

Your School Garden - a Resource for Educators

Welcome - this is YOUR garden! If students are following The Agreements and being respectful, they are welcome to freely explore and engage with their garden - that includes touching all the stuff. *Don't walk on eggshells out there - if plants get damaged as kids are learning, that is okay! That's what these interactive gardens are for (not to be perfect display gardens).*

THE FOUR GARDEN AGREEMENTS:

~ **Walk in the Garden**

Why is walking the right way to move around in the garden? "So we don't step on plants or creatures" "So we can stay safe, and keep each other safe" "So we can notice everything"

~ **Wait to Be Invited**

(To pick, to taste, to use a tool) "So we know what to do", "So we don't pick things that aren't ripe" "So we can stay safe"

- Exceptions are ok - examples: tasting chives or nasturtiums, getting gloves, picking a few herb leaves to smell, picking a ripe berry, touching plants or creatures gently

~ **Listen with Respect** To the adults, to each other, to the creatures and plants in our garden

~ **...and Take a Deep Breath** We can feel calm and peaceful in the garden

These Agreements use a language of positive reinforcement. State the positive - what we want kids to do - affirm and reinforce behavior we want "nice job walking in the garden". Recognize positive intent "I appreciate that you are excited to start exploring", then redirect.

What can I do with my class out there?

- ~ Explore, take a sensory tour, look for changes in seasons
- ~ Read, write, draw - feel free to move benches and tables around. Eat lunch.
- ~ Measure plant growth
- ~ Look for critters: dig in the soil, look under logs, rocks, pots... *remember to be kind to every living thing.* Put them back when you are done so they can be with their families. Worms get sunburned! Be compassionate. Draw a sketch of your creature friend, write a story about them.
- ~ Pinch off herb leaves, smell and taste (herb plants are generous and happy to share with you)
- ~ Pick a sprig of lavender or other herb to keep. Make an herb bouquet/bundle, tie with string.
- ~ Dig up a small plant or flower bulb to see how it is growing under there. Replant.
- ~ Cut some flowers to appreciate:
 - Are there lots of flowers? Then everyone can take one.
 - Are there not so many flowers? Then just pick one bouquet for the classroom (or for the secretary, etc).
- ~ Harvest seed heads and pods. Examples: hollyhock, sunflower, calendula, beans, broccoli, kale. Take back to class to dissect. Plant them in a cup of soil to see what happens.

~ Taste, with little to no restraint:

- Chives and chive flowers
- Nasturtiums, calendula, broccoli flowers
- Leafy herbs - mint, lemon balm, rosemary, etc
- Kale (buds, flowers, leaves)
- Radish - they pass their ripeness window quickly, so eat them up if they are tender

~ Taste, with some restraint:

- Peas, beans
- Grapes (there won't be enough for each student to have an entire bunch to themselves, but everyone can have a few)
- Cherry tomatoes, ground cherries, berries, currants
- Big stuff such as tree fruit (apples, plums, pears, figs) - there is often not enough for each student to have their own piece of fruit. In this case, pick a few for the class and cut it up so everyone can taste. Same idea with cucumbers, big tomatoes, summer squash,
- Carrots are a precious commodity - they take half a year to grow and there often aren't enough for each student to have their own. Harvest a few and slice them up.

~ Helping the garden (reciprocity, stewardship):

- Pick up fallen fruit - put in Compost
- Pull weeds (if not sure, it's always safe to pull plants growing in pathways)
- Water: use finger to check soil - if it's dry an inch deep, give roots a deep drink

~ Projects (this is your garden; there is room for your class to do major projects out there)

- Create a special Garden Area: Butterfly, Pollinator, Native Plant, Cultural
- Build a trellis -tie some sticks together, or do something more substantial
- Plant a crop: mark off an area of soil in a bed and plant some stuff - just make sure you label with date and info so other classes will know what is going on there.
- Make a habitat for insects, frogs, fairies
- Garden Art and Signage!
- Contact your Garden Coordinator about major projects (info below)

“Wait - how do I get IN there?”

- Ideally your garden will be open all day; a custodian can unlock in the morning and close at night
- Tools and gloves are for your use!

Questions? Need materials? Got big ideas? Reach out to:

_____ email: _____ Call/text: _____

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