

Jeffco Public School's Garden to Cafeteria Protocols

Jeffco Public School's Food and Nutrition Services strives to "Provide nutritious, high quality meals that provide students with healthy choices for developing positive lifestyle decision making", in the classroom, in their daily lives and to set the foundation for healthy lifestyles as they grow and mature.

The Garden to Cafeteria (GTC) program is a unique opportunity for Jeffco students to grow fresh fruits and vegetables in their school gardens with the aim of supplying some of their harvest to the school cafeterias to be used at lunch service. The first season of the GTC program will occur in 2013 as a pilot for up to 6 schools to participate.

The following protocols have been put in place to assure the food safety of the vegetables harvested from the school gardens by students. Items in *italics* in the following paragraphs are safety protocols that have been adapted from Federal and State guidelines for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP):

1. US Food and Drug Administration

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceandPlanProducts/ucm064574.htm#iii>

2. Colorado Department of Agriculture

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1219832881143&pagename=Agriculture-Main%2FCDAGLayout>

3. United States Department of Agriculture

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&leftNav=GradingCertificationandVerification&page=GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram&acct=freshgrdcert>

The following protocols are divided into several major headings:

1. How to sign-up a School Garden to participate in the GTC Program
2. Produce items that are eligible for the GTC program
3. Preparation by a GTC Leader for a Harvest with students
4. How to Harvest produce with students from a school garden
5. How to clean the produce and store it in the school kitchen
6. How to compost the produce scraps from the Harvest
7. Guidelines for DUG Community Gardeners to participate in the GTC program

How to sign-up a school garden to participate in the Garden To Cafeteria Program:

Please note, there are several procedures necessary in order to sign-up your school garden to participate in the Garden to Cafeteria Program.

1. Please visit the GTC website (www.sfdseedtotable.org) and download the form “School Garden”. Fill out the required contact information and return the form to ewinter@jeffco.k12.co.us
2. Register as soon as possible to start the process. Registration will end by Aug 31, of each year.
3. Your registration information will be provided to Jeffco Schools Food and Nutrition Services and to Slow Food Denver. Slow Food Denver will contact your GTC Leader about the upcoming schedule of training classes. Slow Food Denver will also verify the school’s participation with the principal.
4. A representative of your school garden, preferably the school GTC Leader, must attend one training class to learn about the protocols for harvesting with students. Slow Food Denver will host the training sessions. There will be several training sessions in August (schedule to be determined).
5. The school’s Kitchen Manager must attend a GTC Safe Food Handling training. These will be provided prior to the school year starting. Times and locations TBD each year, and will be communicated with school.
6. Any GTC Leader participating in the GTC program must complete the necessary Jeffco Schools volunteer requirements, including a Background Check (please see Jeffco Garden information at link at end of this document).
7. Jeffco Schools Food and Nutrition Services will supply the name and contact information of the Kitchen Manager and the Area Facilitator at your school. The school GTC Leader needs to make introductions and discuss the GTC Program with the Kitchen Manager and the Area Supervisor.
8. The school GTC Leader should recruit a group of students for the GTC project. The students can be from one class, from a school club or some other group representing the school community. The GTC Leader should talk to the students’ teacher(s) to get permission to take the students on Harvest Day.
9. Only potable water will be used to grow and rinse the garden produce used in the school kitchens.
10. No pesticides will be used to grow the garden produce used in the school kitchens.

Produce items that are eligible for the GTC program:

1. Produce items that are eligible for the GTC program include any fruit or vegetable that appears on the regular school lunch menu. Produce items that were on the current year's menu include:
 - Tomatoes, cucumbers, romaine, spinach, radishes, bell peppers, celery, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, melons, berries, apples, plums, peaches
2. Produce items that the school kitchens are not ready to use tend to be the vegetables that require some cooking to be served. Any items not on the current menu will not be accepted by the cafeteria.

Required Equipment List:

Schools garden teams are to provide the following:

1. **Harvest basket-** Must be made of hard plastic that is not porous. Items that are acceptable are food-grade Lexan containers, plastic bus tubs, and plastic shopping baskets (Whole Foods will donate these if needed). Not acceptable are wicker baskets, cloth or burlap bags.
2. **Scale-** Most Jeffco Schools kitchens have a 20 lb scale. Please make arrangements with the Kitchen Manager prior to the actual time of harvest to use the scale on Harvest Days.
3. **Large Salad Spinner (5 gallon preferable)**
4. Large **Cutting Board** (18"x24")
5. Large **storage box** with lid (18"x26")
6. Large food box **draining tray** (18"x26")
7. **Chefs Knife:** 8"
8. Straight **Peeler**
9. **Recording Sheet-** This can be downloaded from the GTC website. The Recording sheet can be kept with the Kitchen Manager or the GTC Leader.

Preparation for a Harvest with students

The GTC Program will start the week of August 19, 2013. Each school can participate as often as they wish. The GTC Leader should share the Harvest Schedule with the Kitchen Manager so there are no surprises. The GTC Leader should also set up a schedule with the student group and their teacher(s), and participating Community Gardeners, so as not to have a large impact on the academics of the day.

On the day of a harvest, the GTC Leader should follow these steps to prepare for the harvest.

1. GTC Leader or volunteer checks in with Kitchen Manager.
2. GTC Leader gets the harvest baskets from the garden storage the kitchen scale and Record Sheet.
3. *Before each use, baskets must be washed by GTC Leader.*
3. The GTC Leader surveys the school garden for fruits and vegetables to pick.

4. The GTC Leader turns on the potable water to the hose.
5. The GTC Leader prepares the Record Sheet for the harvest. Example found at the end of this document

How to Harvest with students from a school garden

Once the GTC Leader is prepared for the day's harvest, he/she should follow these steps with the students:

1. GTC Leader will need to schedule time with Kitchen Manager for each "produce delivery"
2. GTC Leader or other volunteer gets a small group of students from classroom. *Be sure to verify that none of the students are showing any signs of illness or have just missed school because of an illness. If a student was absent for an illness at any time in the previous two weeks, he/she can't participate in the harvest.*
3. *Students and GTC Leader wash their hands with soap and water in classroom sink or bathroom.*
4. GTC Leader takes students out to the garden and shows the students what fruits and vegetables are ready to be picked.
5. The harvest baskets are passed out and the students start to pick.
6. *The vegetables are washed in the harvest baskets, under potable running water from a hose.* The purpose of this first wash is to remove the large visible signs of dirt.
7. Once all vegetables are washed, the produce is weighed on the scale.
8. A student records the following information on the Record Sheet:
 - a. Weight of the vegetables
 - b. *Names of GTC Leader and students involved in the harvest*
 - c. *Date and time of harvest*
9. Students and GTC Leader take produce to the Kitchen Manager. *Kitchen Manager signs the Record Sheet to acknowledge the receipt of the vegetables.*
10. Garden Leaders take the Harvest Baskets and rinse any soil from the baskets with the garden hose. Then the baskets are taken to the school kitchen and washed in manner that has been agreed to by kitchen manager.

Steps for handling the garden vegetables in the cafeteria

When the Kitchen Manager receives the garden vegetables, he/she needs to wash them and refrigerate the vegetables to below 41°F prior to serving:

1. Kitchen Manager or foodservice worker fills a sanitized vegetable prep sink with tap water and thoroughly scrubs the produce in the sink with a brush *if required* to remove all visible dirt.
2. The vegetables are removed from the sink, rinsed again and drained in a colander.
3. The vegetables are placed in a separate clean and sanitized storage container (kitchen staff can use any of their existing food grade storage containers) that is labeled “School Garden Vegetables” and the date of harvest.
4. The vegetables are stored in the cooler/refrigerator for one day to reduce their temperature to below 41°F.
5. The vegetables can be used at lunch service the day after the harvest if the temperature of the produce is below 41°F. This temperature will be recorded on the menu production forms under the recipe the produce was used in.
6. The produce will not adversely affect the kitchen manager’s menu plan/ ordering as the amount will be small and the produce can easily be incorporated into the days menu plan.
7. Produce grown by a school garden will be used only in that school kitchen and not transported to other schools kitchens.

The goal of harvesting produce from school gardens for use in the cafeterias is to minimize the time period from harvest to presentation of the produce to the school cafeterias. Ideally, the students pick the produce, wash off the visible dirt, weigh and record the produce, and then deliver it to the Kitchen Manager.

Links:

Jeffco Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services <https://sites.google.com/a/jeffcoschools.us/food-services/>

Jeffco School Garden Guidelines: <https://sites.google.com/a/jeffcoschools.us/healthy-schools/home/district-health-and-wellness-efforts/jeffco-school-gardens>

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