

Growing

1. Site Selection

- a. Garden site selection is important and can be challenging. Ensuring the site has access to approved water sources and good soil composition can help establish a successful school garden.
- b. Appropriate permission for a garden must be obtained, taking into account local laws and regulations involving urban agriculture; and will include having written consent from the school administration and school district.
- c. Obtaining the garden site history may provide insight into potential hazards such as previous flooding, use as garbage site, chemical storage, animal grazing, animal housing, animal feedlots, etc.
- d. If official site history is unavailable, a visual site assessment may be performed to determine potential food safety risks.
 - i. Look for traces of animal tracks or droppings.
 - ii. Survey layout of potential site to determine risk for garden flooding.
- e. Site must be positioned to protect it from runoff from industrial and agricultural areas, parking lots, roads, or other sources of potential contamination.
- f. Ensure the site is properly protected from domestic and/or wild animals (examples may include fencing, predator deterrents, etc.)



Construction materials:

- g. When constructing raised beds, containers, stakes and trellises, only use materials made of non-toxic and non-leaching material such as concrete and untreated wood.
- h. Do not use pressure-treated wood, used tires, railroad ties, or single use plastics in the school garden. Do not use products coated with lead-based paint or other potentially contaminated coating.



2. Soil Composition

- a. Soil nutrient tests should be conducted before the garden is built, testing for levels of plant nutrients and micronutrients, pH, and soil type.
- b. Levels of contaminants such as chemicals, pesticides, lead, etc. should also be tested.
- c. Information on local resources available for soil testing can be found under the Resources tab.



3. Plant Selection

- a. Select plants that perform well in your area and that have growing cycles that fall within the school year's schedule.
- b. Do not grow sprouts due to the increasing number of illnesses associated with eating raw sprouts. Growing sprouts may also be a concern when used strictly for education purposes. Students may still attempt to consume the high-risk product.
- c. Be aware of potential allergens. Do not bring products with allergens into the garden in order to prevent cross-contamination.
- d. Do not grow crops of well-known allergens, such as peanuts or soybeans.

•http://www.washoecountyschools.net/csi/pdf_files/HEA-M600%20Food%20Allergy%20Manual.pdf

(Washoe County Policy for student allergies)

- e. Inform students that different vegetative parts on fruit and vegetable plants may be toxic (including leaves, roots, and unripe fruit). For example rhubarb leaves and unripe green potatoes are toxic to humans.



(1. Lupine)



(2. Morning Glory)



(3. Rhubarb)

4. Chemical and Fertilizer Use

- a. Do not use any pesticides or herbicides in school gardens due to potential health hazards.
- b. Secure all fertilizer in a safe and locked location when not in use.
- c. Fertilizer may only be handled by an adult and not applied while children are present.
- d. Do not use raw animal manure in the garden as fertilizer.