in volunteering to help in the garden during the summer
〇 Yes  〇 No  〇 Maybe

Additional comments or thoughts about the garden project:
Volunteer Job Descriptions

Once you have found some eager volunteers and have identified their interests to help out with school gardens, the best strategy is to have a list of job opportunities from which they can pick. Available jobs may vary from garden to garden, so first check with the garden leaders at each school to see what kind of volunteers they need. From the requests of the garden leaders, generate some job descriptions so that the new volunteers understand what their roles and expectations may be. Include in the job descriptions the hours and days of the week that will be part of the volunteer opportunity. Posting volunteer role descriptions online is a great way to help you manage your volunteer roles and volunteer interest.

HOW TO WRITE VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Before the volunteer role descriptions are written, revisit the goals that were laid out for this project as described in the “Design and Build” chapter. Design the volunteer role descriptions to help meet the goals of the school garden program. For example, if one of the goals is to engage local chefs to do cooking demonstrations with the garden produce, be sure to include a description for the local chef volunteer role.

When sitting down to write the descriptions, try to think from the potential volunteer’s point of view. What information will they want to know? Be sure to always include an estimated time commitment. Try to make the descriptions fun, inviting, short, and specific.

For an example of volunteer role descriptions visit www.friendship-gardens.org/volunteers

Below are some great examples of garden job descriptions from Friendship Gardens in Charlotte, NC, and Slow Food Charlotte:

We realize that there are many people who wish to volunteer, but in a way that takes advantage of their passions, skills, or talents. It is for this reason that we offer specialized volunteer opportunities.

Photographer - Do you love to shoot... pictures? We need pictures of each garden for the website. We would also love to invite you to a work day to be the designated photographer.

Harvest Deliverer - Harvest time is busy! We need help getting the harvest from our gardens to the willing chefs at Friendship Trays. After years of volunteers taking food tray deliveries FROM Friendship Trays, it’s time for volunteers to deliver food TO Friendship Trays. We would pair you with one of our volunteer garden leaders, and you could help deliver the harvest from the garden(s) they manage.

Baby Plant Starter - Our network of gardens needs lots of plants. We can provide the supplies. Can you germinate, nurture, and babysit plants in your home before they are ready to plant outside?

Greenhouse Worker - Do you love baby plants? Want to help us start plants for our network of gardens in our donated greenhouse? We provide the supplies and can train you.

Leaf Thief! - Fall leaves make great mulch around plants and are an essential ingredient in making compost. We need LOTS of leaves year round. We need leaf thieves to save bags of leaves from the curb and deliver them to the Friendship Gardens.

Harvest Prep Team in the Kitchen - Cooking fresh collards is a lot more work than opening a can! Volunteers are needed to assist the kitchen staff in prepping the garden harvest that is donated (washing, de-stemming, etc.). Can you help? Time slot is each Tuesday 11am - 12:30pm. Email Lani Lawrence llawrence@friendshiptrays.org if you are interested.

Composter - Did you know Friendship Trays creates 15–20 pounds of food scraps every day that need to be composted? This could be a great source of nitrogen for your home compost bin or a free source of food for your backyard chickens. Please let us know if you would like to take a five-gallon bucket of frozen food scraps home to compost.

Mower / Weed Eater - Enjoy keeping the grass cut low? We grow food but also need to keep grass and weeds around gardens low. We need your help.

Home Grown Volunteer - We will be helping to install gardens in the backyards of interested Habitat owners so that they can grow food for their family. Volunteers are needed to help with dig-in/planting days and to provide gardening mentoring to newbie Habitat gardeners.
**WHY POST YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLES ONLINE?**

**It will save you tons of time.** People will ask “How can I help?” Instead of writing a new email each time a new person asks this question, spend a little time at the beginning to write out the volunteer role descriptions and post them to the Slow Food chapter webpage. Then, when a volunteer reaches out or when there is a need to recruit a volunteer, simply send them the link to the descriptions.

**Once the job descriptions are posted online, the volunteer needs will be easy to share.** Webpage links are extremely easy to share on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media. When there is a need to do a volunteer recruitment push, simply share the volunteer link within your online community and ask them to re-share the info as well. Does the school have a website or Facebook page? If so, be sure to chat with the person who runs these sites so that they can share the volunteer role descriptions there as well.

**It is easy to share volunteer needs with the media.** Once the school garden program picks up steam, they may be contacted by a local media member about doing a story. Media members usually ask “Where can people go to learn more or volunteer?” Simply give them the link to the volunteer role description page online. Providing a website is preferred to having them print a cell phone number in the newspaper.

**Master Farmer Volunteers**

Although these are not technically volunteers, here is another model for recruiting interns to a program, provided by Slow Food East End.

**JOSH LEVINE/SLOW FOOD EAST END ‘MASTER FARMER’ PROGRAM**

The Master Farmer Program was formed by Slow Food East End to provide technical growing assistance to garden coordinators in 26 Long Island, NY school districts with school gardens and greenhouses. Over the course of many monthly meetings of the Edible School Garden group ([edibleschoolgardens.org](http://edibleschoolgardens.org)), it became evident that most of the people working in the gardens lacked expertise with such issues as crop scheduling, low maintenance, vegetable-growing practices, integration of the garden into the curriculum, and greenhouse operations. Many general topics issues were addressed in the monthly meetings, but the scope, goals, and mission of each garden differed significantly enough to warrant individual attention.

One of our volunteers, who was a Master Gardener and a vegetable farmer, had worked extensively in several school gardens offering much-needed advice, helping determine long- and short-term goals and organizing helpful ‘work days’ to advance garden progress. Both Edible School Gardens and Slow Food East End felt that this service was invaluable for the sustainability of the school garden movement. With a program offering support services in place, gardens would be more apt to withstand changes in garden and/or administrative leadership and program challenges that could potentially lead to abandonment of the project. With the help of another partner organization, the Josh Levine Memorial Foundation, and many generous donors of food and services, we hold what has become a collaborative annual fundraising dinner to raise funds for three part-time Master Farmers (MF) to assist our school garden network.
In its second year, the program has attracted many highly qualified MF candidates, including farmers, environmentalists, and gardens and food advocates and has benefitted school programs, reaching over 10,000 Long Island students. This past year, another partner organization, EECO Farm (East End Community Organic Farm), funded an additional Master Farmer, who fields inquiries from all school gardens and coordinates the activities of the Master Farmers so as to maximize their talents and time.

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER SOLICITATION

Slow Food East End  
Josh Levine Farming Internship Application

Through the generosity of the Joshua Levine Foundation, Slow Food of the East End is seeking applicants for three Slow Food Garden Coordinator Positions to support the expanding network of Edible School Gardens on the North and South Fork of Eastern Long Island.

**GOAL:** The Garden Coordinators will support the growth of the local school garden movement by advising Edible School Garden members within a designated region on the planning, creation, maintenance, and sustainable continuation of their school gardens using local networks and resources. As each school garden is different in scope, ascertaining the needs and goals of the individual school gardens and suggesting ways to achieve them will be an important aspect of these positions.

**Slow Food USA Mission: Supporting Good, Clean, Fair Food**

Slow Food USA seeks to create dramatic and lasting change in the food system. We reconnect Americans with the people, traditions, plants, animals, and fertile soils and waters that produce our food. We seek to inspire a transformation in food policy production practices and transformation in food policy, production practices, and market forces so that they ensure equity, sustainability, and pleasure in the food we eat. [www.slowfoodusa.org](http://www.slowfoodusa.org)

**Slow Food East End Principles**

Slow Food is an idea, a way of living, and a way of eating. It is a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world. Slow Food links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. We support the mission of Slow Food USA to provide food that is good for you, good for the people who grow it, and good for the planet. [www.slowfoodeastend.org](http://www.slowfoodeastend.org)

**Joshua Levine Memorial Foundation**

Josh loved living on the East End of Long Island. He was enamored with its beauty, history, and potential for providing a wonderful place to create a home and raise a family. As a farmer, Josh gained much satisfaction out of planting seeds in the rich earth, seeing them take root, helping them to mature, harvesting the bounty, and finally tasting the rewards. The Joshua Levine Memorial Foundation’s mission is to support charitable programs in which Josh had an interest, including organic farming, photography, and education. [jlmf.weebly.com/index.html](http://jlmf.weebly.com/index.html)
The Slow Food School Garden Coordinators will:

- Assist designated Edible School Garden ([EdibleSchoolGardens.org](http://EdibleSchoolGardens.org)) members on the North or South Fork of Long Island in the planning, creation, and maintenance of their school gardens, using local school community resources and networks. Assistance may include: site design and layout, the creation of planting and harvest schedules, greenhouse growing techniques, instruction in organic farming principles and integrated pest management and the art of composting.

- Advise members on how to set and accomplish individual garden goals and provide technical and/or horticultural advice. The Coordinator will not be responsible for the maintenance of or working in the garden.

- Attend monthly Slow Food Education/Edible School Garden Meetings, Slow Food Events, and the Joshua Levine Memorial Dinner at the American Hotel on April 1, 2012, and the 2013 dinner.

- Serve as a liaison between Slow Food East End, the Joshua Levine Foundation, the Edible School Garden Group, and designated school gardens on the North or South Fork, communicating the needs of and issues concerning school gardens to the Slow Food Education/Edible School Garden Leaders.

- Keep a weekly activity log of garden visits and submit report monthly to the Slow Food Education Committee at the Edible School Garden/Slow Food Education Committee meetings.

Online tools for managing volunteers

Utilizing free tools available on the Internet such as [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com) is a great way to keep track of volunteers for a particular event. Just input info about the project, date, times, what people should bring, and a few other details. You can input several days and dates as well as recurring times/dates. Automatic reminder emails can be sent, and groups notified by you or the system. This draft example is for a Youth Farmers’ Market training class from Slow Food Denver.
Volunteer Training

Volunteers may be eager to help the Slow Food cause in a school garden program, but they will come to the workday with a whole range of skills and previous experiences. It is very important to start the workday out with a training workshop, to show exactly how the required tasks need to be performed. This is best done with an actual demonstration of the task by the garden leader and then having the volunteers show that they can also perform the task. This helps you know that they are capable of the task assigned, and it gives them a sense of purpose and helps them be comfortable in their role. Making sure that your volunteers are trained in something new also helps them feel that their time was well spent. For example, having a tree expert show everyone how to plant fruit trees, so that they can in turn teach kids how to do it, gives everyone a sense of accomplishment, and they learn something as well.

The training workshop is also a good opportunity to teach people about Slow Food, and the Slow Food values should be reiterated at this point as a framework for the volunteer to understand how their efforts contribute to the overall mission. Here is definitional info from the SF-USA website:

**Good**
The word good can mean a lot of things to a lot of people. For Slow Food, the idea of good means enjoying delicious food created with care from healthy plants and animals. The pleasures of good food can also help to build community and celebrate culture and regional diversity.

**Clean**
When we talk about clean food, we are talking about nutritious food that is as good for the planet as it is for our bodies. It is grown and harvested with methods that have a positive impact on our local ecosystems and promotes biodiversity.

**Fair**
We believe that food is a universal right. Food that is fair should be accessible to all, regardless of income, and produced by people who are treated with dignity and justly compensated for their labor.

For volunteer opportunities in the gardens that are more of the daily type of work, providing instruction for volunteers as to the immediate task at hand is also very important. For example, when a family agrees to be the garden caretaker for a couple weeks, having a job sheet that reminds the family what needs to be done is a very effective means of getting the work done.

The following is an example of how Slow Food Chicago provides info to volunteers:
SAMPLE VOLUNTEER GARDEN INFORMATION

Dawes School Garden
Important Garden Information

The code for the garden gate is 8899.

The key for the garden shed is located in a brown bottle that is tucked in next to the big garden sign in the prairie garden. It is located next to the support on the right side of the sign.

Garden tasks are listed on the clipboard attached to the shed door.

A sign in sheet is attached to the clipboard. Please have people sign in when they arrive. The number of participants is an important record to have for our grant writing.

Load garden equipment including gloves onto cart and wheel out into the garden for easier access. Please no children in the garden shed at any time.

Reminders to use and store equipment safely will constantly be needed.

Remind children that there is no running in the garden and to practice care with garden equipment.

Your suggestions and comments will be useful to other volunteers, so please jot them down on the comment sheet.

On leaving, make sure all equipment and tools are returned to the shed, the shed key hidden away, and that the garden gate is secured.

**Suggestion:** Bring a water bottle as drinking from the hose is not recommended.

ACCESSING THE WATER BOX
To access the ground water from the in-ground spigot do the following:

**Open the Water Box**
Turn the dial to Single Manual Settings.
Hit the arrow in the top right corner until $4 station is in view in the window
Hit the manus sign so that it reads six hours.
Turn the dial back to RUN which is at 12 o’clock
Close the door—you often have to slam to get it to close properly.

**In the Garden**
Attach the wrench, found in the shed, to the end of the hose and connect it to the valve in the ground. Turn the handle 180 degrees. The water should flow through the nozzle.
Be sure to turn off the water and return the wrench to the shed.
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO RETURN TO THE WATER BOX. IT AUTOMATICALLY RESETS.
Logistics

Utilizing a notebook to record volunteer tasks needed and completed allows you to keep track of who is doing what, how much time it takes, and what has not yet been done. Recording hours spent helps with understanding just what it takes to run the program and is valuable info for grant applications, etc.

One way to organize the notebook is by task; for example, weeding, tilling, harvesting, or watering. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK AREA</th>
<th>TASK REQUIRED</th>
<th>DATE COMPLETE</th>
<th>VOLUNTEER NAME</th>
<th>TIME REQUIRED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wooded Landscape</td>
<td>Spread mulch around area. Use doughnut technique to mulch around plants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raised Beds</td>
<td>Connect and lay hoses in beds.</td>
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Also, you can organize by schedule; for example:

SCHOOL GARDEN WEEKLY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Summer Maintenance Coordinator: __________________________________________________________
Daytime phone number: ______________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK OF</th>
<th>NAME(S)</th>
<th>PHONE NUMBER</th>
<th>TASK</th>
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Here's another way to track volunteer hours, which enables you to get signoff from the volunteer, too.

GARINGER GARDEN CLUB VOLUNTEER HOURS

This is a bi-monthly tracker of summer volunteer hours in the garden. Please turn into Ms. Hendee. Track all garden hours and ensure that all parts are filled in.

Student Name: ______________________________________________________________
Phone: __________________________ Email: ________________________________
Age: __________________________ Grade: ________ School: __________________________

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY</th>
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Total Volunteer Hours: __________________________

Student Signature: __________________________________________________________
Parent Signature: __________________________________________________________
Supervisor Signature: ________________________________________________________

Sustaining Volunteers

There is so much work that goes into the recruiting and training of volunteers that it would be nice to keep them part of the team for a long time. While most volunteers do not ask for much in return for their service, they do like to be appreciated for their efforts and time in the garden project. Thus, at least once a year, it would be appropriate to recognize the volunteers that have spent time with the garden program. Below is a list of some possible ways to show appreciation to volunteers. The level of appreciation does not have to be expensive or elaborate. Simple symbols of appreciation are just as effective as something more elaborate.

Appreciation Ideas

- Yearly events such as a Harvest Dinner (collaborate with school, Annual planting, Annual tilling)
- Appreciation Day
- T-shirts
- Certificates
- Painted pots
- Slow Food USA recognition (for example, a blog post)
- Social Media Shout-Out
- Thank-You cards
- Discounted Slow Food membership
- Gift Cards
- Invitation to events
- Certificate of completion for students (this adds to students’ high school graduation accomplishments)
Screening and Liability

See the Policy chapter for issues around screening volunteers and background checks. With regards to liability, you should discuss potential issues with your school district’s Risk Management group. If volunteers fill out the district’s paperwork, find out if you are still somehow responsible if they are injured. See Policy chapter for more on this.

Stipends

School gardens would not survive without the thousands of hours that volunteers bring to the project. It is the goal of every garden program to be able to raise enough funds to compensate the key volunteers for their time and efforts. Being able to pay volunteers a stipend will not only express how important that person is to the effort but will go a long way to the long-term sustainability of the garden program. Quite simply, school gardens will not last for the long-term without some sort of compensation for the key people in the gardens.

EXAMPLE 1

Slow Food Charlotte
HENRY OWEN, SLOW FOOD CHARLOTTE

There are a few examples of Slow Food chapters raising money through grants or donations to support a stipend for key people in the gardens. The first example is the advertisement for a Garden Leader, Project Manager, and Curriculum Coordinator at the Garinger School Garden in Charlotte, NC. Slow Food Charlotte was able to raise some funds to support these positions so that the teachers had the support they needed to deliver an effective garden program.

GARDEN AT GARINGER

Project Manager: Andrea Hendee
Student Manager: Jackie Olguin, Henry Lieu, and Aaron Moratoya

Our Mission Statement
Exercising young minds to build knowledge, skills, and habits sustainable to work and live in the 21st century-global environment.

Garinger Fit and Green Objectives:
Address the nutritional deficit in our community, both at school and in the surrounding area
Invest students in experiential 21st century-learning that transforms students within and beyond the classroom
Empower students to understand, respect, and utilize their own passions, their neighbor’s passions, and their community’s passions to serve locally and globally now and in the future
**TEAM OF TEACHERS – POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

**Project Manager**

**Description**
The Garinger Fit and Green Project Team Leader will supervise the garden, curriculum integration, the V.O.I.C.E. program, community development, and the Fit Lab. The Project Team Leader will work with staff and students to strengthen and continue the Garinger Fit and Green program to make it sustainable and successful.

**Purpose**
Organize, communicate, and facilitate the Garinger Fit and Green initiative by investing staff, students, and neighbors in the Garinger community.

**Key Responsibilities**
- Coordinate and facilitate weekly meetings with students in Garinger Fit and Green Club
- Coordinate and facilitate bi-monthly meetings with Garinger Fit and Green staff team
- Coordinate and facilitate monthly meetings with administration and district committee
- Attend community meetings, including neighborhood meetings, Shamrock Drive Development Association, small committee meetings, and other community meetings as needed
- Coordinate monthly community events in conjunction with Garinger Fit and Green team and students
- Respond to emails within 24 hours
- Send bi-weekly emails to administration with updates on program (as needed)
- Help promote garden, fit lab, and V.O.I.C.E. program to students, staff, and community
- Remain flexible and open to new ideas to develop program from staff, students, and community
- Send monthly staff emails with updates about Garinger Fit and Green through newsletter and Google docs calendar
- Work with other Garinger clubs and organizations to strengthen school culture and community, such as the mentorship program
- Work with each staff member as needed to ensure success of each part of project

**Time Commitment** 15–20 hours per week

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**Garden Manager**

**Description**
The garden manager will be responsible for growing vegetables, flowers, fruits, and herbs throughout the 280 days of NC planting season. The garden manager will ensure the success of the garden and incorporate student, staff, and community involvement to ensure long-term success and integration of the Garinger Garden.

**Key Responsibilities**
- Develop a solid plant plan for each season
- Organize the sale of vegetables at farmers’ markets and local restaurants (60%–70% of total harvest)
- Organize the donation of vegetables to local food shelters (30%–40% of total harvest)
- Organize weekly community volunteer day to maintain garden throughout the school year and three days per week for volunteer days during the summer
- Meet weekly with students at club meeting and have 30-minute breakout session prepared for students and staff while remaining flexible, depending on greatest need
- Send weekly emails to Project Director with updates
- Meet bi-monthly with Garinger Fit and Green Staff Team
- Work with student Garden Project Manager and Business Manager

**Time Commitment** 10 hours per week

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**Curriculum Coordinator**

**Description**
The Curriculum Coordinator will take an innovative approach to bringing healthful living into the classroom across all contents. This individual will work with teachers across all contents to increase mastery and rigor within the classroom and meet differentiated student needs.

**Key Responsibilities**
- Facilitate the organization of staff and students in the garden throughout the school year
- Maintain written record of curriculum integration
- Communicate with PLC leaders about garden and fitness integration
- Support and supply teachers with ideas of how to integrate garden and fitness into their classroom content. *For example, looking at the economics of farmers’ markets and gardens for civics and economics class or plotting the matrix for geometry classes or the importance of fitness in the Hunger Games for English II*
- Send weekly emails to Project Director with updates
- Meet bi-monthly with Garinger Fit and Green Staff Team
- Meet weekly with students at Club meeting and have 30-minute breakout session prepared for students and staff while remaining flexible depending on greatest need
- Work with student Curriculum Coordinator

**Time Commitment** 5 – 10 hours per week
From the Joshua Levine Memorial Foundation Website: This year we have decided to again focus on working with the East End chapter of Slow Food to aid their efforts in supporting school gardening programs. Specifically, Slow Food will provide grants to a number of young local farmers to work with the administration, teachers, parents, and students of the now over 20 public schools on the East End that have such programs. The goal is to enhance these programs so that they can become self-sustaining from year-to-year. Proceeds from the 2012 dinner enabled three Master Farmers on the East End to devote considerable time to assist the schools that have edible garden programs. There are now 20 such schools on the East End. Go to the Josh Levine Memorial Foundation Facebook page to see comments on the success of these programs.

Through the generosity of the Joshua Levine Foundation, Slow Food of the East End is seeking applicants for three Slow Food Garden Coordinator Positions to support the expanding network of Edible School Gardens on the North and South Fork of Eastern Long Island.

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Joshua Levine Memorial Foundation
Josh loved living on the East End of Long Island. He was enamored with its beauty, history, and potential for providing a wonderful place to create a home and raise a family. As a farmer, Josh gained much satisfaction out of planting seeds in the rich earth, seeing them take root, helping them to mature, harvesting the bounty, and finally tasting the rewards. The Joshua Levine Memorial Foundation’s mission is to support charitable programs in which Josh had an interest, including organic farming, photography, and education. jlmf.weebly.com/index.html

The Slow Food School Garden Coordinators will:

● Assist designated Edible School Garden (EdibleSchoolGardens.org) members on the North or South Fork of Long Island in the planning, creation, and maintenance of their school gardens, using local school community resources and networks. Assistance may include: site design and layout, the creation of planting and harvest schedules, greenhouse growing techniques, instruction in organic farming principles and integrated pest management and the art of composting.
● Advise members on how to set and accomplish individual garden goals and provide technical and/or horticultural advice. The Coordinator will not be responsible for the maintenance of or working in the garden.
● Attend monthly Slow Food Education/Edible School Garden Meetings, Slow Food Events, and the Joshua Levine Memorial Dinner at the American Hotel on April 1, 2012, and the 2013 dinner.
● Serve as a liaison between Slow Food East End, the Joshua Levine Foundation, the Edible School Garden Group, and designated school gardens on the North or South Fork, communicating the needs of and issues concerning school gardens to the Slow Food Education/Edible School Garden Leaders.
● Keep a weekly activity log of garden visits and submit report monthly to the Slow Food Education Committee at the Edible School Garden/Slow Food Education Committee meetings.
Compensation

Slow Food East End will pay each coordinator a stipend of $25/per hour up to a total amount of $4000. These are year-round positions and hours (approximately 16 hours per month) should be distributed accordingly. Stipends will be paid in quarterly installments on a prorated basis.

At the close of the internship, coordinators must submit a brief written evaluation of the internship program to the Slow Food Leadership.

Application Process:

The deadline for applications is the Spring Equinox, Tuesday, March 20, 2012. Finalists will be notified by Friday, March 23, 2012, and an interview will be scheduled. Recipients will be notified by March 31 and will be honored at the Joshua Levine Memorial Dinner at the American Hotel on April 1, 2012.

Please submit: Resume and brief Letter of Intention by email to: EDUCATION@SLOWFOODEASTEND.COM

In your Letter of Intention, please specify if you would like to be considered for a Coordinator position on the North Fork or the South Fork of the East End.

EXAMPLE 3

Slow Food Charlotte

HENRY OWEN, SLOW FOOD CHARLOTTE

In May of 2008 I raised my hand to help build a garden in a weedy lot behind Friendship Trays, Charlotte’s Meals-on-Wheels program. Shortly after the first plants were in the ground, we partnered with Slow Food Charlotte and formed Friendship Gardens, a special project of both Friendship Trays and Slow Food Charlotte. One of our first joint ventures was to apply for a local grant through The Women’s Impact Fund here in Charlotte. We received the grant, which enabled us to hire two part time staff (I was one) who were tasked with growing Friendship Gardens into a network of gardens across Charlotte, all teaching gardening to their community and donating a portion of their harvest back to Friendship Trays, the Meals-on-Wheels program.

Now in the spring of 2013, we have 42 Friendship Gardens in our network, we operate a weekly mobile farmers’ market that visits the bus station downtown, we partner with Habitat for Humanity Charlotte to start gardens in the backyards of Habitat homeowners, and we are poised to break ground on our first urban farm in the next few months. We have received a handful of other donations and grants that support one full-time staff member and one half-time staff member.

Friendship Gardens remains a partnership between Slow Food Charlotte and Friendship Trays and it is this partnership that allows us to be successful. Partnering with an existing nonprofit relieved Slow Food Charlotte from having to manage employees with a payroll department, office space, etc. From Friendship Tray’s perspective, Slow Food Charlotte provided the connections and expertise around local food in Charlotte.

From a personal perspective, it is a challenge to create a new program without an existing model to follow, all the while knowing the date when funding will run out. What my job lacks in security it more than makes up for in fulfillment. It is a great joy and privilege to work with my colleagues on a mission we are all passionate about: ensuring that all people have access to fresh, healthy food.

To learn more about Friendship Gardens visit www.friendship-gardens.org.
3

Fundraising

CHAPTER LEAD:
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Introduction

School gardens cost a lot of money to build, to develop experiential learning opportunities, and to maintain over many years. The costs may appear to be daunting, but many within the Slow Food world see great value in the education that the children receive. And, with careful planning and some good luck, school gardens can become self-sustaining or even profit centers that can support the development of larger projects or gardens at other schools.

The Design & Build chapter described a series of steps and created a project plan and a budget for that plan. Moving forward, a Slow Food chapter can play an important role in how to best fund the project. When setting out to fundraise, it is important to be realistic while also reaching for the stars. There is always the possibility that there can be a financial angel who is just looking for the right project to support. However, the more realistic approach is to look at a multi-phased fundraising approach to capture enough interest from the community to provide funds for the project. This chapter will discuss various routes for fundraising.

Tell Your Story

The first and, in many ways, the most important step in approaching a potential funder is to develop a powerful story behind the school garden project. Images of students growing healthy food on school grounds to learn about healthy eating pretty much will write itself into a compelling story. Add some images of children working in the garden along with some student-written testimonials and people will be engaged in the project. Slow Food Miami describes this process:

State the fundraising mission of the event before and during the event. At every Slow Food event and in every piece of media that you distribute there is an opportunity to let the community know about the garden project. Try to tell a compelling story about the importance of school gardens. When there is an audience listening, they will forget most of what they heard, but they will remember a story and they will remember if they liked and trusted the storyteller. Stories humanize and make lofty ideas real. Visuals, of course, are invaluable as well and can add to the story. The Slow Food Miami chapter consistently lets guests know that “All proceeds from this event go to our school garden program.” It is up to the Slow Food chapter to decide when and how often to tell the story and how to build up for the “ask.” Strategies include making an announcement at the meal, placing donation cards at every place setting, or even having a live auction and asking people to raise their hand if they will make an additional gift to the garden. Some donors love to be a role model and to goad others on in public. Make clear that donors may contribute anywhere from a few dollars to funding for an entire garden or more. Slow Food Miami has used all of these techniques, including showing photos of children’s big smiles as they harvest carrots for the first time.
Network

Donations can come from all types of interactions, even some very unlikely places. It can be helpful to network, using connections that come from the Slow Food membership. Slow Food Miami overheard that there was a lady who loved gardening and was looking for a way to give back. Through a conversation, it was discovered that she was having a birthday party, and it was decided that she could ask for donations to Slow Food Miami in lieu of gifts. The chapter set up a “hot button” on their website, and donors could give in her name through the website. Over $1,500 was raised from her kind gesture and from a member who followed through on a conversation. Part of networking also includes the advertising for the garden and fundraising project. Slow Food chapters may utilize social media, email lists, and news opportunities to get out the message that a school garden is in need of donations from the public.

Donations

Potential donors can appear from anywhere, and a successful Slow Food chapter should be ready whenever there is a chance to cultivate a new donor. There may be donors in the midst of a Slow Food chapter’s event, as a volunteer at a school garden work day, or hearing about Slow Food for the first time at a public meeting. Donors must be sought out, cultivated, and properly thanked.

There are three types of donors:

1. Individual donors
2. Foundations
3. Corporate donors

Individual donors include event ticket buyers, chapter members, and philanthropists who kindly open their checkbooks to hand over funds from as little as $5 to donations as high as in the thousands of dollars. Sometimes foundations will give without solicitation or at the request of an individual who has power to direct funding from the foundation. More often, a foundation will make a gift after the chapter has filled out an application for grant money. Often, the foundation will require the money to be spent in a certain way (generally, as outlined in the grant proposal), and it will ask for a report at the end of the grant period to verify this. When a gift is given this way, it is referred to as a “grant.” Grants are covered in more detail below.

Examples of potential corporate donors include: farms, nurseries, supermarkets, newspapers, restaurants, printing companies, rental companies, and food brands. Corporations usually appreciate attention and consideration for their donation. Sometimes corporations will require some kind of action from the chapter in return for the gift, such as signage at an event or a notice of their gift in the newsletter. A corporate donation that has “strings attached” is often called a corporate partnership or sponsorship. Slow Food USA is developing guidelines for its own participation in fundraising from corporations, and it will make these guidelines available to chapters for their reference when they are complete.

One way to gain access to like-minded grantors and donors is to have adequate visibility with respected organizations that attract donors. Groups like Philanthroedia (www.myphilanthropedia.org), GiveWell (www.givewell.org), and United Way (www.unitedway.org) support donations from businesses and individuals by vetting and qualifying charitable donors. In
addition to annual RFPs, many organizations, such as United Way, offer bi-weekly payroll
deductions to recipients chosen from a selected group of charities that are hand-selected by
the local chapters. It is important for Slow Food to become more widely known for its passion,
dedication, and successes in these circles of influence in order to gain access to the donors
who share our mission and concern.

There are several issues to consider before looking for and accepting donations. Before
approaching or accepting money from any donor, the leadership of the chapter should be
familiar with the Slow Food Fundraising Guidelines developed by Slow Food International to
guide fundraising decisions by chapters. For example, there are different considerations when
the donor represents a business versus as an individual. The Slow Food chapter must consider
and confirm that the potential donor is in line with the mission and values of Slow Food. For
example, a chapter would likely turn down a donation from a “fast-food” restaurant. While the
Fundraising Guidelines clearly describe instances where donations cannot be accepted (e.g.,
companies that produce or sell GMOs, weapons, or oil), there are certainly gray areas that
need to be carefully examined. A good yardstick is to ask: if this donor-chapter link became a
cover story in a newspaper article, would it be a good association? Fundraising Guidelines are
included as an appendix.

A chapter must also consider the donor’s goals. Most certainly, the donor would like to be
recognized for their gift by either being publicly listed in a program flyer or at the garden site, or
the donor may be happy with a simple thank you note from the chapter. Slow Food Miami
produces a plaque to acknowledge the donor and places it directly on the garden bed frame.
Slow Food Miami has given donors a tour of the gardens that their money
has supported so that they can directly see where their money has gone.

When potential donors have been identified, making the “ask” can be
done multiple ways. The most direct approach is to have a conversation
with the potential donors either at their workplace, at an event, or in a more
private setting over coffee or lunch. The direct approach allows for a
more-detailed conversation and the immediate exchange of information that
the donor believes is important for them to make their decision. In addition,
the Slow Food presenter can have ready materials and pictures that can be
used to sway the donor to get involved.

On the other hand, social media can be used to get the attention of
many more potential donors with an ask for a donation. Information can be loaded on a
website that provides potential donors with lots of information about the project. Email blasts
and Twitter posts can reach thousands of potential donors with information of an upcoming
event or just by keeping Slow Food on their radar screens. The recipients can look at the
information at their leisure and can always refer back to the information later. The drawback of
social media approaches is that they do not feel personalized and the exchange of information
is more one-sided.
Grants

Grants differ from donations in that donations are made without any contractual requirements and often without restrictions. Grants are generally made from foundations (and, rarely, individuals) and require a report at the end to verify how the money was spent. Another source of grants for school gardens are federal, state, and local government departments. In most cases, granting organizations release Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or send out direct invitations to apply. State and local offices may also offer more specific opportunities through their Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, and/or Consumer Services Departments. Many non-government organizations (NGOs) and corporations have specific interests aligned with those of Slow Food. A quick Google search may help identify matches for organizations looking to donate to food, environment, children, and educational causes. You can also do a search for like-minded foundations at www.foundationcenter.com.

Grant opportunities from federal and state agencies as well as from organizations such as the W. K. Kellogg Foundation or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation offer a significant amount of multi-year funding that can be very attractive to a garden program. However, when looking at grant opportunities to get funding for school garden programs, a Slow Food chapter needs to look at its capacity to write the sometimes lengthy applications and, if successful, manage the reporting requirements requested by some grant programs, including completing a report at the end of the grant period. This is especially true of government funding, which can be especially onerous in reporting and spending requirements. In many cases, the application process can be quite lengthy and require the partnership of other organizations to be competitive. Since these national RFPs are widely advertised, the number of fellow applications can be quite large, making for a highly competitive process.

Slow Food Denver has been successful with two Specialty Crops Grants from the Colorado State Department of Agriculture (funds from the USDA) to support their Youth Farmers’ Market program in food desert communities. The Specialty Crops grant required the reports to be filed twice, once at the midway as a progress report and then at the completion of the grant as a final report. The reporting process took quite a bit of energy by the Slow Food Denver team to complete on time and with the required information.

Grant opportunities from local government agencies or business or health foundations may carry smaller award amounts, but the amount of competition will be much less, and often the amount of reporting required is also less. Going after local funding also allows for the opportunity to make direct contact with the officers in charge of the grants to ask questions and perhaps get advice on the application process. For smaller Slow Food garden programs or brand new gardens, it is advisable to start with local funding so that it is manageable to write the grants and deal with reporting requirements. Just the writing process for the application is a valuable exercise, as it pushes the Slow Food chapter to gather its resources and data into one place for the application process. Even if the application is not successful, there now exists a template with information for future RFPs.

Slow Food Miami has been lucky enough to find several experienced grant writers who donated their time by looking for and applying for grants. This can be time consuming and is always much appreciated by chapter leaders. Post a notice to the membership asking for any previous grant writing experience. Even without professional help, be sure to save all previous grant applications to build up a database of information that can be used in future applications.
On a smaller scale, it is a good idea to get the Garden Leaders involved in grant writing to develop skills for larger efforts. Slow Food Denver offers micro-grants to individual garden programs every couple of years to support infrastructure needs of the gardens. While the grants may be for only $500–$1,000, Garden Leaders are required to submit an application that asks for a mission statement, goals, budget, and work plan for the grant money. This process makes the Garden Leaders look at their program closely and pushes them to plan for the future.

Support from Local Businesses

Outside of grant opportunities, local businesses are very generous in using their standing in the community to drive fundraiser opportunities for Slow Food chapters and school gardens. Because of the obvious food connections, restaurants and chefs have been very supportive of using their businesses to raise funds for school gardens. A common approach is to donate a percentage of the day’s receipts to a garden program. Chipotle encourages its restaurants to partner up with local schools to raise money for garden programs. Often these fundraiser efforts involve 25%–50% of the daily total donated to the school garden. Whole Foods offers two programs to support local nonprofits and schools. Every quarter, Whole Foods selects a new nonprofit to receive the 10 cents per grocery bag that customers donate to the program. In addition, a couple times a year a store may donate 5% of its day’s receipts to a nonprofit. Both of these programs at Whole Foods can raise $3,000-$5,000 for Slow Food with a relatively simple effort.
Events

For those Slow Food chapters that have a large amount of capacity, events are a wonderful fundraising opportunity. They can further the mission and story of Slow Food and allow the guests the opportunity to give to the community. The Slow Food Miami chapter plans five or six fundraising events per year to support school gardens, interspersed with other lower cost/free events.

Here is a checklist of fundraising event planning:

1. Recruit a chef, venue, food, rentals, and menu printing. Often, these “in-kind donations” can be gotten for free, especially if given consideration in the program/advertising for the event. Slow Food Miami prints a program/menu for almost every event. The program thanks donors, clarifies menu details, and later serves as a memento of a wonderful dinner. A program helps to make it feel like an “event.” Ticket pricing can be tricky to set but look around your community at similar events to guess what people would be willing to pay. If the chef or venue is prestigious, it is easier to set a higher price. Include sample program.

2. Publicize the event. Send email blasts to your mailing list, newspapers, and listings websites. Use Twitter, Facebook, and other social media. Sometimes chefs and venues have their own mailing lists and will forward on the event information. One of Slow Food Miami’s chef-partners sent a blast out to several thousand Twitter followers. Perhaps the local news station will cover the event as a story. For one offbeat event on food allergies, Slow Food Miami put flyers in local allergy doctors’ offices.

3. Decide if it would be appropriate to do further fundraising at the event. An expensive event might preclude you from asking donors for even more money. However, who knows if that financial angel is in the audience? You can make an announcement at the meal, place donation cards at every place setting, or even have a live auction and ask people to raise their hand if they will make an additional gift to the garden. At one Slow Food Miami live auction, the guest chef generously added a last-minute addition that he would cook a private dinner in the winner’s home, and that raised several thousand dollars. Some donors love to be a role model and to goad others on in public. Make clear that donors may contribute anywhere from a few dollars to funding an entire garden or more. Silent auctions can be another financial boon.
Examples of Successful Events

HIDDEN KITCHENS

Hidden Kitchens was created by Slow Food Miami as a cooking demonstration/tasting-fundraiser in which locally grown produce or locally sourced proteins were featured. The name came from the fact that each event would take place in a different kitchen—usually at a private residence, but once in a while it might be a different venue that also has a kitchen, such as a corporation or teaching culinary school (but always donated space).

The formula was to use the private residence of a well-known local host or someone who prides themselves on a large cooking/dining area and would like to share it with others. Ideally the space would be large enough to host 30 guests. The Slow Food chapter would also recruit a very well-known chef who would grab people’s attention to donate their time to come and cook a few dishes. There is often an air of specialness and exclusivity to the event. The chef would prepare the dishes on the menu and answer questions as people gathered around. The guests would watch them to understand how the recipe worked and then taste the food to see how delicious it was, thereby promoting locally sourced items.

We were fortunate enough that Whole Foods would donate about $400 per event to purchase needed items, and at times a farmer would donate their items or a local vendor would donate wine. As our mission is to support small farmers as well, we might buy and feature produce from them. The only overhead would be if additional food was needed for the event, rentals (dishes, linens, cutlery, stemware), and a person to wash dishes and service the event.

Since the home and chef were usually quite prestigious, we found that we could charge $140 per person and sell out our events. The event and pricing can, of course, be customized for your chapter’s personal style and potential attendees.

ARK OF TASTE FUNDRAISER

Our Ark of Taste Fundraising dinner is one of Slow Food Miami’s most important and lucrative events of the year. Every year our best chef in Miami, Michael Schwartz, creates a multicourse meal around a native and endangered South Florida ingredient. We pay for the ingredients since our farms need our support and can’t afford to donate. Our publicity for the event always highlights that it is important for us to keep our native and diverse plants alive and support the growers who produce them while encouraging chefs and consumers to eat them. We emphasize that if you know your farmer, you know your food.

We have our event at the Kampong National Botanical Gardens and split the proceeds with them to help maintain their unique gardens. The charge is our highest ticket of the year, $250 per person. We have found success and sellouts at 110 people when we have the event in late October or early November, before the holidays. We allot 10 comps to cover restaurant guests, farmers, media, and sponsors. Our sponsors give us in-kind gifts of vodka, wine at a big discount, and gift-bag premium items for guests. We pay a discounted fee to the chef for food per head and catering company rate per head for staff and rentals.

BREW-B-QUE

Down the street from the Saints Peter and Paul School in Buffalo is Island Park. Every year during the summer, community events take place in the park, such as Old Home Days, Taste of Williamsville, and various beer festivals. The park is right across the street from the Williamsville Farmers’ Market. Ellicott Creek was once an important local source of transporting grain down to the Erie Canal. Several of the farmers at the market raise delicious grass-fed beef as well as heritage GOS hogs. I am very engaged in the craft beer scene, and a colleague...
of mine is pitmaster for a BBQ team that competes in Memphis in May, the largest pork BBQ
in the world. In addition to all of this, our parish Knights of Columbus (KofC) Chapter does
service work for our school.

Putting this all together, we teamed up to propose the KofC Brew-B-Que in Island Park as
an annual family-friendly event featuring locally brewed craft beer, BBQ sourcing meat from local
vendors and featuring local BBQ teams, and even a people’s choice home-brewing competition.

The Brew-B-Que was proposed as a KofC-sponsored event to benefit the school’s
Boy Scout Troop as well the SSPP Edible Schoolyard. The concept went
over well, and we sold enough tickets to break even. Our success and
our potential were recognized by school leadership, and we have been
invited to make this an annual fundraiser. It will be key to partner
with other organizations and farms to make the Brew-B-Que a
fundraising success. But its potential is tremendous and could
easily raise impressive dollars for our school garden program.

DENVER BRAVA PIZZA

Brava Pizza did a fundraiser for Denver’s gardens when they
opened, which raised about $200. They have also offered to buy
basil from the gardens. In addition, they have brought their mobile
pizza ovens to a few events. In return, we have also hired them
when possible. This is an example of a partnership that has brought
funds to Slow Food Denver and attention to a Slow Food-friendly company.

FRIENDSHIP TRAYS

Each year, Slow Food Charlotte, Friendship Trays, and Friendship Gardens team up to
throw our ‘Garden Party.’ The Garden Party is a $50-a-person dinner party hosted under
hanging lights at the Friendship Trays Demo Garden. Local chefs prepare local food as guests
drink local beer/wine and listen to music. All proceeds support Friendship Gardens
www.friendship-gardens.org, a partnership between Slow Food Charlotte and Friendship
Trays, our local Meals on Wheels program. Friendship Gardens is a network of gardens across
Charlotte, all teaching gardening and donating food to Friendship Trays. Our gardens are
located at schools, faith-based organizations, nonprofit agencies, etc.

SELLING PIES

In the fall, Slow Food Miami has a pie baking contest called Thighs and Pies. The
ticket price is held at cost so as to attract many attendees, but there is a
fundraiser in the fact that pie contestants are asked to bake and donate a
second pie that is sold for $15–$20 after the contest is over. People are
eager to take home the delicious homemade pies, and they always sell out.
Crowdsourced Funding

Other ideas for fundraising include crowdsourced funding, merchandise sales, and buy-a-brick programs. It is not known if any chapters have done crowdsourced funding such as Kickstarter, but this type of fundraising could be effective.

Merchandising

Another idea is selling Slow Food-branded merchandise. Slow Food Miami does steady sales of aprons, hats, and children and adult t-shirts at our events. Slow Food Long Island has had a successful buy-a-brick program.

Long-term Sustainability of the Gardens

Once a garden has been built and the program is under way, the fundraising needs for the garden are not as great. There needs to be some money available to replenish the supplies that get used, such as seeds, amendments, and planting pots. Ideally, the school community gets behind the garden program with some steady donations or with a couple of annual events that fund the program. Perhaps the PTA takes up the needs of the garden program with a couple of fundraisers throughout the year. If a Slow Food chapter was involved in the initial financing of the garden build, the chapter could possibly support the garden program for a couple of years with events and promotions. Eventually, the school community needs to make the garden program self-sufficient.

One way to generate funds for the long-term sustainability of the garden is to use the primary asset that the garden generates. Not only can the fresh produce be used for educational opportunities for the students but the produce can be sold in several ways to support the garden program. Slow Food Denver has created several programs that not only provide students with educational opportunities but also raise money that gets pumped back into the garden program.

The Youth Farmers’ Market program is designed for students with adult supervisors to sell fresh produce from the school garden to the school community, usually as an after-school activity. Students learn how to run a small business with everything from marketing to sales to customer relations. Slow Food Denver supports the YFMs by buying produce from local farms to supplement the school garden produce so that the market stands have a nice variety of seasonal produce. The YFM leaders can set the prices for the produce, ideally in a range that the local community will see as a fair value while still earning a profit for the garden program. In Denver, an eight-week YFM season can net anywhere from $250 to $1,500 in profit for the gardens. In addition, the YFM program brings some very positive attention to the garden program and some new volunteers.
Also in Denver, Slow Food Denver has worked with Denver Public Schools on food safety protocols so that the students can harvest fresh produce from the school gardens and sell it to the kitchen manager in the cafeteria. The Garden to Cafeteria program is now in its fourth year and has resulted in over 3,000 pounds of school garden produce going into the salad bars at about 20 schools. Overall, the GTC program has raised $3,000 for the garden programs at those schools.

Other fundraising efforts using products of the school gardens include sales of seedlings that the students raise in the classroom for the garden program. In Denver, many schools start the Seed to Table program in February with seedling classes to generate many of the plants that will be planted in the garden later in May. Generally, the first and second-grade classrooms grow the seedlings, as this activity is consistent with the science curriculum at those ages. The seedling program produces many more plants than are needed for the garden, with enough for each student to take one home for their garden, and the rest are pooled to be sold at a school-wide plant sale as a fundraiser.

In many ways, using the fresh produce and plants from the school garden program to raise funds to support the gardens has several advantages. The students learn that their efforts in the gardens are not only fun and educational but they are supporting the continuation of the program for years to come. Activities like Youth Farmers’ Markets and Plant Sales bring the community to the school and provide an opportunity to increase awareness of the programs. New volunteers and donors may come from these visits who will have an impact on the program. Finally, many schools are in neighborhoods that are classified as food deserts, so the garden program may be the only source of fresh produce for the community. If prices are set accordingly, the produce from the gardens can support both healthy eating habits in the community as well as raising funds for the program.

**Policies and Procedures**

**Fundraising guidelines from Slow Food International**

There is a clear directive in the draft Slow Food International Fundraising Guidelines as follows to ensure that donations do not violate the Slow Food principles.

Donations and collaborations of any nature cannot be accepted from any legal entities that:

- produce or sell weapons
- produce or refine oil
- produce or sell tobacco at a multinational level
- produce or sell GMOs
- violate regulations regarding the disposal of toxic or dangerous waste
- violate international conventions on human, property, and workers’ rights
- violate fundamental rights or are being prosecuted or have been condemned for legal violations
Introduction

ow that you have a garden established, it's important to connect it to the students. In schools across the country, teachers are under considerable pressure to provide educational opportunities that help students achieve state academic standards. In some enlightened cases, schools and teachers may use the garden as a tool for these lessons, teaching things like biology, botany, writing, and math, using the garden to create a real-world application. However, it often falls to volunteers in after-school programs to use the garden to provide educational opportunities. Whether for teachers or for volunteers, however, there is a wealth of excellent information about developing curricula that reinforce these kinds of lessons.

The goal of this Curriculum chapter is to provide a different kind of approach to student engagement, one that is rooted in the Slow Food values of Good, Clean, and Fair food for all. This chapter provides ideas and examples of curricula that engage children around the food itself, rather than embedding garden lessons in traditional classroom curriculum. We certainly believe that using the garden as a laboratory for courses such as science and social studies is a worthy enterprise, and we want to encourage its continuation. However, as Slow Food, we also want to encourage teachers and volunteers to use their garden to teach children about:

1. Where food comes from
2. What real food tastes like
3. How to grow and harvest fresh produce in an environmentally friendly way
4. How food connects to culture and community

This chapter does not provide a custom Slow Food curriculum to be used by Slow Food chapters. Instead, for the purposes of this manual, we seek to share some examples of existing curricula that support the above goal and the Good, Clean, and Fair values. Slow Food members have developed some of these curriculum examples, while other examples come from other external resources. In addition, we have provided examples from Slow Food Denver of professional development workshops that are designed to train volunteers and teachers in how to teach from a school garden. We feel that professional development is key to the successful implementation of school gardens in the classroom. These workshops represent a different kind of curriculum that we’ve worked to develop for use in the garden.
Good, Clean, and Fair in a Garden Curriculum

Bringing Slow Food into a school garden means developing lessons for students that provide a hands-on experience with food that is fun as well as educational and extends from the growing process to harvest to cooking and enjoying the results.

Therefore, a “Slow Food” school garden curriculum should include the following elements as it seeks to capture the hearts and imaginations of the students:

1. Activities and instruction regarding growing food, including a discussion of the cultural and regional connections behind certain foods

A Slow Food school garden will link the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. The curriculum is the place where the Slow Food mission is expressed in gardening and cooking activities. Our holistic approach allows the student to understand the network of relationships between humans and the natural environment from a personal point of view.

This curriculum chapter is organized into two sections. First, we will show how Good, Clean, and Fair should be present in a Slow Food curriculum and provide an explanation of these components. In this section, we will show several examples of recommended curricula by Slow Food members and others that meet some or all of the Good, Clean, and Fair components. We will then talk briefly about how to conduct professional development workshops with teachers and garden leaders in order to bring Good, Clean, and Fair lessons into the garden classes.

2. Activities that center around cooking and eating

(“Food) education will embrace slowness, pleasure, diversity and community. Put into practice, this means that activities that engage people’s senses, mind and passion in discovering ‘real’ food — from taste test games, to planting school gardens or organizing cooking lessons — are one of the strongest opportunities we have to improve our food systems. Without creating the desire for ‘something else’, the industrial food system will always have a captive audience.”

—SLOW FOOD INTERNATIONAL

3. Activities that promote the enthusiastic enjoyment of Good, Clean, and Fair food for all
Good, Clean, and Fair in a Slow Food Curriculum

As we think about a “Good, Clean, and Fair” curriculum, it’s useful to define those terms and think about what they mean in a curriculum. Table 1 shows how “Good, Clean, and Fair” can fit into a garden lesson plan.

**TABLE 1: GOOD, CLEAN, AND FAIR: WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN THE CURRICULUM?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>CLEAN</th>
<th>FAIR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOOD</strong></td>
<td><strong>CLEAN</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAIR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying the pleasures of healthy and delicious food</td>
<td>Gardening for sustainability</td>
<td>Producing food with respect for economic and social justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BIG IDEAS**
- Education about healthy food choices incorporates knowledge of how the quality of food is affected by its freshness, cultural factors, preparation, cooking, and consumption.
- Food must be produced sustainably to help ensure the ecological well being of our natural systems and the health of our diverse human communities.
- The co-producer. We as consumers have power to join hands with producers to regain control over how food is produced, distributed and sold in our communities.

**KEY CONCEPTS**
- Our culture shapes our food choices and behaviors.
- How we grow our food affects the Earth, our community, and our personal lives.
- Food should be accessible and affordable to all, while respecting the dignity of labor from field to fork.

Table 2 on the following page shows how the examples of curricula provided in this chapter “rate” in terms of their connection to each of these important concepts. In coming years, we hope to develop a “Slow Food-specific” curriculum that does a robust job of tying together all of the Good, Clean, and Fair values and builds on the excellent work represented in the examples that follow.
### TABLE 2: How Existing Curriculum Rates According to Metrics of Promoting Good, Clean, and Fair

**GOOD**
- Enjoying the pleasures of healthy and delicious food

**CLEAN**
- Gardening for sustainability

**FAIR**
- Producing food with respect for economic and social justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Name</th>
<th>Taste Education</th>
<th>Biodiversity</th>
<th>Food for Sustainability</th>
<th>Farmers’ Markets</th>
<th>Local Food System</th>
<th>National Food System</th>
<th>Global Food System</th>
<th>Human Rights</th>
<th>Food Policy</th>
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<td><em>Eat Think Grow</em> Linda Colwell <a href="http://eatthinkgrow.org/">http://eatthinkgrow.org/</a></td>
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<td><em>Seed-to-Table Activity Guide,</em> Gigia Kolouch <a href="http://www.sfdseedtotable.org/stt-documents/">http://www.sfdseedtotable.org/stt-documents/</a></td>
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<td><em>Plant, Harvest, Celebrate</em> Lynn Hyndman</td>
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<td>Food is Elementary <a href="http://www.foodstudies.org/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=29&amp;Itemid=32">http://www.foodstudies.org/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=29&amp;Itemid=32</a></td>
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<td>The Growing Classroom Life Lab <a href="http://www.lifelab.org/store/curriculum">http://www.lifelab.org/store/curriculum</a></td>
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<td>Cooking with Kids <a href="http://cookingwithkids.net/shop/">http://cookingwithkids.net/shop/</a></td>
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**NOTE:** Curriculum with * indicates those written by Slow Food members.
eat. think. grow.
Lessons for the School Garden

LINDA COLWELL, PORTLAND, OR

Eat. think. grow. is a comprehensive kindergarten-to-fifth-grade, seasonally based garden education curriculum designed to support teachers and school garden volunteers. The curriculum integrates garden-based education into the learning day through in-depth activities that address core curriculum standards. The lessons follow a blended seasonal-school-year calendar that combines age-appropriate and seasonal activities.

At the beginning of the year, kindergarteners are introduced to the garden as a place of learning, like the library or gymnasium. They plant large seeds, such as garlic, that will overwinter and produce a plant in the spring. They learn about the spatial relations inherent in a garden, such as under, above, and on the ground, and what is living and non-living in the garden.

First-grade lessons introduce natural and man-made environments and reveal the diversity of living things in the soil, plants, and air around the garden. Winter lessons introduce soil and its various properties, and seeds and their needs. Spring lessons shift to developing an understanding of insects and their role in the garden.

Second graders learn about harvesting ripe and ready-to-eat plants for food and how that is different from harvesting seeds for saving. Spring is full of lessons that focus on green, leafy plants growing in the garden and includes a lesson that reveals what grows in the neighborhood, tying students to a broader sense of place.

Third grade brings a focus on diversity and life cycles in the garden and preparation for third grade science testing. Students develop and test hypotheses in the garden, get to know their local farmer, and plant potatoes.

Fourth graders learn about the Ozette potato and spend the winter mapping and designing their garden plans. The spring lessons culminate with in-depth studies of farmers and farmers’ markets.

In fifth grade, students learn about corn and spend the winter studying school food systems, marketing and advertising local foods in the cafeteria. In springtime, students learn about compost and soil improvement.
The Seed to Table Activity Guide is designed to help facilitate transformational change to the school food and education systems while furthering the goals of Slow Food Denver. Through the construction of school gardens, the integration of multidisciplinary garden-based learning, and food and taste education programs, the Seed to Table program strives to foster dramatic and lasting change in the food system by creating a generation of citizens who become enthusiastic supporters of Good, Clean, and Fair food.

This guide is the result of 11 years of program development, trial and error, lessons learned, and collaboration among Slow Food Denver, Denver Public Schools, Denver Environmental Health, the Denver Fire Department, and countless experts, consultants, teachers, chefs, and volunteers. While not all-inclusive, each section guides teachers, administrators, and program developers through specific projects, processes, and lessons representing best practices, while supplying valuable resources, classroom-tested lessons, and recipes.

The lessons in this guide are designed to be used in tandem with the Seed to Table Project Manual, which describes the planning, permitting, garden construction, and processes used to build Taste Education, Garden to Cafeteria, Youth Farmers’ Markets, and Chef-Driven classroom activities. While written for elementary ages, these lessons and processes can be, and have been, adapted for a variety of age groups, environments, and settings. Though covering a variety of processes in garden and taste education, these lessons can be used independently, adapted to classroom and other outdoor settings, and are constructed to allow varying instructional time, differentiated learning, and varying complexity.

**Overarching Goals and Principles of the Seed to Table School Food Program**

- Deepen learners’ understanding of and appreciation for the foods they eat.
- Increase the consumption of, and willingness to try, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Develop an understanding of the food system including growing, harvesting, preparing, and, in some cases, marketing fresh foods.
- Teach learners about the relationships between their diet, bodies, and health.
- Encourage experiential scientific inquiry into life, earth, and social sciences.
- Provide a safe environment where students are free to develop and refine their taste preferences, learn basic food preparation techniques, and explore the relationships between the food system and their community.
- Embrace multidisciplinary, hands-on learning that engages learners and their community.
The Seed to Table School Garden Activity Guide is organized by themes covering the following subjects:

1. **Plant Cultivation:**
   Introduces learners to growing food from seed to harvest.

2. **Sensory Education:**
   Promotes learners’ appreciation of food and flavors, and the exploration of individual taste preferences.

3. **Using Kitchen Tools:**
   Provides lessons on basic food preparation, processing, and common kitchen tools.

4. **Plant Botany:**
   Explores the parts of a plant, their functions, and life cycles.

5. **Food and Culture:**
   Explores the cultures and cuisines of the world through cooking, geography, games, and books.

6. **Farm to Table:**
   Introduces students to food systems, markets, and supply chains to foster the development of informed consumers.

7. **Appendices:**
   Provide supplemental information about lesson planning, choosing activities for your program, cooking with children, maintaining a garden, and recommended resources.

Photos courtesy Linda Colwell
Plant, Harvest, Celebrate!

LYNN HYNDMAN, CHICAGO, IL

This set of three basic gardening lessons is designed for elementary students in grades kindergarten through fifth. It includes a spring planting lesson, a spring harvest and tasting lesson, and a fall harvest and tasting lesson. Each lesson has a number of activities appropriate for various grade levels, grouped in this manner: Grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. The exception is the fall harvest and tasting, where there are separate lessons for kindergartners and first graders.

These lessons were designed for use in edible school gardens, where plants are grown in raised beds with tools at hand in a shed, and seating at picnic tables, where students come to enjoy the tastings. As long as there are basic garden tools available and some good soil in which to plant, the activities in most lessons can be adapted for most situations.

Overview of each lesson:

Spring Planting: The reasons for nourishing the soil food web are the heart of the lesson as the older students prepare the raised beds for planting. Younger students learn about the role of the garden compost bin, what materials can be recycled in the bin, and what critters do the work of recycling the garden waste. A variety of cool-season seedlings—kale, chard, arugula, spinach, and salad greens—is planted by the younger children.

Spring Harvest & Tasting: Students learn how to harvest greens and about the important role plant food and, in particular, greens play in their daily diet. They then come together to assemble and enjoy a salad fresh from the garden.

Fall Harvest & Tasting: Each class participates in the fall harvest and celebration. The celebration emphasizes the many pleasures of fresh garden food, honors the people who help put food on our table each day, and calls attention to the diversity of crops in the garden, along with the diverse culinary traditions within the community.
The compost bin in our edible school garden is prominently situated right next to our garden gate. In the spring it is our first stop when I welcome the fourth and fifth graders to the garden. The older students have the task of preparing the raised beds for planting and are eager to get to work. We talk briefly about how we will use the compost to feed the soil before gathering around a raised bed. My first job is to awaken the students’ imaginations to what is happening underground. Imagine, I say, a vast network of activity with diverse populations at work—earthworms, microbes, nematodes, millipedes, centipedes, etc. Their jobs vary and include moving water through the soil, warding off diseases, recycling plant particles, becoming food for other critters, and, most importantly, providing nutrients for plants and other organisms. The question is: why should we keep these critters happy? Is there any way their survival is linked to ours? With a few more leading questions, the impact of healthy soil on plants and on our own health is brought home. Our attention is now brought to the task at hand, supporting this underground network that, like us, requires air, water, and food to survive. We set to work, lightly cultivating the soil so as not to cause much disturbance to the system. Loosening the soil provides more pathways for the air and water to reach the organisms. Next, we gently work in the compost after pausing to discuss its important role. When we feed the soil, just what are we feeding? Well, a handful of compost is home to billions of tiny creatures. Feeding just a small amount of compost to the soil in the early spring helps jump-start activity as the beds warm slowly in the sun. A few more steps, and our work is done. We level the soil bed so that the rainwater will be evenly distributed and finish things off by mulching. Students know that the mulch will help retain the moisture in the soil in addition to keeping the competition from the weeds down. Wrapping things up, we take time to reflect on how our survival depends on a healthy soil food web. It’s clear from working the soil that the children gained a deeper understanding of the miraculous system nature has in place for feeding us. Judging from a fifth grader’s comments, it’s good for the body and soul, too. “I like that we all have something to talk about in coming to the garden and that we get to work together. I like getting away from the stress.”
Professional Development

Since the majority of the Slow Food programming in school gardens is delivered by volunteers and teachers who may not be familiar with all the uniqueness of a garden lesson based on Slow Food philosophies, it will be important to conduct workshops that train the garden educators on how to deliver the curriculum. Slow Food Denver holds a monthly workshop that is open to all volunteers and teachers who bring students into the gardens. The theme of the workshops varies each month, but try to address seasonally appropriate lessons that can be applied immediately in the schools. For example, in February the workshop may show how to plant seeds and take care of seedlings in the classrooms. In the August workshop, a lesson on how to cook with students using garden produce is presented to the volunteers.

WORKSHOP PARTNERS

A Slow Food chapter may not have all of the expertise necessary to run professional development workshops. In that case, a good strategy is to develop relationships with local organizations that may have the same or similar mission and invite them to lead a workshop. Use the following list to brainstorm possible partnerships. In exchange, you can advertise their events to your members and school gardens.

- Environmental education organizations
- Permaculture groups
- Urban agriculture groups
- Local farms
- Cooking schools
- Gardening associations
- Community garden associations
- Local university or college teachers
- USDA Agriculture in the Classroom Program
- Examples of workshops

TYPES OF WORKSHOPS

**Introduction to Gardening with Kids:** Example Provided

**Introduction to Cooking with Kids:** Example Provided

**Connecting food with culture and heritage** and instilling pride in food traditions

**Growing and Cooking with Herbs,** including how to start a school herb garden, how to harvest, and how to use fresh herbs with young learners

**Edible Perennials and Permaculture** in the School Garden

**NOTE:** as you might imagine, these kinds of workshops can extend well beyond educating teachers and volunteers on implementing various curricula. They are also great opportunities to provide lessons learned from other sections of this manual, including things like negotiating school district policies regarding school gardens (approved garden materials, health and safety codes, volunteer background checks, etc.) and fundraising for gardens: how to fill out a grant application, where to look for funding, how to tell your story.
THREE EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Gigia Kolouch of Slow Food Denver and Linda Colwell of Portland, OR have developed a series of workshops that help train volunteers and teachers on how to deliver garden and cooking lessons with students. These workshop guides can be used by any Slow Food chapter to help design a workshop that is tailored to the specific needs of a garden program. As part of this manual, we have included two of the workshop guides as appendices to this chapter.

In the workshop called **Gardening with Young Learners**, the participants will learn about the Slow Food philosophy concerning garden education and how gardening in Colorado is unique compared with other locations. The guide then provides safety tips, weed identification guidance, and a list of garden supplies to outfit your school garden. For Colorado schools, the guide features several Cultivation charts and a Garden Calendar to help plan the planting and harvesting dates of produce items that will grow in Colorado. The guide then ends with a list of resources for seeds and books that will support the garden classes.

In the second workshop guide called **Cooking with Young Learners**, class participants again are taught the Slow Food philosophies on cooking with students and how the students should be the drivers in how the recipe is made in class. The guide includes Safety Tips when cooking with students and a list of required cooking supplies for an effective school teaching kitchen. 

**eat. think. grow.** uses professional development training models and continuing education credits to train classroom teachers and community partners. **eat. think. grow.** tailors 1, 3, and 5 day workshops to give teachers the tools, framework, and confidence to implement and align school gardens and food literacy with core curriculum and into the school learning environment. Special focus areas include wellness, and place- and community-based education.

Both workshop guides contain a Tasting Worksheet so that students of all ages can record their experiences each time they make and sample a new recipe. The Tasting Worksheet can be used with students in kindergarten because the rating system is a series of faces representing five steps from Yuk! to Yum! Older students can use the same worksheet but instead replace the faces for actual words that describe their taste experience.
Marketing

CHAPTER LEAD:
Wendy Levitz, Slow Food Miami, FL

CONTRIBUTOR:
Andrew Nowak, Slow Food Denver, CO
Introduction

When it comes to school gardens, the desire to get the word out to the community that the local Slow Food chapter is involved in a school garden usually gets lost in the beginning of the project. There is too much excitement and activity around the designing and building of the school garden. Garden leaders may feel that they need to get the project off the ground and get students in the garden before they can effectively market the garden through typical channels in the media, school newsletters, and social media. In the beginning of a new garden program, a Slow Food chapter can be really stretched in its capacity to address all the needs of the fledgling program, so marketing and PR activities can easily be pushed off to the side. Besides, we are all gardeners and foodies. What do we know about marketing and PR activities?

The goal of this Marketing chapter is to illustrate the importance of communicating details of the Slow Food garden program as early as possible so that the new program can reap the benefits of getting the word out. Since most Slow Food chapters are launching garden programs with a small number of volunteers and limited budgets, marketing the garden program may bring in more volunteers and financial support for the program through donations of money and supplies. In addition, it is the mission of Slow Food to educate the public about the Slow Food movement. Currently, the public really identifies with projects like school gardens, so the opportunity to connect to many potential new members is great. However, before any promotional activities are launched, it’s best to start with a plan.

This chapter will share a template from Slow Food Miami for a communications plan that includes some of the key objectives, strategies, and tactics that form the foundation of any solid marketing plan. To be more specific to marketing Slow Food garden programs, we have given you a head start in identifying potential targets, messages, and cost-effective activities for your chapter and your garden program. It’s important that, as Slow Food chapters, we leverage the messages outlined by Slow Food USA, but there will be unique attributes to your marketing program when it comes to gardens. Not all markets or programs are alike, and you definitely have the freedom to be creative!

Communications Plan Template

MISSION STATEMENT

Before a Communications Plan can be developed, the school garden leaders need to have a clear set of goals and objectives for the program. As discussed in the Design and Build chapter, one of the first steps in getting the program launched is to have an agreement within the leadership on the Mission Statement and how the students will be a part of the program. Is the garden program about teaching kids where food comes from? Or will the program be a science-based education with food more of a by-product of the science education? Will the gardens be supplying fresh produce to the school cafeterias, and is a goal to affect the quality of the school lunch programs? Having a well-thought-out Mission Statement will have an impact on how the Communications Plan will be developed.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
A well-thought-out Communications Plan requires that the leaders of the Slow Food chapter spend a fair amount of time brainstorming the Goals and Objectives of the Communications Plan. Within this discussion is a clear understanding of the capacity of the Slow Food chapter and the limitations of the time commitment provided by its key volunteers. You don’t want to establish a Communications Plan that requires way more time to achieve than your volunteers are able to give. On the other hand, you want to develop an aggressive enough of a plan so that your volunteers are challenged and engaged at a satisfying level of work and that there will be sufficient success to keep people’s interest.

It’s important to understand your overall objectives for the Communications Plan. Are you interested in generating awareness for your Slow Food chapter and its garden program? Are you trying to attract new corporate sponsors? Are you trying to reach out to new schools to be part of your garden program? All of these objectives are important and should be addressed in your plan.

Some typical goals of a Communications Plan include increasing the general awareness in the local community of the goals of your Slow Food chapter. Slow Food chapters still have much to do to educate the community on the Slow Food movement, and school garden programs are very effective in attracting attention for the movement. At the same time, a goal of the Communications Plan will be to reach potential donors and sponsors to help with the initial funding and volunteer support for the construction of the garden. Finally, the Communications Plan will need to notify the community about an upcoming event or fundraiser and to sell tickets to the event.

TARGET AUDIENCES
The next step in your Communications Plan is to identify the top 1-3 audience groups that you need to engage to meet your communications objectives and what you need them to do for your program. As you identify each group, try to determine what will capture the attention of each group, what will they want from your program, and what are they able to provide to your efforts. Examples of some key constituencies are:

1. **Community residents:** potential parents and volunteers for the garden program. They care about the food their children eat or want to give back to a program that aligns with their values pertaining to nutrition and the environment. Some community members could come with gardening experience or just be an active member of the community with school age or high-school children.

2. **Sponsors and donors:** local businesses, foundations, and individuals who have cause-related dollars they are allocating. They may be focused on local food-related causes, childhood obesity, farming, or nutrition.

3. **School administrators and teachers:** determine your target geographic area in your community where you would plant gardens, and research the schools and community centers in that area.
BENCHMARKS
A strong Communications Plan will identify key measureable outcomes to help determine if the plan is working. Try to identify 3-5 concrete, specific measures that will help you understand if you’re on the right track to achieving your communications goals.

Potential benchmarks:

- Generate a specific number of applications from schools for new gardens.
- Finalize partnerships with two local organizations to help support and generate funds for the program.
- Secure a feature article in a local publication or media outlet, such as the local newspaper, Edible magazine, radio interview, etc.

MARKETING STRATEGIES
Your marketing strategies are designed to motivate your target audience to take specific actions. Marketing strategies are a series of rules that ensure that you are reaching these audiences in a meaningful way. Here are some successful marketing strategies that Slow Food Miami uses to support their garden programs:

**Branding** Define, convey, and reinforce the Slow Food brand (the unique way in that the organization delivers its expertise in improving food choices and education for children and under-resourced communities) for all target audiences. Consistent, memorable branding helps your base membership to keep Slow Food and your garden program top of mind and spread the word about it.

**Expand marketing reach** Increase the awareness of the organization and the number of people who see the Slow Food name. Associate your garden program with the organization. For example, due to primary focus of the Slow Food Miami chapter on planting gardens, our tagline is “Planting a Fresher Future for Our Children.”

**Put Public Relations to work for you** PR is one of the most cost-effective activities for a nonprofit organization such as Slow Food to utilize, as it can tell a complete story to a large audience at very little cost. Is there a PR firm in your area that would be willing to do pro bono work? Slow Food Miami identified a restaurant/hospitality PR firm that was willing to donate their time to align themselves with our cause. We write press releases for all events and milestones for our chapter, and the PR firm uses their up-to-date media list to distribute them to key members of the press.

**Social Media** Social media allows you to reach a potentially large audience in a cost-effective manner. It allows for one-to-one dialog with individuals and organizations and grows the number of people who choose to hear from and support you.

**Pre- and post-event marketing** Should your chapter host fundraising or garden events, it’s important that you support attendance at these events via your marketing and PR efforts. Event marketing is designed to generate ticket sales and could include presence on community event calendars, grassroots marketing at coffee shops and other local businesses, and placement in local media outlets.
MARKETING AND PR TACTICS

Marketing tactics are the specific activities you use to deliver your messaging to your audience. They leverage the strategies listed above and create the action-oriented part of your marketing plan. All tactics should support your overall goals and objectives as well as your strategies.

Some potential marketing tactics include:

Create a messaging platform
It’s important that messaging about the Slow Food movement and your chapter’s garden program be consistent. This language should be reflected in all materials you create—from your website and collateral to Facebook posts and press releases. Slow Food USA has designed a media training and messaging platform that outlines the mission of the organization and allows you to create your own messaging platform, using their guidelines.

As your chapter engages more and more in marketing activities, you’ll often be asked for materials and logos. Use a service such as Dropbox to store graphic files and easily share them with someone via email. Dropbox will keep a library of images in a single location and keep you from having to email large files. In addition, having a Standards guide available within your Slow Food chapter will help with consistent messaging and fewer hassles to the staff and volunteers. Create a PDF guide for staff and volunteer messengers to use to make decisions on messaging and the “look and feel” of communications.

Use a consistent look and feel
Consistency of look and feel is important. Slow Food USA has created branding guidelines to help you ensure that the Slow Food logo is used properly, as it’s a registered trademark and needs to be treated as such. Individual chapters have the ability to brand their garden programs or create taglines to help describe the mission of their chapter. As mentioned above, the Slow Food Miami chapter tagline is “Planting a Fresher Future for Our Children.”

Develop marketing materials
As part of Slow Food USA, we have access to a series of collateral materials that we can use for new members or for donations. Slow Food Miami has developed several collateral pieces to help support their garden program.

Donation Brochure
Using the Slow Food USA brochure as a guide, Slow Food Miami created a two-sided card that provides an overview of the program and outlines how people can get involved. You’ll notice that Slow Food Miami described ways that people can get involved, ranging from attending an event to helping plant gardens and make a donation. For a school-garden donation program to work well, it’s important to understand the cost to plant a garden. Slow Food Miami allows people to donate $625 to plant a garden, or someone could donate just $48 to provide plant starts and seeds for one being planted.

Garden Sticker
An additional piece of collateral created by Slow Food Miami is the garden sticker. Every child who plants a garden is sent home with the sticker on their shirt. The sticker may spur conversation with parents about their experience during the day and further generate awareness of the organization and potentially get parents involved in tending to the garden, volunteering in the Taste Education classes, or becoming donors to the program.
Create a strong online presence There are many ways that chapters can leverage their website to support their garden program. Designating a section of the website for “Garden Program” or “Edible Garden Program” will feature your efforts in this area, while giving the chapter an opportunity to provide:

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<td>an overview of your mission</td>
<td>the locations of the gardens you’ve planted in the area</td>
<td>an education section for seasonal planting ideas, literature, etc. and</td>
<td>a page that will provide people with the opportunity to donate.</td>
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There’s also an opportunity to create a page to thank donors and sponsors in this section, as it can be one of the benefits they receive when sponsoring a garden.

Engage in social media (Facebook/Twitter)

**Facebook.** As mentioned earlier, social media provides nonprofit organizations such as Slow Food with an opportunity to reach out to supporters on a one-on-one basis at no cost. Your chapter may already have a Facebook page, and it’s a powerful vehicle to use to promote your garden program. Below are some ideas and guidelines for using Facebook for this purpose:

- Always try to post smart, inspiring, and useful content. There is an 80/20 rule for nonprofits when it comes to content posts. 80% of the content on Facebook posts should be directly related to the nonprofit’s cause and programs, while 20% can be related to current events and food/nutrition/farming related topics.
- Once you have photo releases signed by people participating in your garden plantings, post them on Facebook with descriptions of what they were planting and some information about the school or class. Throughout the growing season, you can show updates of the garden growing and even photos of garden harvests.
- Other Facebook posts could include articles about nutrition and food advocacy, information on farmers, and details about restaurants in your area that are actively supporting the movement.

**Twitter.** Twitter is a social medium that is effective in sending links, quick updates, and photos. You are limited to 140 characters, and it requires some finesse to get your point across effectively. If your chapter already has a Twitter account, be sure to leverage it to show pictures of plantings, harvests, links to your garden application, and other interesting garden-related items.

Above right is an example of a ‘tweet’ promoting the Slow Food Miami Edible Garden program.
**Leverage Public Relations Activities** In addition to social media activities, Public Relations is a cost-effective means of generating awareness of your Slow Food chapter and garden program, in addition to generating ticket sales to specific events. Press releases or media alerts are a great way to inform key members of the press about activities such as:

- Launch of your garden program
- New donor or sponsor of the program
- High impact planting(s) at a large school or community or a planting that has special meaning or a storyline (e.g., sensory garden at a school with handicapped students).

Once you’ve written a press release, the work begins. Getting your release into the hands of key members of the press can often be helped by someone who regularly updates a press list in your area. Try to find a PR firm willing to do pro bono work. Offer to write releases and ask them to distribute them and follow up with the media. PR firms have the relationships to get media coverage for you, whether it’s a feature story about your chapter in a local newspaper to listings on blogs or event calendars about your fundraising events. Be sure to always post press releases on your website in a News section.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Because Slow Food chapters are volunteer-based, it’s important to look across the organization to determine what members can assist with some of the activities in the Communications Plan. Can your existing team handle these activities or do you require some outsourcing? Some companies, such as design firms, will offer a nonprofit rate for web and email design. Also, which activities are project-based and which ones require ongoing support? For example, social media requires consistent effort and attention, so it’s important that someone with capacity to monitor the different social marketing channels take on this role.

To ensure consistency of messaging across your Slow Food board, share the messaging plan with them and do a brief media training. Work on your mission statement for your chapter and your garden program, and prepare an elevator pitch. All members of the organization should be familiar with the language used to describe the program, whether it’s in social media, on the website, or in press releases. Clearly specify each board member’s and volunteer’s role as a marketer with necessary training so that they become effective communicators of Slow Food’s key talking points.

**BUDGET**

It’s ideal to start your marketing planning process with a budget in mind so that you can plan realistically. Your goal is to develop an understanding of the greatest return on investment of each of your activities and to track budget expenditures in the coming year. Marketing plans should be refined and tweaked as you go along. Evaluate what is working best so you can do more of it. Determine which targets are engaged and which audience segments you need to engage differently. What content resonates most with your base? And what messages generate action?
Keep close account of the impact of your messaging and the extent that it is reaching your target audiences.

A marketing plan for school gardens should be considered a work in progress. Keep close account of the impact of your messaging and the extent that it is reaching your target audiences. Continue to ask yourself if the message is fresh or does it need to be updated to keep from getting old and repetitive. As the garden program experiences successes, be sure to include these stories in your updated messaging and to expand your reach to segments of the community that may not have been your original targets.

METRICS
Some metrics to analyze include:

1. **Website usage analytics:**
   - What are the most visited pages on your site and what keywords are users searching to reach your site?

2. **Review your open and click-through rates for your marketing emails.**
   - MailChimp is an effective and free email platform that will allow you to create, distribute, and track emails sent to your list. Looking at open rates will help you determine if you are effectively marketing to your database.

3. **Use online surveys to determine what your constituents are seeking from your chapter.**
   - SurveyMonkey is a free online survey platform that will help you quickly develop, distribute and analyze survey data.
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Introduction

As a new school garden gets launched, plants and seeds get into the ground and students begin to enjoy the great, bountiful harvest, many garden leaders want to grow the success of these programs into the community and start to look around for other ways to engage the students in the garden. Or often a Slow Food chapter wants to extend their relationships to other groups in the community and needs a project that will bring together groups with similar missions around healthy foods. The goal of this chapter is to give examples of successful Special Projects from Slow Food school gardens. These projects go beyond the classic Taste Education and garden curricula. Often these projects find new and innovative ways to use the food that is produced in the school gardens to provide further educational opportunities for the students in the community. Almost always these projects result in new partnerships that increase the capacity of both groups to support school gardens and extend their reach into the community.

This chapter was not written as a “How to Do” chapter but rather to provide a brief description of the different projects. If there is a particular project that resonates with your chapter, please reach out to the Slow Food leader listed at the end of the section for further information. In some cases, the Slow Food chapter has developed a manual to support that project, and it will be available to any Slow Food chapter that requests the resource.

Find new and innovative ways to use the food that is produced in school gardens to further educational opportunities for the students in the community.
Low Food Charlotte has conducted a project where students harvest produce from school gardens to contribute to an after-school spaghetti dinner. The pesto, sauce, and salad are made from harvested produce. Students are involved from planting in the spring to getting the food to the table in the fall. All children can be involved in the process and design of the dinner. Older children can participate in cooking. Younger children can decorate tablecloths and make menus. All students help with planting and harvesting. There are opportunities to include education in the table decorations and menu creation.

Planning for a Harvest Dinner starts way back in the spring when the garden is going to be planted. It will be necessary to have a preliminary menu established so the appropriate plants and seeds will be planted to support the menu. Ideally, the produce will not be ready to be harvested until just right before the harvest dinner. But since we can’t always control the growth of plants, a contingency plan should be developed in case the harvest needs to be performed earlier. In case of an early harvest, is it possible to prepare the dishes early and freeze them until the Harvest Dinner? Conversely, if the harvest is going to be late and not available for the dinner, can the menu be changed or can the produce be purchased from another local garden or farm?

There are many places where the students can be involved in the Harvest Dinner. Students can help design the menu and the food plants that will be needed to prepare the meal. As the event approaches, students can help with advertising and marketing the event. There will be a need for many volunteers, and students can reach out to their networks for family and friends that can help as volunteers. Students can also go around to local businesses to get donations of non-food items, like tableware, centerpieces, drinks, and auction items if necessary.

Events like Harvest Dinners are ambitious to pull off and come with a set of difficulties. First, it is challenging to grow enough food in a school garden to feed a large number of guests. While it may be necessary to partner with a local farm to source all the needed food, at least the students in the school garden will be able to see how their produce was a large part of the party. Second, the produce from the garden is not going to cost you anything, but there will be expenses outside of the garden food that will require a budget. Some of these items could probably be donated, but some fundraising will be necessary to cover some of the expenses.

As always, involving children in the planning for an event will be a good learning experience for them, but it represents a challenge for the adults in charge. Patience will be required to work with the students on the event. And there will have to be enough adult volunteers to help supervise the children as well as handle some of the more heavy-lifting tasks.

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There are many uses for the fresh produce that comes from the school gardens. While it is important that the activities have some sort of educational component, the final recipients of the food can vary widely. In Denver, Slow Food Denver is part of a coalition of anti-hunger groups that have developed a program called Produce for Pantries (P4P). These groups represent different types of gardening groups as well as faith-based groups and food banks that work to end hunger. The goal of P4P is to connect home gardens, school gardens, and community gardens with the nearest food pantry to supply excess fruits and vegetables for those in the community in need.

There were several challenges to overcome to make the fresh produce available to the pantries. The first challenge was to find a way to connect all the different gardeners to their local pantry. After several attempts of a website, a partnership was made with a state-wide hotline that connects families to resources like summer feeding sites, assistance with SNAP, and events that are supporting families struggling with hunger issues. The hotline will now accept calls from gardeners and, using a large database of pantries in the state, connect the gardener with a local pantry using their zip code. Now it is possible anywhere in the state to connect a garden with a pantry.

A second challenge was to set standards of the types and condition of food that can be donated. The program is targeting only fresh, raw, and whole produce. The literature for the program states that a gardener should “donate only items that you would be comfortable in serving to your family.” Because the recipients of donated food are considered at high risk for health problems, the P4P partners also established some basic food safety protocols for the gardeners to minimize any food risks. These protocols are published on the website and included with any literature on the program. Many pantries are also challenged with necessary storage and refrigeration for fresh produce.

The biggest challenge now is getting the word out to as many gardeners as possible so that as much produce as possible can get to the pantries. There have been partnerships with Garden Centers of Colorado to help get the word out as well as some creative websites to inform people. Most of the recognition for the program is coming from social media and word of mouth.
Often connections with local restaurants can produce special events to support the educational mission or the fundraising needs of a school garden project. In Buffalo, NY, Slow Food Buffalo has produced events with several restaurants to bolster their garden program. The chef from the Whole Hog Truck took kids to a garden, harvested basil and tomatoes, and taught knife skills in the kitchen in the production of bruschetta, which was used as a snack for Back to School Night. Trattoria Aroma, a field-to-fork restaurant that works with Oles Family Farm, took a group of kids to the farm, harvested, and delivered produce to the restaurant’s chef, who came to the school kitchen the next day and did a cooking demonstration involving a pasta dish that the kids helped cook. Both events have been very successful despite the challenges of getting donated kitchen space.

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In the summer of 2009, Slow Food Charlotte and Friendship Trays teamed up to start a garden in the empty, weedy lot behind Friendship Trays, our local Meals-on-Wheels program. We wanted to increase fresh vegetables coming into the kitchen and decrease the amount of empty #10 aluminum cans going out of the kitchen. Everyone loved our whimsical little garden, but it didn’t produce nearly enough. Friendship Trays serves 700 meals every weekday, and that takes a lot of food! We needed to start more gardens.

In 2010, Slow Food Charlotte applied for and received a grant from a local organization that allowed us to hire two part-time garden coordinators. These two coordinators were tasked with growing and sustaining the garden program, now named Friendship Gardens.

As of this writing, we have over 55 active gardens and six more in development. In 2012, our volunteers logged over 12,000 hours and our gardens donated over seven tons of the freshest, healthiest, as-local-as-you-can-get food to Friendship Trays.

At Friendship Gardens, we believe everyone should have access to fresh, healthy food. Along with our garden network, we have created a handful of other programs that help us live out that belief.

Through HomeGrown, our partnership with Habitat for Humanity Charlotte, Habitat homeowners are given a garden and support in the form of a garden mentor, access to our monthly workshops, and the promise that HomeGrown volunteers will return to replant one more season.

The Friendship Gardens Mobile Market was launched to break down barriers to access to fresh vegetables for those residing in food deserts. Each week we set up a farm stand at the bus station in downtown Charlotte and sell vegetables for nonprofit prices. We happily accept cash, credit cards, and EBT/SNAP benefits.

Backyard Friendship Gardens is a community of backyard gardeners who plant a little extra each season to donate to Friendship Trays. With our vegetable growing powers combined, we can ensure that Friendship Trays recipients are served the very best food that there is: fresh, healthy, and delicious food grown with love in our own backyards.

Learn more about Friendship Gardens on our website
www.friendship-gardens.org
Henry Owen r.henry.owen@gmail.com
Once a relationship between your students and the school garden is established, an invaluable way to further the understanding of where good food is coming from and how it is fairly produced is to organize students field trips to nearby farms.

Every spring, science teacher Sara from Essex Street Academy in New York City, one of the schools our Slow Food NYC chapter supports, travels with a group of students to Hawthorne Valley Farms, a 400-acre biodynamic farm in Upstate New York. At the farm, about 20 tenth graders spend two days working and participating in all aspects of the farm’s life and activities. At Hawthorne Valley Farm, the students enjoy farm-based learning activities, including harvesting, cheese making, sap collecting, baking, cooking, and fermentation. While working together, kids learn about the interdependency between different natural productions and the urban and rural worlds. Students bond through sharing and learning in an out-of-the classroom environment, the conviviality of preparing meals together, and the exposure to farmers’ real lives and their vocational work are some of the many added values of bringing your students to a farm.

The students start preparing for the trip early in the school year through lessons that relate to every core aspect of the academic curriculum and that can be applied to their future farm experience. If possible, an in-person exchange between the students and the farm’s staff will help familiarize students with the people they will be working with.

If you don’t have relationships with farms already, an easy way to start one is to visit your local farmers’ market. Introduce yourself and your students and support the vendors by doing your food shopping there.

One of the challenges of organizing a farm trip is covering transportation cost. Three quarters of Sara’s budget for the trip covers the bus rental fare. Depending on the number of kids, less expensive solutions can be considered, such as parents/teachers carpooling or renting a less expensive minivan.

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If bus transportation is needed, contact a rental company and determine the cost. Check whether your school budget can afford the cost. Students usually pay a nominal amount to participate, but you should have other sources of funding to cover the trip.

Carefully consider your students’ age and group size to make sure the farm offers enough age-appropriate activities and enough staff to assist your group. Draw a timetable for the day and plan a realistic schedule for the day, then share it with the farm staff.

Obtain school and parents’ permission slips, inquire about any food intolerance/allergy and special needs students might have, and check your school’s liability policy for field trips.

Start preparing your group in advance about what to expect during your visit; also set expectations for students’ behavior—they should be aware of the farmers’ hard work and avoid disrupting it in any way.

Make sure you will have enough adults on the trip; contact parents and/or school staff to sign up volunteers.

A Slow Food chapter can support farm field trips by fundraising for the money to pay for the bus, to bring supplies to the farm or to recruit a chef for a food demonstration.
Andrew Nowak of Slow Food Denver was thrilled to get a call one day from Leo Lesh, Director of Food and Nutrition Services for Denver Public Schools (DPS). Leo was asking how they could get some of the produce grown in the school gardens into the cafeteria. DPS had just invested in salad bars for every school, and it seemed logical that some that fresh produce growing in the gardens should land on the salad bars. That call was something Andrew had dreamed about but never really expected to get!

With the go-ahead from Leo, Andrew began thinking about what process they would have to go through to accomplish this task. Food safety for children is paramount, so Andrew started looking at the USDA regulations regarding safe handling of foods. These guidelines are intended for large farming operations, so Andrew began paring away at the regs to get to those that would apply to school gardens feeding their own schools. After many meetings with DPS and with Denver Department of Environmental Health, a pilot Garden to Cafeteria project was announced.

Key to the success of the pilot would be incenting gardens to grow food for the cafeteria, instead of, or in addition to, their own programs. DPS sweetened the deal by offering to pay wholesale prices to the gardens for produce grown and delivered to the school cafeteria staff. (Another key component of this project was a willingness by DPS to train their staff to handle fresh produce.) Garden to Cafeteria pilot schools took the bait and started growing things that would create cash: cucumbers, tomatoes, and melons are tricky to grow at altitude, but they are heavy and bring in the greatest amount of revenue. Plus, kids love them since they are not just tasty but familiar.

Produce is identified on the salad bars as having come from the garden, and it is well received by the students. The garden programs benefit, and as their balances grow, they have learned to grow even more of the produce that DPS is eager to buy. The program has been so well received that DPS is now rolling it out to all school gardens willing to participate and taking over from Slow Food Denver the administration of the program. Success!

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Youth Farmers’ Market
SLOW FOOD DENVER, COLORADO

Slow Food Denver and its partner, Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), developed a farmers’ market model on school grounds using fresh produce from school gardens and local farms. The Youth Farmers’ Markets (YFM) 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. Finally, YFMs support community-building as the markets become a gathering place for a school community and support the nutritional needs of that community.

A basic YFM is an after-school event run by older students and supported by adult volunteers. Typically held on a Thursday or Friday afternoon, the YFM team starts to set up the market an hour before school ends. A group of students harvest fresh produce from the garden under the supervision of adult volunteers while a second group sets up a farm stand on several tables and under a pop-up tent. The produce is displayed with signage indicating the source of the fresh fruits and vegetables and the price. Market setups can include wicker baskets or metal tubs, or simply being spread out on a table. A simple cash box allows for students to accept cash and return change. Once the bell rings, families gather at the market and students work one-on-one to sell the produce.

To increase the range of produce items being sold at the markets, Slow Food Denver and DUG developed a distribution system in which a rental truck was driven to nearby farms on Thursday morning to pick up cases of fresh produce items that are difficult to grow at school, such as corn, watermelon, broccoli, peaches, and apples. Individual markets placed their orders earlier in the week for this produce and are able to pick it up at a central cooler that DUG operates. Schools pay the wholesale price for the produce and can mark it up to make a profit for the garden program.

The YFM model has been very successful in getting fresh produce into neighborhoods that have limited grocery stores and in raising money for the school garden program. Slow Food Denver has been successful with two Specialty Crops Grants from the CO Department of Agriculture to support YFMs in food desert areas and promotions in these neighborhoods to increase the purchasing of the fresh produce. In addition, across an 8-week season, YFMs can earn anywhere from $200-$3,000 for the garden program to be used to buy supplies for the next season.

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YFM/GTC Conference
SLOW FOOD DENVER, COLORADO

Slow Food Denver and its partner, Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), have been collaborating for over eight years on the Youth Farmers’ Market model and for three years on the Garden to Cafeteria program. Both projects have provided students with garden-related activities that extend into the community and cafeteria. In addition, both programs provide the garden with an opportunity to raise some funds to become more independent from typical fundraising efforts. For the most part, participating schools came from the Denver Metro area, yet there was great interest in both of these programs throughout the state.

In 2012, Slow Food Denver and DUG received some funding from the 1772 Foundation to support a full-day conference to show other schools and districts how the two programs can support garden programs in their area. The funding allowed for the rental of a large hall on the grounds of a county fairgrounds, materials to share with the participants, and the service of a local lunch to all participants. In total, over 120 people attended, representing over 26 school districts from Colorado and Wyoming.

The conference was split into two half-days. In the morning, we discussed the development of the Garden to Cafeteria program, highlighting the partnership between Denver Public Schools Food and Nutrition Department, Denver Department of Environmental Health, and Slow Food Denver. The key point of the story was the development of the GTC protocols that allowed students to harvest and sell fresh garden produce to the school cafeteria.

After a great lunch from a local chef, the afternoon was spent on how to set up a Youth Farmers’ Market program in a district. While there are many moving pieces to a YFM project, the goal of the conference was to break the process down to doable pieces so as not to overwhelm a new site to get started. There was a sample market stand set up in the conference hall, and there were several YFM leaders who shared their successes with the crowd.

The impact of the conference was seen following the session. The GTC protocols have now become a template for districts and county health departments across the state to use to develop their own protocols that best fit their community. At least three other districts have already started GTC programs with the hope that many more districts will follow. The YFM program has also expanded to new sites in the state and is taking on issues such as SNAP benefits and food desert communities. Slow Food Denver and DUG have also teamed together to produce a YFM Manual that shares all the Best Practices that have been developed through the partnership over eight years.

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The Greenmarket Bucks is a three-year collaboration between Greenmarket (http://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket) and Slow Food New York City. Lower, middle, and high-school students from all over the city receive educational tours of the Green Markets, primarily at the flagship market at Union Square in Manhattan. Kids from schools with a 75% free lunch participation rate each receive a $2 “Greenmarket Bucks” coupon that can be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables offered by farmers participating in the market. Kids can enjoy their purchases at the market, take them home, or collaborate on a class meal back at school, depending on the accompanying teacher’s plan. The Slow Food NYC contribution of $2,500/year provides 1,250 coupons. Slow Food NYC was the first and remains a primary funder of the program.

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Not every school has a kitchen classroom, and not every lesson related to the garden can or should happen in the garden. Children often start seeds in the classroom and then plant those seeds in their school garden. Some schools have compost for garden waste, as well. Being able to eat what they grow gives the school children a strong sense of connection to the garden, and it has the potential to teach them math and logic skills, nutrition and health, and history and local culture, as well as foster creativity as they think about and explore different flavor combinations. In an effort to provide the opportunity to enjoy and learn about food in the classroom, the garden leaders and parents at Shamrock Elementary School came up with a classroom kitchen cart that could be taken to any classroom in the school for demonstrations.

The Slow Food Charlotte volunteers who created and kept the Shamrock Gardens Elementary gardens for the first couple of years wanted to make sure that the students were not just planting and harvesting produce but that they were also able to share their produce as a group. The cooking/tasting portion of the garden program is important in that the students get to feel a sense of community while working together to prepare their food as well as sitting together to enjoy tasting it. This part of the program also allows the students to experience the preparation of food and is transferable to their home lives (bringing home recipes, talking about food with their families, etc.). In order to accomplish the cooking/tasting portion of the garden program, we had to find a way to bring the kitchen to the classroom due to lack of space and equipment. In 2011, a few of our Shamrock parents made the kitchen cart their priority and were able to get all of the items donated through friends and family. Since then, the cart has been a treasured part of our program—the appearance of the cart in any classroom creates excitement in students and teachers alike!

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RECOMMENDED INVENTORY FOR CLASSROOM KITCHEN CARTS:

1 Kitchen Cart. Preferably stainless steel for durability and ease of cleaning. Butcher block countertop to stay cool with hot cooking devices on top, durability, and ability to use as extra cutting board (at least three inches x 2 inches)
1 Display mirror for kitchen cart
1-2 Large toaster-convection ovens with roasting pans (Krups brand)
1 Extra-large electric burner (for use with sauté pans large enough for preparing food samples for a double class and/or parents and children)
1 Blender
4 Mixing bowls in various sizes, rubber grip on bottom
2 Colanders
3+ Wooden spoons (non-reactive and non-stick safe)
2-3 Tongs
3 Spatulas/rubber scrapers
2-3 Turners
1 Plastic-coated whisk
2 Vegetable peelers
1 set kitchen knives with safety guards
1 Additional paring knife
2-3 Kid-safe knives (still needs to have adult supervision)
3 Cutting boards
2 sets Measuring cups (at least 1/4, 1/3, 1/2, 1 cup sizes)
2 sets Measuring spoons (1/4, 1/2, 1 tsp, 1 Tbsp)

2-3 Frying/sauté pans with metal handles and lids
2-3 2-quart sauce pans with lids
4 Cookie sheets
2 Glass 8x8 baking pans
1-2 OXO salad spinner
1 Shaker for dressings and sauces
4 Flat pot holders
2 sets Hand mitts
10 Thin towels (for drying produce and dishes)
6 Terry towels
1 Salt and pepper mill set
1 Vinegar cruet
60 Bamboo, reusable plates (~$1 each)
60 Fork, spoon, knife sets (~$1.25 each)
60 Cloth napkins (purchase bolts or lengths of fabric in school colors)
Cork shelf liner

Staples:
Salt and pepper
Olive oil
Vegetable oil
Dish soap
Hand sanitizer
Apple cider vinegar
Spice blends (+dried herbs from garden)
Honey
In order to find new and creative ways to engage all students with the fresh food from the school gardens, Slow Food Denver formed a partnership with the Denver Zoo called the Garden to Zoo program. The Denver Zoo has recently gained national attention as the Greenest Zoo in the country for their efforts on waste reduction, energy savings, and local food procurement. The curators from the Denver Zoo approached Slow Food Denver with an idea that school gardens could grow fresh produce for zoo animals in exchange for educational opportunities at the zoo for the school children. After a discussion of what school gardens could grow easily, the curators decided that it would be best if the school gardens would grow fresh greens for the gorillas. Slow Food Denver liked this plan as it was always a challenge to get students to get excited about items like kale, Swiss chard, and collard greens.

For the pilot season, four school gardens grew a couple of patches of greens for the Denver Zoo. Slow Food Denver arranged for a weekly pickup from a couple of schools and delivered the fresh greens to the zoo’s commissary kitchen. The greens were weighed each week at the zoo. In general, the greens were presented whole to the gorillas, but sometimes the greens were added to other food mixes for the primates.

The Educational Department of the Denver Zoo designed a program on “Colorado Food Webs” for the visiting students. Each school picked two classes (usually third or fourth grades) to go to the zoo for the educational program and a behind-the-scenes tour of the commissary kitchen. Highlights of the tour included a visit to the walk-in freezer where the students were able to see frozen mice, rabbits, and other delicacies for the zoo animals.

After the tour, the students went to the gorilla enclosure where they saw the curator feed the gorillas the greens that were harvested from the school gardens. The students were able to eat their sack lunch prepared by the school kitchen that was loaded with Colorado products and fresh produce from their school gardens. When the students realized that they were eating very similar food as the gorillas, students were heard to say, “I now like kale because I see the gorillas eating kale.” The program was deemed a success as the students were motivated to eat food similar to the gorillas.

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Chapter 7: Policy

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Introduction

Since school gardens involve growing fresh food on school grounds with students of all ages, there are many sensitive issues that come into play that require certain policies to be put in place. As Slow Food chapters get more involved in school garden projects, it will become more important that chapter leaders are well-versed in understanding how to navigate different levels of policies and to become the designers of policies. The goal of this chapter is to describe some of the policy challenges that school garden projects will face and how Slow Food chapters can help lead the efforts to write effective, while not restrictive, policies around school gardens.

Different levels of policy within a district and community

There are many levels of policies that will be in play when a Slow Food chapter gets involved in a school garden project. For example, just getting a garden started will bring the attention of a school district’s Facilities and Grounds Department and their policies on safe use of school grounds and the use of materials in a garden. The Facilities department will also be checking the garden to see if it meets American Disability Act (ADA) standards for access to all students. At another School District level will be the Food and Nutrition Services Department and their need for safe food handling protocols during the cooking classes using fresh produce from the garden. Finally, the Risk Management Department will have policies in place for the background checks of volunteers and for cooking equipment that can be used in the school.
At the school level, the principal will have certain policies in place to allow students outside in the schoolyard to work the garden. To ensure the safety of the children, there will be rules about garden tools and the amount of supervision required in the garden. Each school has a Facilities Manager who may have certain rules on water access and use of the school building for storage.

Teachers may have their own policies around class management and what kind of lessons can be incorporated into the classroom instruction. Ideally, the school garden is viewed as another classroom, so all rules that apply in the classroom should be applied in the garden setting.

We can even look at levels higher than the school district for possible policies that may affect school garden work. Once a garden program starts looking to supply the school cafeterias with fresh produce, the City Health Department will be involved to ensure that the food coming into the school kitchens is handled properly. Since the garden produce may be part of the school meal service, the State Department of Education or Human Services may have policies in place as they manage the National School Lunch Program. In some states, the State Department of Agriculture is insisting that school gardens fall into the same category as farms when it comes to Good Agricultural Practices.

In the next sections, descriptions of possible policy challenges will be provided for such issues as designing and building school gardens, volunteers, growing and harvesting of fresh produce, preparing and cooking fresh produce, curriculum, production of value-added products, and licensing needed for special projects. Within each section, examples will be provided of specific policies that have been developed by Slow Food chapters and descriptions of the partnerships that were created to accomplish these policy documents.

### CHECKLIST: LEVELS OF POLICIES ENCOUNTERED AROUND SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECTS

**State Level**
- Department of Agriculture
  - Farming practices
- Department of Education and Health and Human Services
  - National School Lunch Program

**City Level**
- Health Department
  - Food safety in school kitchens
- City government
  - Use of public lands and permits

**District Level**
- Facilities Department
  - Land use, safe building materials and ADA
- Risk Management
  - Safe cooking procedures
- Food and Nutrition Services
  - Food safety

**School Level**
- Principal
  - Students outside of the classroom
- Facilities Manager
  - School storage and water use

**Classroom Level**
- Teacher
  - Curriculum and classroom management

As school garden programs become more developed and sophisticated, it is useful to produce a list of principles that guide all the discussions and decisions that may need to be made throughout the process. Slow Food Denver, working with their partners Denver Urban Gardens and Learning Landscapes, developed a list of Guiding Principles that became the foundation for school garden programs within a large urban district that involves many community partners.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAMS:

- School gardens are spaces for experiential, hands-on education, incorporating the full cycle of learning associated with healthy food - from growing to nutrition to cooking.

- School garden programs are designed to involve teachers and support their multi-disciplinary curriculum primarily in the subjects of science and social studies, while also promoting self-growth and a respect for diversity.

- Student education, rather than food production, is the primary purpose of a school garden program.

- Community involvement from the school administration, parents, and neighborhood volunteers is essential to the function and sustainability of a school garden program and its inclusion into the day-to-day culture of the school.

- School gardens are outdoor classrooms that utilize the grounds of the school to expand learning and stewardship opportunities for students without having to leave the school site.

- School gardens are engaging spaces for children to develop both a respect and a nurturing relationship with nature and their community.

- School gardens should model environmental stewardship and sustainability, while emphasizing the importance of seasonality to these concepts.

- Students should be provided with simple and culturally relevant take-home messages and practical skills to put what they’ve learned into practice at home.

- School gardens and programs should serve as training spaces and models for others interested in developing a similar program at their neighborhood school.

- School garden programs are inclusive by design, promoting a respect for all backgrounds and points of view and providing each student involved with an opportunity to participate.

This list of Guiding Principles then became the beginning for the construction of a School Garden Manual for the entire Denver Public Schools District. For over a year, Slow Food Denver, Denver Urban Gardens, and Learning Landscapes worked on the District School Garden Manual to carefully detail the district's policies that would impact a school garden program. The intent of the Manual is to provide a school with all the necessary information and contacts to launch a new garden program and follow the district policies in the process of getting started. Within the manual are links to District websites that detail the construction standards that gardens are supposed to follow and contact information for the Facilities Department. There are also policies concerning volunteers, food safety, fire safety, garden safety, garden maintenance guidelines, and greenhouse standards. Once the manual was completed, a coalition of community partners met with Denver Public school officials to work on any missing pieces and to get acceptance for the manual. The Denver School Garden Manual can be found at: www.sfdseedtotable.org/stt-documents/
Design and build policies

Most school garden programs begin with a series of meetings to organize and develop the goals and mission of a garden program. Slow Food chapters are often part of these initial meetings, helping to frame the discussions to focus on the purpose of the gardens and how the learning opportunities from the garden can be incorporated into the school day. One of the more anticipated segments of this planning is where to place the garden in the schoolyard. Often the attendees of the planning meetings are not aware of the district or school policies that may affect the location of the school garden. The missing link of communication is often from the district departments such as Facilities, Land Use, Risk Management, and Water to the groups representing gardens at the school. Slow Food chapters can serve as this link by first getting to know the important players at the district level that could make decisions that impact school gardens. The previous checklist shows the possible different district departments that could be engaged in the early phases of planning a school garden. Slow Food chapters can be a valuable resource of district information for school groups that may not be that well connected. And the district may prefer dealing with one group, like a Slow Food chapter, rather than dealing with numerous garden groups from multiple schools.

At the District level, the concern with school gardens is how the precious school property will be used as a garden and whether it will impact on the other needs of the school such as physical education classes, athletics, traffic flow, and noise control. Most Districts will require a site visit from a representative of the Facilities Department to go over the proposed location of the garden. The main concern of the Facilities Department is the long-term use of the land. Will there be much work required to prepare the land for a school garden and how will the placement of a school garden affect the visual appeal of the school? Are there long-term needs for expanding the size of the school or changes in the use of the schoolyard that need to be considered before placing a school garden at the site? Will the site be accessible to all students and are there any potential risks to the students at this site? See the checklist below for potential questions from the Facilities department.
CHECKLISTS: TYPICAL CONCERNS OF THE LOCATION OF A SCHOOL GARDEN

1. **Line of sight**  
   Are there uninterrupted sight lines from the school building to the farthest extent of the garden?

2. **Existing use of the site**  
   Are there any structures or natural features (trees, slopes, boulders) that may interfere with the placement of a garden?

3. **Visual appeal**  
   Does the placement of a school garden at this site affect the visual appeal of the schoolyard?

4. **Future plans for the site**  
   Does the District Planning Department have a five-year and ten-year plan for expansion for the school and the proposed site?

5. **Existing state of the site**  
   How much will need to be done to get the site garden-ready?

6. **Risk management**  
   What are the possible risks of the proposed site (traffic, strangers, animals)?

7. **ADA accessible**  
   Is the site accessible to all students, no matter their physical or mental disabilities?

8. **Pest control**  
   Are there any threats of pests to the students (wild animals, bees, stray dogs or cats)?

Once the site of the new school garden has been approved, the Facilities Department will probably have a list of materials and features that will be approved for use on the schoolyard as part of the garden. Again, the main concern is safety for the students and the long-term sustainability of the materials. There are big differences between what districts may allow in the gardens (e.g., wood vs stone for raised beds). The following checklists are some of the considerations when planning for materials and features in a school garden.
### CHECKLIST: ISSUES CONCERNING MATERIALS IN SCHOOL GARDENS

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<tr>
<td><strong>Soil</strong></td>
<td><strong>Amendments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Building materials</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pathways</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Most districts will want to conduct soil tests for the presence of metals, poisons, and organic material.</td>
<td>It will be necessary to know the source of compost and age of manures used in the gardens.</td>
<td>Facility departments want gardens to use materials that will last for a long time and pose minimal risk to the students. Check on the use of wood vs stone/block vs synthetic materials.</td>
<td>ADA requirements dictate use of crusher fines vs wood chips.</td>
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### CHECKLISTS: TYPES OF FEATURES IN SCHOOL GARDENS

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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compost systems</strong></td>
<td><strong>Worm boxes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pergolas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Garden tables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the proposed compost system a good distance from the school building and made from materials that will not rot?</td>
<td>Will they attract critters wanting the food that is fed to the worms?</td>
<td>Provide nice shade but are they made from materials that will not rot?</td>
<td>Will they splinter and hold up to the use by lots of students?</td>
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<th><strong>5</strong></th>
<th><strong>6</strong></th>
<th><strong>7</strong></th>
<th><strong>8</strong></th>
<th><strong>9</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fencing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Water/irrigation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greenhouses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chicken coops</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beehives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the district require the garden to be fenced and what are acceptable materials (chain link vs. wood)?</td>
<td>Does the irrigation system become a threat to theft and is the water source secure?</td>
<td>Does your district have greenhouse construction standards as student safety will be first concern?</td>
<td>What are the district policies around farm animals, including chickens, on school grounds?</td>
<td>Can a beehive be installed on school grounds or perhaps on the roof of the school?</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Another point of discussion with the Facilities Department is whether the school garden will be using organic practices to grow the fresh produce. Most school garden leaders will want to use organic gardening practices because of the concern of chemicals affecting the children eating the fresh produce. To be really organic, the rest of the schoolyard will also need to be organic so that there is no runoff of chemicals onto the school garden. The Facilities Department may not be familiar with organic practices for grass and weed control in a schoolyard.

As detailed above, there are many policy issues that need to be worked out with the Facilities Department to get a garden started on a schoolyard. Once you have cleared the district-level hurdles, the next step is to check with the principal to see if there are any school policies that need to be addressed for the school garden. Slow Food chapters can help organize a meeting between the Garden Committee, teachers, staff, PTA, and the principal. A typical concern of a principal is the amount of time the garden may take students away from their core course work. Especially if the school is a low-performing school based on state test scores, a principal may be wary of allowing students to be in the garden during the school day. The best way to integrate the garden into the school day is to get teachers to use the garden during classes in science, math, social studies, and even art. The more the garden becomes a classroom with opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning, the more the principal will see the garden as a resource. In cases where the principal does not allow garden classes during the school day, the garden program usually becomes an after-school program.

**Policies concerning volunteers in garden programs**

The availability of volunteer opportunities in food-related activities in the community is a trademark of Slow Food programs. Most Slow Food chapters will have standing policies around the recruitment, training, and appreciation of volunteers. When it comes to school garden programs, the success by Slow Food chapters in schools would not have been possible without a dedicated pool of new and returning volunteers. Since volunteer opportunities in school gardens bring adult volunteers closer to children, Slow Food chapters have to be extra careful concerning who volunteers in schools and what kind of activities they are involved in with students in the gardens.

School districts will have policies in place concerning volunteers on school properties. A best practice for a Slow Food chapter is to become very familiar with those volunteer policies and make it a point to meet in person the officer who is in charge of these policies. If you are in doubt of the office in a school district that is in charge of volunteers, a good place to start is with Risk Management. They should be able to point you in the direction of an office in charge of volunteers in the district. But it may not always be very clear who is in charge. In Denver Public Schools, there are two offices that are managing volunteers for the district while in the neighboring district, Jefferson County Schools, there is no one in the central administration that manages volunteers, but rather each school is responsible for their own volunteers.

An initial meeting with the district volunteer coordinator would be an opportunity to describe the activities of Slow Food volunteers in school gardens and cooking classes to hear from the District if there are any special concerns relating to volunteers. Be sure to try to get specifics from the district volunteer coordinator so that you don’t try to build a program on either incomplete or inaccurate information. Find out from this representative what are the major concerns for the district of volunteers on school grounds and what can be done to minimize those concerns.
Slow Food Denver has been recently informed by Denver Public Schools of a recent clarification concerning what kind of background check is necessary for different types of volunteers. The district has started to make a distinction between volunteers who will be alone with a group of students or who will be accompanied by a teacher or staff member. According to Denver Public Schools, any volunteer who will be alone in any sort of activity with students needs to go through a full background check. In addition, any volunteer tied to an outside organization will have to go through a full background check that will involve both the full name and social security number of the volunteer. The chart below shows the different classifications for volunteers established by Denver Public Schools and the level of background checks.

### LEVEL OF BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIRED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>ALONE WITH STUDENTS</th>
<th>BACKGROUND CHECK NEEDED</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Based Garden Leader</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FULL</td>
<td>DPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Volunteers</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FULL</td>
<td>DPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Volunteers</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NAME ONLY</td>
<td>DPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-School Instructor, parent</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FULL</td>
<td>DPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-School Instructor, Outside Organization employee</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FULL</td>
<td>OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-School Instructor, Outside Organization volunteer</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FULL</td>
<td>OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Classes in Classroom, Outside Organization employee</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FULL</td>
<td>OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Classes in Classroom, volunteer</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NAME ONLY</td>
<td>OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the requirements for volunteers established by a school district, Slow Food chapters should have some sort of training and evaluation process in place as volunteers become active in school gardens. Working with young children can be a challenging enterprise, and not every volunteer is going to be best fitted for these opportunities. It would be ideal for the Slow Food chapter to provide some sort of orientation for new volunteers and then have them shadow a couple of classes conducted by garden leaders or veteran volunteers. Not only will these opportunities allow new volunteers to experience first-hand what happens in the school gardens with a group of students, but the Slow Food leaders can observe these new volunteers in action. It might be necessary to provide some more training for a volunteer if they are not comfortable around students. See the “Volunteers” chapter in this manual for more information and suggestions on working with volunteers.
Policy issues around the growing and harvesting of food

There is a lot of sensitivity around school gardens when the major output of the garden is food and we want to engage children in tasting that food. There are always concerns around the safety of the food that is produced in a school garden and whether we can feed the food to the children. Since one of the goals of a Slow Food garden is to get children to appreciate the food that is grown, a Slow Food chapter can play an important role in assuring that the food safety concerns are addressed at all levels of the district and city.

In this section, we will address the safety issues around the food and the children when we consider growing and harvesting fresh produce on school grounds. Some of the issues that come up seem to stem from the same expectations that USDA and state agriculture departments expect for large-scale farmers. We will address how a Slow Food chapter can support a school garden project by understanding some of the Federal, State, and local regulations placed on the growing and harvesting of the fresh produce.

Growing Food Crops. Fresh produce from a school garden can be considered wholesome and free of pathogens (microbes that cause food-borne illness) if precautions are followed to prevent microbial contamination. Knowing the potential risks in a school garden and then establishing commonsense practices is the best way to maintain the wholesome nature of a school garden. The main threats to a school garden’s food safety come from human hygiene, animals, use of manure as a fertilizer, and irrigation water. Established practices can minimize the risk of these factors and still allow students to have a great educational experience in the garden.

At the Federal level, the USDA has prepared safe farming practices called Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and safe harvesting practices called Good Handling Practices (GHP). In most cases, it is not required for a school garden leader to be familiar with GAP and GHP (the USDA promotes these practices and some large farm operations are GAP and GHP certified).

The USDA prepares a checklist for both GAP and GHP protocols. These checklists can be found at: www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&leftNav=GradingCertificationandVerification&page=GAPGH PAudit VerificationProgram&acct=freshgrdcert

Within each checklist are major categories that are possible entry points for contamination to occur. In GAP protocols, which concern themselves with the growing process, there are eight major principles:

1. **Water sources**
2. **Manure use and handling**
3. **Worker health and hygiene**
4. **Sanitary facilities**
5. **Field sanitation**
6. **Packing facility sanitation**
7. **Transportation**
8. **Traceability**
Looking at this list, there are some obvious principles (highlighted in italics) that will have a direct connection to food safety concerns in a school garden. **Luckily for school garden leaders, the USDA has produced several publications that relate GAP and GHP to the school garden:**

*Food Safety Tips for School Gardens*

*Fresh, Healthy and Safe Food: Best Practices for Using Produce from School Gardens*

**In addition, there are some publications that detail safe growing practices for home gardens that apply well to the practices used in school gardens:**

*Food Safety Tips for your Edible Home Garden*, Trevor V. Suslow and Linda J Harris.

Western Institute for Food Safety and Security, University of California, Davis.

[www.wifss.ucdavis.edu](http://www.wifss.ucdavis.edu)

*Five Steps to Food Safe Fruit and Vegetable Home Gardening*. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

The most logical place to start when talking about students growing food is hygiene. Fortunately, schools are usually very active in trying to minimize the risks of children infecting each other, so talking to the children about hand washing after the use of the toilet and before we go out to the garden should not be too much trouble. But it is important that this discussion becomes part of the garden practice at your school.

In most cases, the source of water for school gardens should also not be much of a problem. Typically, the water source will be from the city and is the same water that goes into the school. In some cases, municipal water companies are starting to install “purple pipes” that carry recycled water that is safe for lawns and flowerbeds. It is not recommended that recycled water be used on gardens growing fresh food. Finally, states will have different regulations concerning collecting rainwater on school grounds to be used in gardens. The school garden leader should be familiar with the local regulations concerning the collection and use of rainwater.

It is commonplace to see families bring their dogs to school while picking up the children at the end of the day. The presence of animals like dogs, cats, chickens, wild birds, and larger wildlife like deer may increase the risk of contamination in the school garden. It is highly advisable to limit the presence of all influences of animals in the garden during growing and harvesting seasons, especially in parts of the garden with edible produce. Also, minimize the presence of piles of decaying fruits and vegetables adjacent to your garden as they may attract unwelcomed visits by animals. Any compost system should limit the access to the piles by most animals.

The use of manure is a common practice to enrich the soils in a school garden and is a great lesson for students on how to provide nutrients to the soil that will grow their food. It is important for a Slow Food garden leader to understand proper management of compost to minimize pathogens. It is advisable not to use manure from pigs, dogs, and cats for composting or to fertilize the garden as some parasites from these animals are not destroyed by composting and might remain a threat to humans. Properly composted manures, mainly from cows, horses and chickens, are unlikely to be a source of microbial pathogens. The best practice is to be sure to purchase your manure from reputable sources that can offer traceability of the compost or to purchase compost without any manure in it.

It is equally important to understand when to apply manures to a school garden to minimize possible contamination. The best practice is to apply approved, composted manure at the end of the season, after all harvests are completed. If you desire to apply composted manure closer to the growing season, a best practice is to mix the composted manure into the soil at least 60 days before planting. Do not leave manure on the soil surface and do not apply manure after seeding or transplanting edible plants.
**Harvesting Food Crops.** The concern for food safety is heightened as students are in the garden harvesting ripened fruit and vegetable crops to be used in cooking classes, in the cafeteria, or for just for tasting. While a school garden leader should always make it a priority to assure the safety of the garden produce, we don’t want to limit the educational experiences for the students with all the great fresh food coming from the gardens. Fortunately, there are some great publications from the USDA that allow for the safe handling of fresh produce by students and volunteers in school gardens.

**Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools**

The major concerns for food safety during the harvesting and consuming of fresh produce from the school gardens are the hygiene of the students and the cleanliness of the cookware that is used to process the produce. As a general rule, everyone should wash their hands prior to harvesting and then again prior to handling the fresh produce during its preparations and eating. The teachers and volunteers who are leading the harvesting activities should be familiar with safe preparation and cooking procedures. A great resource for these procedures will be the Food and Nutrition Services department in the district. A Slow Food leader could be the connector between the Food Service Department and the garden leaders to get training in safe food handling.

Storage and timing of the use of garden produce is also a food-safety concern. According to the USDA, just-harvested fresh produce should be consumed within two hours of picking. A typical Slow Food class will involve the harvesting, preparation, and eating all within an hour so the timetable should be no problem. If produce is harvested one day to be used the next day, then it should be refrigerated after harvesting. Any leftover produce from a class that has been handled by students should be composted rather than used another day.

Another food safety concern is the threat of garden produce items to affect the allergies of some students. Garden leaders should be in direct communications with the teachers and school nurse to be aware of any allergic reactions to fresh produce. If a student is identified as having an allergy to some sort of fresh produce, there should be a discussion on what kinds of actions are necessary to avoid risking any incidences.
DPS Garden to Cafetera Program
SLOW FOOD DENVER, COLORADO

Since 2009, Slow Food Denver has been the District partner with Denver Public Schools (DPS) for various programs with the goal of purchasing Colorado-grown-and-raised agricultural products for the school kitchens. The programs, some with School Food FOCUS, have been very successful in getting local produce and meats into the school menus.

In the spring of 2010, Leo Lesh, then the director of Food and Nutrition Services for DPS, asked Slow Food Denver leader Andrew Nowak what it would take to use fresh produce from the school gardens as local produce in the school kitchens. The immediate issue facing this proposal was food safety with students growing and harvesting fresh produce for the school kitchens. So Andrew contacted Danica Lee of the Denver Department of Environmental Health for advice. Danica’s department is responsible for the inspections of school kitchens as required by the USDA at least twice a year. These inspections pay close attention to the safety of food products as they cross the threshold into the school kitchens.

Danica shared with Andrew that her department had no jurisdiction in how the produce was grown in the gardens. Since school gardens in DPS used organic growing practices, there was a reasonable assurance that the fresh produce was safe on the plant. So Andrew and Danica started to address the possible risks associated with students harvesting the produce and delivering it to the school kitchen manager.

These risks were the same as those identified by the USDA in the GAP and GHP protocols: water, health and hygiene, harvesting tools, and traceability. Since the garden produce was being used at the same school and not transported to another school, there were not any concerns about the safety issues surrounding the produce leaving the school grounds. The other risks were addressed quite easily. Any student who was ill within the last two weeks was not allowed to participate in the harvest that day. All students were shown how to wash their hands. The harvest baskets were made of food grade plastic and could be sanitized in either the school’s dishwasher or in the three-compartment sink in the school kitchen. (Many thanks to Whole Foods Rocky Mountain Region for the donation of plastic shopping baskets to be used as harvest baskets.) The harvested produce was rinsed off while still in the harvest baskets using water from the garden hose to remove the large clumps of dirt.

The students then carried the produce in the baskets to the school cafeteria. Here the produce was weighed, using scales from the school kitchen, and the weight of each produce type was recorded along with the names of the students. This served as both a log of the weights of each kind of produce item (the garden programs got paid for the produce items) and as a trace back record sheet. In the event that a food-borne illness was traced to the garden produce, the kitchen manager would have a record of the students who participated in the harvest.

Overall the Garden to Cafeteria program in DPS has become a model for school garden programs growing food for the school cafeterias. This program minimizes the food-safety risks associated with fresh produce harvested by students while maximizing the educational and nutritional opportunities of students growing their own food to be served on salad bars and lunch lines. While the overall quantities may not be too great, the symbolic meaning of school garden produce being used to feed the students at lunch is huge in promoting the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet.
Many school garden programs will grow food that they will donate to hunger-relief agencies to feed their needy populations. With these donate a row type programs, students learn valuable community support skills and become knowledgeable about needy members of their community. In turn, the hunger-relief agencies receive fresh produce that is often difficult to get donated or is expensive to buy.

From a policy standpoint, these donate a row programs only present a few challenges to the school garden program. Since hunger-relief programs deal with populations with stressed immune systems, it is important that the garden produce be handled as safely as possible from the garden to the receiving area of the agency. In general, the food safety rules discussed previously in the DPS Garden to Cafeteria program will apply equally well for produce donations to food pantries or food banks.

The new wrinkle with Donate A Row programs is the transportation needed to take the produce from the school gardens to the agency’s location. In this case, it is highly recommended that the harvest and delivery occur on the same day so that there are no safety issues around the storage of the fresh produce. To move the produce, it is advisable that the fresh produce be placed in food-grade plastic bags and then placed in ice chests that have been cleaned with a soapy solution. If ice is used in the chests, make sure that the ice comes from a reputable source, using potable water.

Food safety concerns should continue as the agency receives the fresh produce. If the agency is a pantry, they may be limited in the extent that they can receive and hold fresh produce. The best-case scenario is that the donated produce is distributed to the recipients that same day so the storage is of minimum concern. If the produce is to be stored past one day, try to get the pantry to place the produce into a refrigerator or an iced cooler to help preserve the freshness of the produce.

In Denver, Slow Food Denver is part of an eight-member collaboration called Produce for Pantries (P4P). The goal of P4P is to connect school gardens, community gardens, and backyard gardens with local food pantries so that extra produce grown in the gardens can support the local community with fresh produce. Slow Food Denver helped to introduce some basic food safety protocols to P4P so that any sort of gardener or volunteer could be informed on how to minimize any risks of donating their garden produce to a pantry. The protocols were written to be easily understood and implemented by all gardeners. When a gardener signs up to donate through P4P, they are pointed to the website that contains the food safety protocols.

CASE STUDY
Growing Food for Hunger Relief Agencies SLOW FOOD DENVER, COLORADO

produce. If the agency is a pantry, they may be limited in the extent that they can receive and hold fresh produce. The best-case scenario is that the donated produce is distributed to the recipients that same day so the storage is of minimum concern. If the produce is to be stored past one day, try to get the pantry to place the produce into a refrigerator or an iced cooler to help preserve the freshness of the produce.
Policy issues concerning cooking with students in schools

A high priority of most Slow Food school garden programs is to get the students to taste and consume the fresh produce coming from the school gardens. In most districts, the responsibility of the food that is served to students during the school day rests with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Department. But in most cases, the school garden program lies outside of the jurisdiction of the FNS department so there is very little coordination between the two programs. This being the case, there are often concerns expressed by the principal, teachers, and parents on the safe nature of the fresh produce coming from the school garden or being prepared in the cooking classes. This section will go over steps and protocols that a Slow Food chapter can help develop so as to minimize any risks associated with student consumption of fresh produce from school gardens. These risks can be classified under the categories of Food Safety, Location of Cooking Classes, Safety with Kitchen Tools, and Cooking with Heat.

**Food Safety.** The FNS department is certainly the expert in any school district when it comes to food safety. So even if the school garden program is not directly associated with the FNS department, it makes lots of sense that the Slow Food chapter reach out to the FNS department for advice and leadership concerning food safety issues when using fresh produce from the school garden for tastings and cooking classes. For guidance on how to harvest fresh produce from the school garden with students, please refer to the previous Garden to Cafeteria section. This section will deal more about food safety issues during Tasting and Cooking classes.

There are several issues concerning food safety during tastings and cooking classes. When students are out in the garden, there often is the desire to sample some of the produce right off the plant. While there is nothing inherently dangerous about eating a cherry tomato or a strawberry out in the garden, there are several steps that should be included in the garden protocols to ensure safer food. It is always advisable to wash any piece of fresh produce before it is eaten, using a potable water source. This is especially important if the produce item was either dug from the ground, such as a root vegetable, or was resting on the ground like a cucumber or a melon. The best practice would be to set up a wash station in the garden so that the students can give the item a sufficient wash with clean water. If the fresh produce is to come into the school for a cooking class, it is still advisable to wash the garden items in the garden first to get rid of any large dirt particles before going into school. Once in school, the fresh produce can receive a more thorough washing using a conventional sink.

Food safety follows the garden produce to the cooking classes as it is best to set up procedures and protocols for safe food handling and safe work surfaces inside the school. The object with these protocols is to minimize the risks of cross-contamination from dirty surfaces, infected hands, or other body parts and the general germs that seem to follow young children to the fresh produce. Of course, all students and volunteers should wash their hands thoroughly before handling the fresh food. The table surfaces at which the food preparation will occur should be cleaned with a bleach solution. In Denver, DPS requires that all food preparation from the garden occur in the cafeteria where the tables can be disinfected effectively and there is no other clutter typically found in a classroom setting. The cafeteria also allows for easier cleanup.
Food safety deals with the proper preparation of dishes so that there is minimal risk in consuming the finished product.

of any spills. The use of the cafeteria also puts the classes closer to the school kitchen where it may be possible to use the dishwasher or three-compartment sinks for washing dirty dishes and food preparation items.

Besides general sanitation concerns, food safety also deals with the proper preparation of dishes so that there is minimal risk in consuming the finished product. A Slow Food chapter can support a school garden program by teaching proper cooking techniques to ensure the safe consumption of the food. For example, much of the school garden produce may be eaten uncooked in salads and other raw preparations. Thus, it will be very important that the fresh produce is cleaned properly once harvested from the garden and handled safely in the cooking class. In the event of cooking meat to go with the finished dish, all cooking instructors should be properly trained in achieving the correct final temperatures to minimize any food safety risks associated with raw meat.

Finally, it is advisable to either consume all the food that was prepared in class or to throw away the extra food. Proper cooling down and storage of leftover food is very important and, if not done properly, could be a source of food risks to the next class.

Many young children display allergic reactions to different food substances, which contributes another element of complexity to the issue of food safety in cooking classes. Typically, the school nurse and classroom teacher are aware of the allergies of the children in the school. It is advisable to share with the nurse what kind of ingredients are going to be used in the cooking classes so that she can advise you on any potential issues with allergies. As a backup, be sure to touch base with the classroom teacher to see if any allergy issues will arise with your lesson that day. There are many food substitutes that can be made to remove a possible allergen from a cooking class so that all students can participate equally in the lesson. Alternatively, special accommodations can be made for the single students who may not be able to eat gluten but could enjoy the recipe using a non-gluten substitute.

**Location of Cooking Classes.** Most schools no longer have a separate room dedicated for cooking classes, such as the Home Economic rooms of days gone by. In many cases, cooking classes from the garden are conducted in the classroom for convenience sake. However, there are many potential risks associated with cooking in the standard classroom, such as increased clutter of flammable materials, difficulty in cleaning up spills, lack of proper sanitation of surfaces, and less-than-adequate washing facilities. Thus, it is advisable to connect with the FNS department to see if it would be possible to use the cafeteria space for cooking classes outside of the time periods in which meals are being served. The use of the cafeteria minimizes the risks associated with all the factors listed above. In addition, by conducting cooking classes with healthy food and themes, Slow Food is reinforcing a relationship for the students between healthy food and the school cafeteria. Ultimately, it would be great if the kitchen staff would participate in the cooking classes from time to time so that the students begin to associate the kitchen staff with the healthy lessons coming from the garden program.

**Safety with Kitchen Tools.** Inevitably there are concerns with students using kitchen implements during cooking classes. Knives are an obvious target for concern by principals, teachers, and parents. Slow Food Denver has developed a procedure by which students gain proficiency with knives by first starting with plastic picnic knives to demonstrate safe handling skills. Each cooking class starts out with a brief review on knife safety, and students are warned
about any inappropriate behaviors while handling a knife, even a plastic one. When the garden leader is convinced that the students understand the knife safety rules and demonstrate sufficient skills, then the students are allowed to use simple chef knives while still being supervised by an adult volunteer.

Besides knives, other kitchen equipment can cause safety concerns for the school administration (we will address the use of heat in the next section). Devices like carrot peelers, cheese graters, and simple machines such as a food mill may not cause great harm if used improperly but can still cause a scrape or break the skin if the student is not careful. The use of these kitchen tools should be first demonstrated by the cooking teacher, and then their use should be carefully supervised by an adult volunteer. Students should gain a respect for all kitchen tools so that they have a comfort level in the kitchen that will lead to safe practices.

Cooking with Heat. Eventually, all cooking programs will want to use some sort of heat to cook the fresh produce from the raw state to some form of cooked produce. The use of a heat source introduces the risk of fire and smoke issues, as well as safety issue with young students around the heat source. In Denver, the Risk Management Department of DPS actually shut down the ability of garden programs to use heat in cooking classes because they were concerned about the risk of fire and hot-oil splashes. Slow Food Denver worked with Risk Management, the Denver Fire Department, and FNS to find a solution so that garden programs could cook with heat around students. The final solution that Slow Food Denver proposed was to use induction burners as the sole source of heat to cook with in classes. At the time, the Fire Department was not familiar with this technology but they were impressed with its low use of electricity and that it shut off as soon as the pan was removed from the burner. So starting with induction burners, the rest of the safety protocols were easily developed for cooking with heat in Denver Public Schools:

1. **Cooking with heat can only be done with an induction burner.**

2. The induction burner is used on a cooking cart with a stainless-steel surface, away from the worktables that the students occupied.

3. The cord for the induction burner is covered with a heavy-duty cord cover.

4. Each cooking cart has a fire extinguisher, and all cooking instructors are trained on how to properly use an extinguisher.

5. No more than 1 Tablespoon of oil can be used in the pan.

6. Students can observe an adult volunteer use the induction burner in class but can not be engaged with the burner or pan.
Media involvement

At some point in every school garden program there will be the desire to engage the local media to provide coverage for an event, to get the word out about the special projects, or just to show cute pictures of children in the garden with healthy food. Or there may be a film project that wants to create a documentary on the school garden project that will require the students to be in the footage. Also, photographs of students in the garden may be used on websites to promote the program. In all of these cases, Slow Food can assist the garden leaders to make sure that the necessary and proper media release forms are filled out for each student and properly compiled with. Be sure that the principal is aware of the media coverage and that there has been a check on the media release forms. Also, most districts have a Media Department and they usually like to be informed when one of their schools is going to be featured in an upcoming article of news coverage.

Most schools have established policies around students appearing in photographs in the newspaper or on websites. At the beginning of each new school year, parents need to complete and sign a Media Release Form, allowing their student to be photographed and the picture used in a basic newspaper or website application. Teachers in the classrooms know which students have permission to be in a photograph and which students do not have releases signed by their parents. So when a journalist or photographer is in the gardens with the students, the Garden Leader can gently steer away students from being in a picture. And when the final story is ready to go to press, Slow Food leaders can help make sure that every child in the photographs has the proper releases.

Licensing required for special projects

There may be times that a Slow Food chapter helps develop a special project from the school garden that comes to the attention of regulatory agencies in the state that will require a special license to be applied for and purchased. Such was the case in Denver and the Youth Farmers’ Program. To supplement the supply of school garden produce to have a full range of available produce, Slow Food Denver worked with its partner, Denver Urban Gardens, to develop a distribution system to bring local produce from four area farms into Denver to be used in the Youth Farmers’ Markets. Every time the truck visited a farm, the driver would pay for the produce in cash so that there were no long-term invoices needed.

An issue came up with the Colorado Department of Agriculture and their regulations that are designed to protect the farmers from unpaid invoices. There is a Colorado law that requires a third party purchaser and distributor of Colorado farm produce to have a sales license so that the state is aware of these transactions. According to the law, each of the YFM school sites would have been required to buy a license to sell the farm produce at the school. Slow Food Denver contacted the Department of Agriculture to understand the law and to see how the schools can best follow the law. After some discussion, it was decided that, since this was an educational program and the truck paid for the produce with cash each time, only one license was necessary for the entire Youth Farmers’ network. Slow Food Denver purchased the license and then shared copies of it with every farmers’ market site.
Evaluation

CHAPTER LEAD:
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CONTRIBUTOR:
Gigia Kolouch, Slow Food Denver, CO
Introduction

In the discussion of evaluation as it relates to school garden programs, this chapter will look at three different levels. First, this chapter will look at measuring the metrics of school gardens. By metrics of a school garden program, we are referring to the measurements of how many students participate, how many volunteer hours are provided to run the programs, and how many pounds of food are grown in the garden. Second, evaluation is also about measuring the impact of the school garden programs on the participants and the community in which the gardens reside. How do these educational opportunities change behavior of the students around healthy food? How do the observations of school garden produce in the school cafeteria affect the attitudes of the community about school lunches? Finally, this chapter will look to evaluation methods to assess how the Slow Food philosophies of Good, Clean, and Fair are reflected in school garden activities. How do school gardens teach biodiversity, fair work practices and issues around the access of healthy food for all citizens?

In each section of this chapter, we will discuss some of the reasons why a Slow Food chapter can lead or support evaluation efforts, the importance of collecting data, and how to share it in meaningful ways. We will also provide resources that are available so that a Slow Food chapter can use existing measurement tools rather than trying to develop their own. It is the goal of this Manual to get Slow Food chapters on the same page when it comes to evaluation and measurements so that we can start collecting data across the Slow Food network and start to show the impact of our efforts across the nation.

School Garden Evaluations: Metrics

There are several reasons why knowing the metrics of your garden program is important for the growth and sustainability of school gardens in your community. School district officials will want to assess the value of volunteer-driven programs that use a considerable amount of resources (land, student hours, and volunteers), which are at a premium in most districts. Principals will want to know how the students are being engaged in the garden as they try to balance the activities that occur in a school day.

While collecting the metrics associated with a school garden program is important, the fact that most of the support is coming from a volunteer pool makes this task a great challenge for Slow Food chapters. Volunteers typically report being engaged in garden programs because they want to have a direct impact on teaching students about their food culture. The volunteers want to share their passion and talents in growing food and don’t really want to be bothered by the mundane tasks of recording data each time they take students out to the garden. The key for a Slow Food chapter embarking on collecting data to detail the metrics is to find a way to collect a minimal amount of meaningful data and then set up a process in which the maximum amount of results are obtained from this data.

A basic school garden program can be defined as “a number of students spending time in the garden with a number of volunteers donating their time doing a number of different activities
with the students.” If we agree with this statement, then the immediate pieces of data that can be collected from a school garden program involve counting the number of participants and activities and the amount of time the participants are involved. Specifically, at the most basic level, we want to measure:

- How many students are involved in the garden?
- How many hours are the students in the gardens?
- How many volunteers support the garden?
- How many volunteer hours are given to the garden program?
- How many different types of educational opportunities are available in the garden for the students?

### CASE STUDY

**Tracking Metrics**

**SLOW FOOD DENVER, COLORADO**

About five years ago, Slow Food Denver realized that the chapter needed to support an effort to track the metrics of the rapidly growing Seed to Table program in the Denver Metro area. This data was important as the chapter got more involved in grant-writing opportunities and making presentations to the Denver community looking for more volunteers and financial support from local businesses. While the success stories of students’ engagement in the gardens were well received, the greater impact came from sharing the yearly reports that contained the numbers behind the garden programs. At the same time, the chapter recognized that the volunteers at each school were already giving so much of their time that it was not feasible to ask the volunteers to do a great amount of data collection and recording. There was going to be a fine balance between collecting meaningful data and the capacity of the volunteer garden committees.

After some trial and error, Slow Food Denver asked the garden teams to collect six pieces of data every time there was contact with a group of students in a school garden. These six pieces of data took only a minute to record and were easily obtained:

- Date
- Teacher name or Room number
- Number of students in the class that day
- Length of class in hours or fraction of an hour
- Names of volunteers
- Type of class conducted

**Gathering data.** To record this data right at the time the class was happening, Slow Food Denver purchased lined Composition Books for each garden that could be used as a Garden Journal and to track each class in the garden. Inside the front cover, Slow Food Denver provided a template that served as a reminder to the garden leaders to collect these six pieces of data each time. Twice a year, the chapter collected these Composition Books from each garden to translate the data into a spreadsheet to calculate specific measurements (more on that soon). After a few years of strictly using the Composition Books, Slow Food Denver also offered an Excel spreadsheet for those Garden Leaders who were more comfortable in using their laptops.

**Translating raw data into metrics.** As the raw data started to come in through the Composition Books, Slow Food Denver quickly realized that it was important to try to estimate the number of unique students and volunteers who were...
involved in the garden program. For example, if Mrs. Johnson’s class of 25 students came into the garden for three 60-minute classes in the spring, does this represent 25 students in the garden or do we count this as 75 students (3 classes x 25 students)? The chapter decided that it was best to count the number of unique students, so in the above example, 25 students participated in the garden. Otherwise, the “number of students” in the gardens would quickly be greater than the number of students in the school. So, by capturing the Teacher’s name or Room number, the data reflected a unique subset of the school’s population.

It is not necessary to record every student’s name, as this would be asking the volunteers to do too much.

But at the same time, just to say 25 students were in the garden does not reflect that Mrs. Johnson’s class spent three sessions in the garden. To capture the number of repeated visits to the garden, the data reflected that 25 students spent 75 hours in the garden. So, while the number of students should always be less than or equal to the total enrollment of the school, the number of “student hours” can be any number reflecting repeated visits to the gardens.

The same goes for the volunteer metrics. Since there is a much smaller group of volunteers than students, Slow Food Denver felt that asking the garden leader to record the individual names of the volunteers each time was not too burdensome of any activity. So, a typical log entry for a day with two garden classes could look like:

**April 18, 2013**
Mrs. Johnson
Room 108
25 students
1 hour
Transplanting class
Vols: Becky M, Betsy A., Carl M

**April 18, 2013**
Miss Crown
Room 104
23 students
0.5 hour
Composting class
Vols: Becky M

So, from this short example, there were a total of three unique volunteers on April 18th that gave a total of 3.5 hours to the garden program that day. Having the individual names of the volunteers allows you to calculate the number of unique volunteers across an entire season or even a year. Slow Food Denver felt that this best reflects the true nature of the volunteer metrics behind a school garden program.

The final piece of data collected with each class was the type of class taught. For this metric to be effective, it was necessary to designate different names for classes and provide a definition of each type of class. Slow Food Denver defined the different types of garden classes as:

- **Seedling** – planting seeds and maintaining seedlings in the classroom
- **Garden** – any general activity in the garden, including planting, transplanting, weeding, watering, etc.
- **Harvest** – a class devoted to picking produce and involving some sort of tasting or cooking
- **Cooking** – no harvest, but a cooking classes devoted to healthy eating
- **Nutrition** – a nutrition class with no cooking
- **Composting** – working with the composting or worm bins
- **Garden to Cafeteria** – harvesting produce for the school cafeteria
- **Youth Farmers’ Market** – helping with the Youth Farmers’ Market
- **Art** – doing art projects in the garden

Of course, as more types of classes are developed, they can be added to the list. It is important that the garden leaders understand this list of class types and the definitions of each class type. The best practice is to tell the garden leaders to use only these labels for class type and do their best to pick the most appropriate class type.

**Compiling data.** The final step is to construct an Excel spreadsheet that allows for the data from all the school gardens to be displayed and group metrics to be calculated.

Contact Slow Food Denver for an Excel template to use to compile data across multiple schools.
Here is an example of the metrics for the 2010 and 2011 Seed to Table School Garden program:

### SEED TO TABLE METRICS

The Seed To Table program uses school gardens to engage students in the process of growing food, to learn about plant science, and to develop their palates for fresh produce. Our goal is to have students develop a positive relationship with food by being part of the process that brings healthy food to their bodies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>↑ 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>↑ 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>6,098</td>
<td>9,153</td>
<td>↑ 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of student hours</td>
<td>10,817</td>
<td>18,409</td>
<td>↑ 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of volunteers</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>↑ 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of volunteer hours</td>
<td>2,029</td>
<td>5,335</td>
<td>↑ 163%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GARDEN TO CAFETERIA METRICS

The Garden To Cafeteria (GTC) program teaches students how to grow and harvest food safely to be used in the school cafeterias on the salad bars. Using Food Safety Protocols developed with Denver County Health Department, students sell fresh produce from the school gardens to the school kitchens with proceeds supporting the sustainability of the school gardens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>↑ 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds of produce</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>↓ 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of produce items</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>↓ 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount paid to gardens</td>
<td>$1,574</td>
<td>$1,249</td>
<td>↓ 26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### YOUTH FARMERS’ MARKETS METRICS

The Youth Farmers’ Market program is a joint effort between Slow Food Denver and Denver Urban Gardens. Students are taught how to set up a market stand on school grounds and sell produce to the school community from the school gardens, as well as produce from local farms. Students learn about marketing, business management, seasonality of produce, and money handling skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>↑ 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of markets</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>↑ 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds of produce sold</td>
<td>18,629</td>
<td>23,080</td>
<td>↑ 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sales</td>
<td>$19,651</td>
<td>$26,313</td>
<td>↑ 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of produce from CO farms</td>
<td>$12,713</td>
<td>$16,774</td>
<td>↑ 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit from markets</td>
<td>$6,480</td>
<td>$8,977</td>
<td>↑ 39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Garden Evaluations: Impact

While the school garden metrics give us a snapshot of the “amount” of involvement of students and volunteers measured in time and number of classes, evaluation techniques can also measure the “impact” of a program on its participants. It is important to know how the school garden programs affect the attitudes of the students towards topics such as healthy food, how food is grown, and whether they form any opinions on workers’ rights on the farms. Evaluation of the impact of school gardens can be extended beyond just the students and can look at the impact of the programs on other community members, such as parents, teachers, cafeteria workers, and farmers.

A common way to measure the impact of any program on a targeted population is through the use of surveys. A Garden Leader could give a group of students a survey at the beginning of the garden season or school year (Pre-Survey) to assess their knowledge of how to grow food. At the end of the garden season, the same survey (Post-Survey) can be given again to the students to see what they have learned and whether any of their attitudes have changed about growing food over the course of the school year. With the survey technique, a single garden leader can get information from a large number of students with not much effort. The data from the surveys can be entered into programs like Survey Monkey that will then provide a summary of the results.

There are several documents that are available that may provide some examples of surveys that can be used by Slow Food leaders to assess the knowledge of students that have been part of a garden program. It is important to realize that there may not be a “perfect” survey available that will address all the issues that you may feel are important. Using a pre-established survey has the advantage that this survey has been already tested and may allow for comparisons with other school populations. It is also feasible to take an existing survey and tweak the questions to be better fitted for your garden program. If a survey is available online, the authors are most likely allowing modifications to their survey given that you provide a reference to the original survey.

One source of surveys is the Farm to School Program Evaluation guidebook published by Anupama Joshi and Andrea Misako Azuma of the Center for Food & Justice and Urban & Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College. This guidebook was published in 2008 and was intended to provide an evaluation framework for Farm to School programs that were increasing in number at that time. The major focus of this evaluation program was on the change in eating behaviors and attitudes toward fresh fruits and vegetables of students who were being exposed to different farm to school activities. While most of these activities involved changes in food availability in the cafeteria, programs like school gardens and farm tours were also included in the possible evaluation tools. The guidebook provides examples of many surveys that can be used by anyone. In these examples of surveys, there are not a lot of questions directly related to school gardens. But, depending on the scope of your school garden program and its interactions with other parts of the district, it may be fruitful to assess the changes in students’ attitudes toward fresh produce.

The Colorado Farm to School Task Force and Spark Policy of Denver has developed a Farm to School Evaluation Tool Kit that has a number of resources available for the evaluation of school garden programs. Andrew Nowak of Slow Food Denver has been on the Task Force since its inception in 2010, representing Parent Groups. The overall goal of the Tool Kit is to bring many resources together in one document designed for the school food service director, school garden leader, or any other participant in Farm to School programs that do not have much experience with Evaluation techniques. The Tool Kit walks the evaluator through the
process of designing an evaluation program, lists possible resources in the community that could support such an effort, and helps in defining the outcomes that are most salient to your program that can be evaluated with available surveys. The Tool Kit is targeting outcomes for students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, producers, school leadership, and community members. Eventually, the Tool Kit will have evaluation tools available for assessing outcomes for all these targeted groups.

**For example, these student outcomes can be assessed with current surveys listed in the Tool Kit:**

1. Student gains in knowledge and awareness about gardening/school gardens.
2. Student gains in knowledge and awareness about agriculture, local foods, and seasonality.
3. Student gains in knowledge and awareness about healthy eating.
4. Students demonstrate willingness to try out new foods and healthier options.
5. Improved K-12 student attitudes toward eating healthy foods and locally grown fruits and vegetables.
6. Increased K-12 student satisfaction with school meal options.
7. Student meal participation increases (or returns to the same level as prior to FTS).
8. Increased student consumption of locally sourced foods.
9. Students consume more fruits and vegetables through FTS meals and at home.
10. Students try new fruits and vegetables.
11. Students choose healthier options in cafeteria.
12. Students consume less of unhealthy foods and sodas.
13. Students engage in positive lifestyle modifications such as a daily exercise routine.
14. Increased student demand for local produce in schools.

If the goal of your school garden program is to increase students’ knowledge and awareness about healthy eating, then the Tool Kit lists the Hawthorne Unified School District’s Student survey (see below). This is a one-page survey that can be given to students who can read and asks them some simple questions about healthy eating. This survey could work as a Pre- and Post-test survey to assess if there are changes over the course of the garden program. In addition, the survey can be modified if there are specific questions that your program may want to include that were covered during the classes.
Student Knowledge Survey

Directions: This is a survey to find out what you know. Circle the letter of the one best answer.

1. Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins and ___________.
   a. protein
   b. fiber
   c. cholesterol
   d. fat
   e. I don’t know

2. Fruits and vegetables that are high in Vitamin A are ___________ in color.
   a. red and white
   b. blue and light brown
   c. yellow-orange and dark green
   d. brown and purple
   e. I don’t know

3. Which ONE of these foods is a healthy snack?
   a. Ice cream
   b. Potato chips
   c. Fresh fruit
   d. Fruit Roll-ups
   e. I don’t know

4. The healthiest juice to buy has ___________ on the label.
   a. 100% fruit juice
   b. contains fruit juice
   c. 100% fruit punch
   d. tastes great
   e. I don’t know

5. A fruit salad will be higher in Vitamin C if you add ___________ to it.
   a. apples
   b. grapes
   c. bananas
   d. oranges
   e. I don’t know
Overall, the Farm to School Evaluation Tool Kit is a great resource to start an evaluation program for your school garden sites. The Tool Kit will lead you through the series of steps necessary to start an evaluation program, provide many surveys that can be used to assess outcomes over a variety of groups, and then provide the tools on how to process the surveys once they are completed.

School Garden Evaluations: Slow Food Philosophies

The ultimate goal of any Slow Food garden program is to engage the students in activities with growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating food that teach and support the overall Slow Food principles of Good, Clean, and Fair. Throughout this Manual, we have tried to incorporate Good, Clean, and Fair through the practices of a school garden program from designing and building a garden to identifying curriculum pieces that support learning Slow Food philosophies to how we recruit volunteers, market the program, and engage the community through Special Projects. There is still much work to do to fully incorporate Good, Clean, and Fair throughout a Slow Food garden program, but for now we should look at how an evaluation program can help address this issue moving forward.

In the Curriculum chapter, we outlined some definitions of Good, Clean, and Fair that deserve another look and to examine the questions that come from these definitions. A clear understanding of these principles will help lead us to the development of evaluation tools to assess the impact of our garden programs.

**Good** is defined as “enjoying the pleasures of healthy and delicious food.” In a school garden setting, this means that education about healthy food choices incorporates knowledge of how the quality of food is affected by its freshness, preparation, cooking, consumption, and cultural factors. When asking students how Good is represented in the school garden program, we can start to ask questions like:

1. What types of sensory information do you get when you eat the fresh food from your garden?
2. When preparing a dish using fresh produce from the garden, what kind of kitchen skills are important to know how to perform?
3. When cooking with your classmates, what is your favorite part of the process from garden harvest to sharing a meal with your friends?
4. How does your family culture influence the food that you cook at home?
5. How important is it for people to understand where their food comes from as they prepare a meal?
6. When your school comes together to celebrate an event like Earth Day, how does food become part of that celebration?

With these types of questions, we can start to understand how the students are processing concepts like Taste Education, Skills Building, Food and Culture, and Local Foods as they work in the garden.
When teaching students about the concept of **Clean**, we are talking about gardening for sustainability. We want to show that food must be produced sustainably to help ensure the ecological well-being of our natural systems and the health of our diverse human communities. When we work with kids in a Slow Food garden, we want to show that how we grow our food affects the Earth, community and our personal lives. A large part of this discussion is about biodiversity, conservation of natural resources, and safe growing practices. **In the garden, we can illustrate these concepts by asking:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What makes up a healthy soil versus dirt that is void of any life?</td>
<td>Where do seeds come from and how can we save them from year to year?</td>
<td>How do insects help support a healthy garden?</td>
<td>Why do cultures around the world have different plants that are important for their daily needs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can we plant these seeds so that we can use as little water as possible to grow the plants?</td>
<td>Do plants grow better when planted next to certain plants and not so well if planted next to others?</td>
<td>How does growing at altitude affect the plants versus growing at sea level?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even in the space of a small school garden, concepts around Clean can easily be shown to students at a scale that they can appreciate. Students like to build models in the classroom, and the garden is no different. Slow Food Denver likes to introduce the students to concepts like water conservation, since farming in Colorado is strongly affected by the availability of water. A typical class activity is to have the students build in an empty garden plot different strategies to plant cucumber seeds and to capture as much water as possible when it rains. Students illustrate their understanding of the concept by creating models of furrows, craters, and ditches in the soil.
The concept of **Fair** may be a challenge to teach to younger students. By Fair, Slow Food means that food is produced with respect to economic and social justice. We can explain to students that Slow Food feels that all people need access to good, clean food, and farmers deserve fair compensation for their labor. **Ideas for discussion topics include:**

1. **Comparison of local, national, and global food systems.**

2. **Different markets that farmers utilize to sell their produce, including Farmers’ Markets, retail, and wholesale.**

3. **Human rights around the production of food around the world.**

4. **Food policy and the impact on the access of food in their community.**

5. **Sources of food for people who have economic hardships (food banks, pantries, dumpsters).**

Many students are not aware of the invisible signs of hunger in their community. A visit to a neighborhood food pantry will bring to life the need in the community to fair access to healthy food for all people. Planting an extra bed of greens to donate to the food pantry will begin to show how they can be part of the solution to hunger in their community.

At the present time, Slow Food USA does not have an effective way to measure how we teach Good, Clean, and Fair in school gardens. A future project will be to collect sample lessons from Slow Food programs that demonstrate these concepts and start to compile a resource for all gardens.
Gigia Kolouch, Slow Food Denver, CO
Gardening with Young Learners
Slow Food Denver and the Seed to Table Program

Slow Food is an idea, a way of living and a way of eating. It is a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. Slow Food Denver is a chapter of Slow Food USA, which is a member of a worldwide food movement, Slow Food International.

Slow Food seeks to create a dramatic and lasting change in the food system. We reconnect Americans with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils and waters that produce our food. We seek to inspire a transformation in food policy, production practices and market forces so that they ensure equity, sustainability and pleasure in the food we eat.

Slow Food Denver’s Seed to Table program supports school gardens and taste education classes in schools across the metro area. We empower learners to become enthusiastic supporters of good, clean, fair food.

Programs support:
- Construction and maintenance of school gardens
- Taste education, food preparation and cultural-culinary programs
- Teacher professional development and community-based education
- Garden-to-cafeteria and school composting/recycling programs
- Farm-to-school programs, guest chef programs and school-to-community markets

Slow Food Philosophy

According to Slow Food International, “education will embrace slowness, pleasure, diversity and community. Put into practice, this means activities that engage people’s senses, mind and passion in discovering ‘real’ food — from taste test games, to planting school gardens or organizing cooking lessons — as this is one of the strongest opportunities we have to improve our food systems. Without creating the desire for ‘something else’, the industrial food system will always have a captive audience.”

Therefore, Slow Food School garden curriculum must include the following elements:

1. Activities and instruction regarding growing food
2. Activities that center around cooking and eating
3. Promoting the enthusiastic enjoyment of good, clean and fair food for all
Slow Food provides a unique contribution to school gardens. By engaging students on experiential and emotional levels, our garden programs provide a meaningful context to learning. Our holistic approach allows the learner to understand the network of relationships between humans and the natural environment from a personal point of view.

School gardens are used for many other purposes, from STEM education, to nutrition, to food production, sensory learning and social connections. These are all praiseworthy efforts to link students and the school community to the natural environment. A Slow Food school garden may include these activities, but its primary purpose is to fulfill the Slow Food mission; a Slow Food school garden will link the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment.

### Overarching Goals and Principles

**Gardening activities should:**

1. Deepen learners’ understanding of and appreciation for the foods they eat.
2. Increase the consumption of and willingness to try fresh foods, fruits and vegetables.
3. Develop an understanding of the food system including growing, harvesting, preparing — and in some cases, marketing fresh foods.
4. Teach learners about the relationships between their diet, bodies and health.
5. Encourage experiential scientific inquiry in life, earth and social sciences.
6. Provide a safe environment where students are free to develop and refine their taste preferences, learn basic food preparation techniques, and explore the relationships between the food system and their community.
7. Embrace multidisciplinary, hands-on learning that engages learners and their community.
Gardening in Colorado

Colorado gardening is unique and sometimes tricky. Here are some important things to remember:

**Short growing season:** Select varieties of plants and seeds that have a short growing season, preferably under 90 days. The frost free dates are May 15 – September 15th (although you may be caught by an early snow). There are many techniques, including row-cover, that can extend the growing season.

**Low levels of nitrogen:** Colorado soils often are low in nitrogen and organic matter, which most vegetables need to thrive. Supplement your soil with compost, coir or peat moss, leaves and organic fertilizer or well composted manure.

**Dry Climate:** Do everything you can to keep moisture in the soil. Protect plants by mulching or planting in afternoon shade, especially tender plants including those with large leaves (delicate lettuces, celery) or high humidity requirements (okra).

In many parts of the world, gardeners make furrows or mounds and plant on top. These designs allow water to run off and increase evaporation from soils, which leads to water loss. Those designs are not recommended for Colorado gardens. Instead, form deep bowls for large vegetables like squash. For smaller plants, form furrows that will hold water.

These recommendations apply to all gardens that are hand watered or have an overhead sprinkler system for irrigation. If the garden has a drip system, it may be more important to maintain an even slope so that the water is evenly distributed throughout the system.
Garden-Based Activities

Use the Plant Cultivation Guide (www.sfdseedtotable.org/stt-documents/plantcultivation/) for activities for exploring your schoolyard, investigating soil types, planting and transplanting the garden. Along with these basic activities to get your garden started, you can also do the following:

Take a tour of the schoolyard and see what is growing. Are the plants happy? Do you see any evidence of insects or other damage? What growth stage are they in? Harvest fruits and vegetables that are ripe. Use them in a cooking or tasting class. Make garden signs that include the edible part of the plant, the Latin name, or the plant family. Play memory games to learn the names of the plants and their plant families. Use the journal page to record what is happening in the garden. Add new words and develop learners’ vocabulary.

Safety Concerns

**Outdoor safety:**
- Encourage garden activities in the morning, before it is hot.
- Bring water to the garden for learners to drink.
- Make sure all participants are wearing sunscreen.
- Remove all puncture vine (goat head) or other thorny weeds before learners use the garden.
- Keep first aid kit with bandages and antiseptic on hand.

**Tool safety:**
- No running in the garden.
- No children under aged 10 will be allowed to use long-handled tools (shovels, hoes, rakes).
- Children will be encouraged to use their hands (as opposed to tools) as much as possible when gardening.
- Children will be provided with gardening gloves if exposed to thorns or other dangerous plant material.
- Shoes must be worn at all times, no flip flops.
- All participants will be instructed as to proper handling of tools, including no running and carry tools face downward at their side.
- Children must be supervised when gardening.
- Participants who do not follow safety rules will not engage in gardening.

**Food safety issues:**
- No use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides in the vegetable garden.
- No use of raw manure as fertilizer.
- Soil testing will be done each year for lead (as part of science education).
- All produce will be washed before being eaten or sold.
- All participants will wash hands, using proper handwashing techniques, after being in the garden.
Weeding and Identification

One of the main tasks in the garden is weeding. New gardeners are often unsure which plants are weeds and which are vegetables. This is a good reason for always planting vegetables in rows. Since weeds usually do not grow in a straight line, it will be easy to tell them apart. Use journals to have learners draw weeds in detail, including new leaves, roots, seeds and flowers. Notice how the weeds spread, if they are connected to each other by their roots and how their seeds disperse. All of these observations will help you design a way to remove them better. Turn weeding into an opportunity for learning by having participants answer the following questions:

What kind of place does the weed like to grow?
What kind of roots does it have? Do you need a shovel to remove it?
Does it grow in loose soil or compacted soil?
Does it look like any of the vegetables that are growing? Does it have a similar flower or seed?
Is it an edible plant? Can we use it in some way?

Weeding tips:
- Pull up the weed close to the base to ensure removal of the entire plant.
- Do not spend time removing bind weed roots; when they break off, they just create new plants. Just pull them from the top as soon as they appear and they will lessen over time.
- If there are no flowers or seeds, you may leave the plant on the edge of the plot to dry out and become mulch.
- If there are flowers or seeds, do not add weed plants to the compost pile. Throw them away.

Resources

Here is a guide to common Colorado weeds from CSU extension:
www.ext.colostate.edu/sam/weed-pocket.pdf.

Please note that herbicides are not allowed for school gardens.

Also, here are fact sheets for individual weeds and suggestions for control:
www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/4DMG/Weed/weeds.htm.

From the National Gardening Association, a weed library of common garden weeds:
www.garden.org/weedlibrary/
## Suggested Garden Supplies

### Minimum Required for Small Garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOOL</th>
<th>AMOUNT*</th>
<th>EQUIPMENT</th>
<th>AMOUNT*</th>
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<td>Digging fork</td>
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<td>First Aid Kit</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Round Point Shovel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Garbage Can</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rake–leaf</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Garden Gloves–kids</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rake–flat headed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Garden Gloves–adults</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wheelbarrow</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trowels</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Hose</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totes for tools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Water wand</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watering can–1 qt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hanging scale</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hose</td>
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<td>Tubs for harvest</td>
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### Suggested for Large Gardens

<table>
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<th>AMOUNT*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rake–leaf</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rake–flat headed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Garden Gloves–adults</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoe</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wheelbarrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totes for tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watering can–1 qt</td>
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### Non Essential

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<td>Pruners</td>
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*Suggestions based on class size of 24
Colorado Front Range Fruit and Vegetable Cultivation Table

HOW TO USE THIS CHART

**Planting decisions:** This chart on the following page contains information to help you decide which plants to start indoors, which to plant outside and when to do it. The “Succession” column indicates whether or not you can sow the crop more than once in a season. In the “Water” and “Fertilizer” columns, you should know that all vegetables require a fair amount of water, sun and fertilizer. “Heavy” refers to those plants that need more than the normal amount.

**Learning botany:** Use the chart and the worksheets to make up botany games, teaching learners the plant families or edible parts of a plant.

**Making signs:** Use the chart to make garden signs organized by plant families or by plant parts. Make each plant family a different color. Draw a plant part on each sign to show which parts are edible.

### PLANT FAMILIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legumes-Fabaceae</th>
<th>Lily-Liliaceae</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage-Brassicaceae</td>
<td>Parsley-APIaceae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nightshade-Solanaceae</td>
<td>Grasses-Poaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower-Compositae or Asteraceae</td>
<td>Buckwheat-Saxafrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beets-Chenopodiaceae</td>
<td>Morning Glory-Convolvulaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumber-Cucurbitaceae</td>
<td>Rose-Rosaceae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PLANT PARTS

- Roots
- Stems
- Leaves
- Flowers
- Fruit
- Seeds

### NOTES:

*The edible portions of rhubarb and celery form the petiole, the part of a leaf where it joins the stem. The true stem in the plants is in the middle, where it flowers.*

**The edible portion of the kohlrabi is a swollen stem.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>PLANT PART</th>
<th>SOW INSIDE</th>
<th>WARMING MAT?</th>
<th>SOW OUTSIDE</th>
<th>TRANSPLANT</th>
<th>HARVEST</th>
<th>SUCCESION</th>
<th>WATER</th>
<th>FERTILIZE</th>
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<td>No</td>
<td>May</td>
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<td>Med</td>
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<td>Med</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Aug</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Med</td>
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<td>Sep</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Med</td>
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<td>July</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Jul-Sep</td>
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# Herb Cultivation Chart

**NOTE:** Tender perennials must be overwintered inside. They cannot survive freezing temperatures. Most herbs will grow in any well-drained soil. Annual herbs with large leaves often require richer soil with more nitrogen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<th>TYPE</th>
<th>SOIL</th>
<th>SUN/SHADE</th>
<th>CULINARY</th>
<th>MEDICINAL</th>
<th>EDIBLE FLowers</th>
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<td>SOIL</td>
<td>SUN/SHADE</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
<td>Summer</td>
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<td>Varies</td>
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**SOIL NOTE:** Garden soil means general fertile, loamy soil. Rich means that the soil requires some extra fertilizer. Lean means that the soil should not be amended. Domesticated plants generally require more care and have larger fruits than wild plants.
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<td>Chou fleur</td>
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<td>Apium graveolens</td>
<td>Apio</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Haricot vert</td>
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<td>Beta vulgaris cicia</td>
<td>Acelga</td>
<td>Bette à carde</td>
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<td>Calabaza</td>
<td>Courgette</td>
<td>Zucchino</td>
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</table>
Colorado Front Range
Simplified Garden Calendar

**March 1-April 5**  
Start seeds indoors

**April 1-May 25**  
Depending on weather, plant trees, shrubs, and herbs.  
Do not plant during a heat wave.

**April 1-April 30**  
Depending on weather and snow conditions, plant peas,  
fava beans and arugula  
Weed, turn over soil and prepare plots

**April 15-May 1**  
Plant Cold Season vegetables outside (potatoes, carrots,  
beets, cruciferous vegetables, chard, radishes, turnips,  
rutabagas, parsnips, onions, lettuce). If using seedlings,  
make sure they are 6-8 weeks old and hardened off.  
See Plant Cultivation chart for individual vegetable varieties  
Start watermelon, gourd, canteloupe and peanuts inside  
(these require a long growing season, but must be  
transplanted when fairly small)

**May 15-June 15**  
Plant summer and winter squash, cucumbers, beans,  
corn from seed

**May 20-June 15**  
Nights must be consistently over 55°F to plant tomatoes,  
chiles, tomatillos, eggplant  
Nights must be consistently over 55°F to plant tomatoes,  
chiles, and tomatillos.

**June 1 - First Frost**  
Pull weeds before they go to seed. Tie up tomato and other  
climbing plants. Water compost and turn it over every week.

**September**  
Plant trees, herbs and shrubs if you have winter water

**September 15-First frost**  
Harvest dry corn, beans and winter squash

**October 15-November 20**  
Garden cleanup, cover plots with leaves, compost,  
well-rotted manure  
Plant garlic

**Succession:**  
Plant a row of beans every 2 weeks May 10-June 15  
Plant a row of lettuce every 2 weeks April 15-May 15 and  
again August 15-September 10, depending on frost  
Plant peas, broccoli, greens in late August if it is not too hot,  
or give shade and plenty of water to germinate
Resources

Books

Bean and Plant by B. Watts
Botany for All Ages: Discovering Nature Through Activities for Learners and Adults by Jorie Hunken
Botany for Gardeners by Brian Capon
The Family Kitchen Garden: How to Plant, Grow and Cook Together by Karen Liebreich
The Growing Classroom: Garden-based Science by Roberta Jaffe
Herbs and Spices: The Cooks Reference by Jill Norman
How to Grow a School Garden: A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers by Arden Bucklin-Sporer and Rachel Pringle
I Am a Seed by Jean Marzolla
A Kid’s Herb Book: For Learners of All Ages by Leslie Tierra
The Moosewood Restaurant Kitchen Garden: Creative Gardening for the Adventurous Cook by David Hirsch
Passover: Celebrating Now, Remembering Then by Harriet Ziefert
The Passover Seder by Emily Sper
Seeds by Ken Robbins
A Seed is Sleepy by Dianna Hutts Aston
Starting From Seed edited by Karan Davis Cutler
Soil: Let’s Look at a Garden by Angela Royston
Soil (Geology Rocks!) by Rebecca Faulkner
The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
The Vegetable Gardener’s Bible by Edward C. Smith

Seed Sources

www.botanicalinterests.com
They are a local source of seeds from Longmont, Colorado with large variety of flowers and vegetables. They also offer fundraisers for schools.

www.cooksgarden.com
Cook’s Garden is one of the first seed sources for market garden seeds, especially European and French varieties

www.growitalian.com
Grow Italian imports seeds from Italy. Look for unusual Italian varieties of vegetables and greens. They have an excellent garden newsletter.

www.highmowingseeds.com
They offer 100% organic seeds since 1996, with over 600 heirloom, open-pollinated and hybrid varieties of vegetable, fruit, herb and flower seed.

www.johnnysseeds.com
An employee owned company that sells and develops a large variety of seeds and plants

www.reneesgarden.com
Renée’s Garden offers organic, gourmet and cottage garden seeds from around the world. Packages include good growing information.

www.nativeseeds.org
Native Seeds/SEARCH conserves and distributes the diverse varieties of agricultural seeds and their wild relatives from the American Southwest and Northwest Mexico.

www.rareseeds.com
Baker Creek carries one of the largest selections of seeds from the 19th century, including many Asian and European varieties.

www.seed savers.org
Seed Savers Exchange is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and sharing heirloom seeds. They offer all types of heritage seeds and old varieties

http://www.southernexposure.com/
Southern Exposure Seed Exchange offers more than 700 varieties of vegetable, flower, herb, grain and cover crop seeds. They emphasize seeds that grow well in the Southeast.

www.territorialseed.com
Territorial Seeds is a family owned business since 1979 producing seeds in the west.
What did you see today?
I notice... I wonder... That reminds me of...

Favorite Words

_________________________  _______________________  ___________________

_________________________  _______________________  ___________________

_________________________  _______________________  ___________________
Cooking with Young Learners
According to Slow Food International, “education will embrace slowness, pleasure, diversity and community. Put into practice, this means activities that engage people’s senses, mind and passion in discovering ‘real’ food — from taste test games, to planting school gardens or organizing cooking lessons — as this is one of the strongest opportunities we have to improve our food systems. Without creating the desire for ‘something else’, the industrial food system will always have a captive audience.”

Therefore, the Slow Food School garden curriculum must include the following elements:

1. Activities and instruction regarding growing food
2. Activities that center around cooking and eating
3. Promoting the enthusiastic enjoyment of good, clean and fair food for all

Slow Food provides a unique contribution to school gardens. By engaging students on experiential and emotional levels, our garden programs provide a meaningful context to learning. Our holistic approach allows the learner to understand the network of relationships between humans and the natural environment from a personal point of view.

School gardens are used for many other purposes, from STEM education, to nutrition, to food production, sensory learning and social connections. These are all praiseworthy efforts to link students and the school community to the natural environment. A Slow Food school garden may include these activities, but its primary purpose is to fulfill the Slow Food mission; a Slow Food school garden will link the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment.

**Goals:**

- Deepen learners’ understanding and appreciation of the foods they eat.
- Increase learners’ consumption of fresh foods, fruits and vegetables.
- Increase learners’ willingness to try new foods and change food preferences.
- Develop an understanding of the food system including growing, harvesting and preparing of fresh foods.
- Encouraging experiential scientific inquiry and observation.
- Learners will understand the relationship between their diet and their bodies.
Teaching Principles

- Put learners in control of the way their food tastes and how it is prepared.
- Lessons reinforce one another and concepts are repeated throughout the program.
- Increase hands-on activity, experimentation and sensory experience while decreasing lecture time.
- Provide a safe environment (both physically and mentally) where students feel free to explore the lessons.

Learner-Driven Cooking Classes

Learner-driven cooking classes are those in which the novice cook chooses the ingredients, proportions, and final outcome of a dish without precise measurements or instructions. The instructor sets up the environment for the learner to be successful. These classes are especially well suited to introducing new ingredients, understanding the goal of cooking and developing a background intuition about combining flavors. They can also be useful to experiment with cooking techniques and food chemistry, such as in pancakes or biscuits.

Not all cooking classes will be learner-driven cooking classes. The ability to follow a recipe precisely is useful for all cooks, especially if one is interested in cooking a specific cultural dish or practicing reading comprehension. No matter what the recipe, learners should always be in control of the final flavor by adding salt and other seasonings to taste.

Benefits of Learner-Driven Classes

- Students are actively engaged in the class.
- Change the role of the learner from passive to active creator.
- Makes the learner responsible for the final result.
- Changes cooking from a results-oriented activity to a process oriented activity.
- Encourages critical thinking and evaluation.
- The instructor does not have to be a chef or expert cook.
Cooking Class Tips

SET UP
● Procure the use of a sink for washing dishes.
● The cooking area should be separate from the food preparation area and from the children, near an electrical outlet in the cafeteria.
● All surfaces must be cleaned with a disinfecting solution.
● Try to have students in groups no larger than 8, with one adult per group.
● Produce should be prewashed and placed in bowls.
● Have a bowl or tray for scraps to put in the compost at the end of class.
● Wait until AFTER you have talked about knife safety to pass out any knives.
● Each student who will be cutting should have their own cutting board.

CLASS INTRODUCTION
● Make sure students wash their hands before sitting down.
● Every class should start with a safety refresher and kitchen rules.
● Show the students where to put their scraps.
● Briefly explain what you are going to make. Then explain only the first step in detail.
● Before transitioning to a new task, make sure all students are quiet and paying attention.

INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COOKING CLASS:

1. Hands-on activities as much as possible.
2. Every child should have something do to, which means...
3. Recipes should be simple to cook, but labor intensive
4. Focus on one primary learning goal, with a few sub-goals that are less important
5. De-emphasize reading instructions and measuring, unless that is your primary goal
6. For picky eaters, encourage “tasting” or “experimenting” as opposed to “eating.” Do more taste classes.
7. Give the students an opportunity to be in control of the final flavor.
8. Give the students opportunities to choose ingredients.
Food Safety

We recommend that you do not cut raw meat or seafood products in order to minimize food safety concerns.

WASH SURFACES:

● Before the cooking class, make students wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

● Wipe down all counter and table surfaces with a disinfectant.

SAFE TEMPERATURES TO PREVENT GERM GROWTH:

● Do not let food sit at room temperature for more than 1 hour before class.

● Do not bring cooked food to the class. Cook all ingredients during or just before the cooking class.

● Do not bring leftovers home.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD MEAT TO YOUR DISHES, YOU CAN TRY THE FOLLOWING:

● Used slices of ham, chicken or turkey cut into cubes for flavor in stir-fries, wraps and soups.

● Use a small amount of sausage for flavor in soups or stews.

● If you would like to use boneless chicken breast or pork, poach it gently while the students are chopping the rest of the ingredients. Let it cool, and then have the students cut the fully cooked meat.
Fire Safety Protocol

- Before each session, children shall have a safety lesson, including food, gardening and fire safety.

- The Fire Department will be invited to provide instruction and training.

- All cooking will take place in the cafeteria.

- As per Section 308.3 of the 2003 International Fire Code (IFC), no open flames will be used.

- Cooking equipment will be electric burner or magnetic induction burner. As per IFC Section 605.7, electrical appliances shall be listed by an approved agency and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and conditions of the listing.

- When using extension cords, they will be grounded and in good repair per IFC Section 605.5.4.

- As per IFC Section 605.5.1, only one appliance will be plugged into an extension cord at a time.

- Instructors will have a Class B fire extinguisher and first aid kit at all times. Instructors will be trained on how to use both.

- All cords or wires will be taped down, to avoid tripping or upsetting electrical appliance.

- Paper, cloth, plastic and other flammable materials shall be kept a minimum of 3 feet – or as prescribed by the Fire Department – from the cooking equipment and vessels.

- There will be no deep frying. No more than 3 tablespoons of oil will be used for cooking.

- All cooking equipment will be locked in a heavy cart when not in use, denying student or other unauthorized access.

- Students will not use equipment at any time without parental permission and the focused guidance of qualified instructors.

ABOUT INDUCTION BURNERS:
The design of the ceramic plate creates instant heat, but only to induction-compatible vessels. Electric induction elements use magnetic waves to excite the iron in the cooking vessels causing them to heat themselves. These mechanisms provide the best control of cooktop performance, safety and efficiency. They provide precise temperature control and if a pan is accidentally removed from an active element it, in effect, instantly shuts itself off. The magnetic waves have no effect on skin or anything other than iron-based materials (e.g., steel).

The induction elements are:

**SAFE** - no fuel, flames or burners, eliminating the inherent danger associated with these types of cooking elements.

**CLEAN** – no fuel combustion fumes and offensive odors and buildup is prevented by easy cleaning with a damp cloth

**CHEAP** – induction heat costs 6 ~ 8¢ (vs. $1.75 per hour for butane).
### Suggested Cooking Supplies

**MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR TASTING CLASSES WITH NO HEAT**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UTENSIL</th>
<th>AMOUNT*</th>
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<td>Steak knives</td>
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<td>Paring knives</td>
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<td>Flexible cutting boards</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Box graters</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large tongs</td>
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<td>Vegetable peelers</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serrated peelers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Julienne peeler</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen shears</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Serving spoons</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic dish tubs</td>
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<td>Can opener</td>
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#### DISPOSABLES

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Olive Oil</td>
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<td>Cider vinegar</td>
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<td>Sugar or honey</td>
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#### CLEANING SUPPLIES

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<td>Brushes, dishes</td>
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<td>Cloths</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spray sanitizer</td>
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<td>Dish soap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dish gloves, pair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wipes, Clorox</td>
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<td>Garbage can</td>
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<td>Compost container</td>
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<td>Paper towels, roll</td>
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*Suggestions based on class size of 24*
## Suggested Cooking Supplies

### FULL RANGE OF COOKING CLASSES

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<td>Butter knives</td>
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<td>Kitchen shears</td>
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<td>Serving spoons</td>
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<td>Can opener</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whisk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metal or plastic spatula</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cooking spoon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling pins†</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### DISPOSABLES

- Paper towels
- Paper plates, small
- Plastic forks
- Plastic spoons
- Napkins

### STAPLES

- Salt
- Pepper
- Olive Oil
- Cider vinegar
- Sugar or honey
- Flour

### CLEANING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMOUNT*</th>
<th>EQUIPMENT</th>
<th>AMOUNT*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Induction burners</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flat bottom steel wok</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Large frying pan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 qt pot</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 qt pot</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extension cord</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cooking cart or storage bins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Suggestions based on class size of 24

† Make rolling pins from 1.5-inch dowels, cut into 1 foot lengths, sanded at the ends.

Make sure all pots will work with induction burners.
# Tasting Worksheet

Name of food you are tasting ______________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Yuck!</th>
<th>Not good</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Yum!</th>
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______________________________________________________________________________________________
NAME OF ACTIVITY

What did you do today?

Favorite Words

__________________________  __________________________  __________________________

__________________________  __________________________  __________________________

__________________________  __________________________  __________________________