

# About the Garden Lessons

Over the course of the Garden Lessons, we will walk educators and young gardeners through the process of starting a garden from planning to harvest to putting the garden to bed for the winter. **Inside, you will find activity guides, curriculum connections, and tips and strategies for successful school gardening.** This hands-on series of Garden Lessons will support educators, youth leaders and students to start and tend to a garden project. These lessons were originally adapted from the Nova Scotia School Garden Resource Guide (2014).

This series is ideal for the integrated learning nature of Nova Scotia elementary curriculum; however, these activities can engage an all ages audience. Throughout the series that spans a full growing season, participants will keep a garden journal for planning, observation, and creative expression. Each student can have their own journal, or a group can keep one together.

**Getting youth in the garden offers them opportunities to shape their food system, learn healthy food choices and connect with nature, all while building resiliency in a changing climate and having fun along the way.**

## Lesson Goals

- Engage in hands-on learning
- Gain food literacy skills
- Learn climate action connections
- Support emotional well-being and connection to the non-human world

# Gardening and Climate Action

Look for these climate action icons in Grow Eat Learn resources to make connections between gardening and the climate!



**Habitat Creation & Biodiversity**



**Waste Reduction & Circular Systems**



**Soil Stewardship**



**Water Stewardship**



**Food Security & Sovereignty**

Adapting to climate change is critical for our food system. By engaging in the garden, students can learn about food production and its interdependence with plants, animals and weather.

## Garden Lesson 6

# What About Weeds?

## Introduction

*Complete this lesson in May or June.*

Other than critters, weeds are inevitable in gardens. They share with garden plants the same water, sun, and nutrients in the soil and sometimes overgrow. Removing weeds from the garden can be a great time to spend nurturing your plants.

Lesson 6 will identify some of the most common garden weeds found in Mi'kma'ki/ Nova Scotia and how to get rid of them safely. We will also go over one of the benefits of weeds: many are edible and can make a tasty addition to a salad.

## Common Garden Weeds



Oxalis / Wood Sorrel



Broadleaf Plantain



Dandelion



Oxeye Daisy



Purslane



Bull Thistle



Red Clover



Coltsfoot

## Safety Tips

- Edible weeds should always be identified by someone who knows the shape of the leaves, the plant size and details of the flower.
- Dandelion greens should be washed thoroughly beforehand and eaten in moderation!
- Do not consume weeds that have been exposed to pesticides.

## Learning Connections

### Science

Observe, Question, Identify

### Mathematics

Comprehend, Read, Write

### Language Arts

Draw, Colour

### Visual Arts

Prepare Healthy Food, Plan a Meal

### Food & Nutrition

Prepare Healthy Food

### Climate



Habitat Creation & Biodiversity



Food Security & Sovereignty



Waste Reduction & Circular Systems

## 6.1 Dandelion salad in a jar

Did you know that dandelions are completely edible, from the roots to the flowers? Instead of throwing dandelions away when they're plucked out of the garden, try making them into the perfect packed lunch with this recipe for dandelion salad in a jar.

1. Wash, dry and chop all produce and dandelion greens before assembling salad.
2. Add 1 Tbsp of your favourite healthy salad dressing to the bottom of the jar.
3. Add the fruits or veggies that are high in moisture.
4. Add the veggies that are lower in moisture.
5. Add a source of protein, such as chicken, salmon, tuna, chickpeas, quinoa, seeds or nuts.
6. Add dandelion greens on top.

Optional: Add other salad greens for variety, such as lettuce, spinach or arugula.

7. Store in the fridge for up to 2 days. When ready to eat, shake the jar until all ingredients are mixed together and enjoy!



## 6.2 Dandelion life cycle

1. Seek out a young dandelion from the garden, backyard or an outdoor community space. Young dandelions will often have a few thin, toothed leaves but no bud or flower yet.
2. Using a trowel or small cultivator, dig up the entire dandelion. Make sure you dig deep enough to remove the entire taproot, which is the large central root.
3. Fill three-quarters of a small pot or recycled container with soil. Place the young dandelion on top and add enough soil to cover the roots. Gently pat down the soil.
4. Place on a sunny windowsill and water regularly. Watch your dandelion grow!

### Tips and Tools

#### Vegetable Suggestions:

**High moisture:** Tomatoes, cucumbers, oranges, clementines, apples, pineapple or berries.

**Low moisture:** Carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, onions, avocado, cabbage or snap peas.

#### 6.1 Materials:

- Mason jar (or a clean recycled glass jar)
- Salad dressing of choice
- Fruits and/or veggies\*
- Protein of choice
- Dandelion greens

#### Optional:

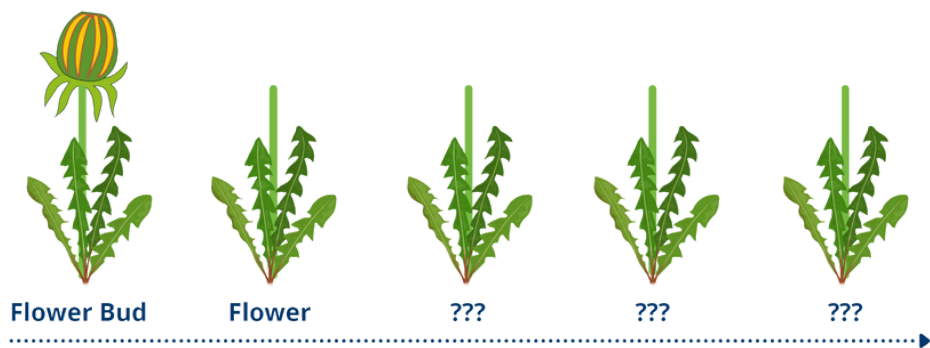
- Other salad greens

#### 6.2 Materials:

- Garden tool (i.e. trowel or cultivator)
- Small plant pot or recycled container
- Soil or potting mix
- Coloured pencils, pens or markers

**Climate Action:** Weeds like clover, dandelions and daisies are a main food source for pollinators, so consider letting them be if they're not interfering with the garden.

5. On the diagram below, draw different stages of growth starting from a flower bud. Can you determine what the other stages are?



## Tips and Tools

To control weeds in the garden:

- **Remove weeds by hand:** Use hands or a garden tool (such as a trowel or claw-weeder) to remove weeds. Ensure that the whole weed is removed, including all the roots.
- **Remove flowers and seeds:** Cut off the flowers as soon as they appear or remove seeds before they can spread.
- **Use mulch:** Mulch is a layer of grass clippings, tree bark, moss or another cover that improves soil health, retains moisture and helps to prevent weeds. Water the garden before-hand and ensure that all weeds are removed.
- **Cover and starve:** For stubborn weeds, cover the area with cardboard, plastic weed fabric, or a tarp to starve the weed roots. This can sometimes take over a year to be effective, but can be used as a last resort.

## 6.3 Colouring activity

1. Colour the following pictures of common garden weeds and write the name of each one in the box provided. Hint: Refer to the images on the introduction page for help identifying the weeds.

2. While students are colouring, prompt a discussion about how weeds also serve as pollinators for bugs and contribute to the biodiversity of the garden. Ask what bugs might visit these weeds in bloom, referring to Lesson 5.



Click for next lesson:

**Garden Lesson 7:  
Harvest & Reflection**