

SCHOOL FOOD GARDENS

Background

The District recognizes the important role school food gardens can play in students' learning. Garden-based learning can enhance academic achievement through integration of hands-on experiences into diverse subjects such as math, science, nutrition, English and environmental education. Garden-based learning also increases access to healthy foods, promotes enhanced social and emotional development, and supports sustainability and environmental stewardship. This procedure aligns with the Health Promotion in Schools Administrative Procedure 213 that recognizes an important connection between health and the many benefits to students, including a student's ability to learn, grow and maintain good health.

Procedures

1. Form a school food garden committee with a minimum of 2 staff, 2 parents (at least 1 PAC member), 2 students and an administrator.
2. The District Guidelines for School Food Gardens will be followed.
3. The School Food Garden committee will work to ensure that curriculum links are established with the garden and where possible, partnerships that inform and support the garden are developed and maintained.
4. The School Food Garden checklist shall be followed.

Guidelines for School Food Gardens

These guidelines outline the process of planning, designing, implementing, maintaining and sustaining school food gardens (located on WVSD property) to ensure their success over the long term.

- Start small to help with the creation of a manageable project.
- Embrace the spirit of caring, social responsibility, inclusiveness, co-operation, teamwork, consensus and collaborative processes in the development of the garden space.
- Ensure that students are involved throughout the planning, design, construction, planting, maintenance and harvesting.
- Give students the opportunity to eat food they have grown by integrating healthy eating experiences, food gardens, food preparation and nutritional education into the school curriculum.

- Encourage the use of environmental 'best practices' for organic gardening (pesticide and herbicide free, no treated lumber), water use, soil building, harvesting and seed saving.
- Support students in the growing of culturally appropriate foods at their school as well as exploring the cultural food and agriculture traditions represented by the diverse populations of West Vancouver.
- Ensure that no poisonous plants are used in the school garden and encourage the use of heirloom fruit and vegetable varieties where possible.
- Ensure that the garden project is sustainable through ongoing maintenance throughout the school year and planning for long term sustainability by promoting environmental stewardship. Involve students and the local community in the ongoing maintenance of the garden space, weeding, watering, garbage removal and compost care.
- Ensure that garden projects and ongoing gardening practices conform to Municipal guidelines around the use of herbicides and pesticides.
- Ensure that Facilities staff is involved in the planning process and finalized garden plans are approved by Facilities prior to implementation.