Starting a School Garden

By
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Partners

Denver Urban Gardens
3377 Blake St, Unit 113
Denver, CO 80205
(303) 292-9900
www.dug.org

Learning Landscapes
University of Colorado School of Architecture and Planning
1512 Larimer Street, Suite 750
Denver CO 80202
303-315-5867
www.learninglandscapes.org
Before you Start:
Brainstorming Exercise

Gather together all those in the school who may have an interest in the school garden. Your group should include teachers, parents, paras or interns and students. Before you organize the nuts and bolts of the garden, it is best to figure out what you are going to do with it.

1. Ask yourselves the following questions:
2. Why have a garden?
3. What ages are going to use it?
4. Will it be integrated into classrooms or an after school/summer program?
5. What is the teaching goal?
6. What kinds of activities do you want to do?
7. Do you want your garden to be a community/school or school only garden? Contact Denver Urban Gardens if you want a community garden.

You can use the sheets on the next two pages to help you come up with ideas. The first page is a graphic from the National Gardening Association that shows all of the subjects that tie into the garden. Use it as an example to fill out the next page. The second page, “Why Your Garden” is for your own ideas about how to tie garden activities into the school curriculum.

If the group is over 8 people, divide them into different subjects and have them brainstorm ideas on how to tie each academic subject into garden activities.

The more your garden is tied to the educational needs of your school, the more valuable it will be to everyone involved. Starting a garden is a big commitment, so you want everyone to clearly see the value of such a large project.

After your group has committed to launching and maintaining a garden project, first fill out the Garden Information Sheet. It will help you have all of the necessary contacts on hand while you are planning and building your site.

Second, fill out the site design sheet. It will help you decide which elements your garden needs, where to place it and how to lay it out. Your site should follow the goals and curriculum needs that you identified in the brainstorming session.
Why a Garden-Example
Why Your Garden?
Garden Contact Sheet

Names and contact information of garden leader(s): __________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Names of garden committee members, including parents, teachers, staff and community members
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Names and contact information of key people
Principal __________________________________________________________________________
Facilities manager of your school ______________________________________________________
Facilities manager of your district _____________________________________________________
Head of parent organization ___________________________________________________________
School accountant ___________________________________________________________________
After school coordinator ______________________________________________________________
Food service supervisor of your school _________________________________________________
District food service manager _________________________________________________________
Managers of local garden stores ______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

For Denver Public Schools, here are contact numbers for some key people:
DPS Food Service-Leo Lesh, food service: leo_lesh@dpsk12.org / 720-423-5624
Risk Management-Mike Mayo, (for cooking) michael_mayo@dpsk12.org / 720 423-3466
Office of Volunteer Services (background checks)/Volunteer_Services@dpsk12.org / 720-424-8245
Learning Landscapes (303) 315-5867 / cate.townley@ucdenver.edu
Denver Urban Gardens, community garden information (303) 292-9900 / dirt@dug.org
Gigia Kolouch at Slow Food Denver (720) 235-6230 / thenaturalpantry@estreet.com
Andy Nowak at Slow Food Denver (303) 324-4683 / ajonowak@mindspring.com
Site Design Sheet

Placing the Garden:
The best light is early morning to mid afternoon. Where is the light in your school? 
Vegetable gardens need 6-8 hours of sun daily. Does your sight have enough sun? 
Is there water nearby? 
Is there an existing coupler or hose bib? 
Is there enough room for expansion? 
Is it away from traffic? 
Is it convenient to classrooms? 
How many classes will participate? How much space will you need? 
Do you want to include a community garden as part of your project?

Garden Layout:
Where will the students sit/gather? 
What are your district’s rules regarding materials and construction? For example, do you have to use a particular type of fencing? 
Lay out beds with rope or string so everyone can see what they will look like. 
Don’t make beds too wide for children. Measure the proper width by having children on both sides reach into the middle. 
How can you incorporate art into the garden? 
Do you have any vertical elements? 
What will it look like in winter? 
Will there be any water features? 
Do you have room to experiment (open areas)? 
How can you incorporate shade? 
Can you make or take advantage of variations in terrain?

Test your soil for plant available lead
You need to send a ziplock sandwich sized bag of soil and $15.00 to: 
CU Extension 
Soil and Crop Sciences Department 
Colorado State University 
Fort Collins, Colorado 
(970) 491-5061(office) 
(970) 491-2930(fax) 
http://www.soiltestinglab.colostate.edu/ 
Jim Self, PhD 
jimself@lamar.colostate.edu

Test the nutrient content of your soil (NPK) and Ph
There are really easy tests for kids to use:
Rapitest Soil Test Kit 
http://www.amazon.com/Rapitest-Soil-Test-Kit/dp/B0002KPKXU/ref=pd_sim_k_title_1
## Estimated Costs:

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<th>Cooking Supplies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Food Cart</td>
<td>$350.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Induction burners (2)</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchen Supplies</td>
<td>$375.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Goods</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Kitchen</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gardening Supplies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeds/plants</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plant propagation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science supplies/soil test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compost bins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Propagation mats (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grow lights (one 3-shelf)</td>
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<td>Garden Tools</td>
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<td>Wheelbarrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drip Supplies</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>$500-$2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fence (30x50) Installed price</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mulch</td>
<td>$100-500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manure</td>
<td>$75-$200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Improvements</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,675-$7,700</strong></td>
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For more information about supply sources in the metro Denver area, check [http://www.sfdseedtotable.org/?page_id=108](http://www.sfdseedtotable.org/?page_id=108)