

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 7

Harvest & Reflection

Introduction

Complete this lesson between August and October.

After all that hard work, the garden is finally ready for harvest. Almost every vegetable has a different way to indicate when it is ready for harvest. For some, it might be the texture or firmness. For others, it may be the size, shape or colour. To know when vegetables are ready to harvest, check your garden journal Seed entry, ask a local gardener, visit the library, or research on the internet.

Lesson 7 will cover when and how to harvest, as well as some fun activities to reflect on this past growing season and the future of the garden.

Common Harvesting Methods

Cut

Harvest by cutting parts of the plant with scissors or pruning shears.

Use for:

- Herbs
- Leafy greens



Pick

Harvest produce gently with two hands.

Use for:

- Plants with "fruits" (ex. beans, zucchini, peppers, tomatoes)



Pull

Harvest by pulling up the whole plant by hand. Soil may need to be loosened.

Use for:

- Root vegetables (ex. carrots, turnips, beets, radishes)



Learning Connections

Science

Observe, Question, Identify, Investigate, Research

Mathematics

Calculate

Language Arts

Comprehend, Read, Write

Visual Arts

Draw, Colour, Design, Create

Food & Nutrition

Prepare Healthy Food

Climate



Food Security & Sovereignty



Waste Reduction & Circular Systems



Soil Stewardship



Water Stewardship

7.1 Harvest time!

1. Different vegetables need to be harvested at different times. Refer to the "Seeds" page in the garden journal and check two things we recorded for each plant on seeding day:
 - a. Sprout Date
 - b. Days Until Harvest
2. Additional factors can impact harvest time, like weather and garden location. If you're still not sure if the plant is ready for harvest? Taste it! If the plant is not ready, you will be able to tell by the taste or texture.
3. Harvest using one of the methods described above (cut, pick or pull). Choose the best method for each plant. For example, you should cut spinach but pull carrots.
4. Inspect and rinse the produce well to remove any insects or dirt.
5. Time to enjoy the harvest! How does the produce smell? Feel? Look? Taste? Explore some fun ways to prepare and share your harvest with community.

Optional: The Nourish Recipes page may help get you started.

7.2 Reflecting and creatively recording

1. In your garden journal, write "Reflection" at the top of the next blank page. The following activity will be completed on this page.
2. Look back at everything written in your garden journal up to this point, and look at the garden itself. Whether it is planted in containers, planters or directly in the ground, walk through or sit by the garden and use your senses to experience it. Take this opportunity to practice mindfulness. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Touch?
3. Using coloured pencils, pens, markers, coloured paper, crayons or whatever craft supplies you have on hand, create a picture of the garden inspired by your experience. If you prefer photography, make a slideshow to share. Take some pictures close up and some far away. Choose a few different subjects for your photos, including whatever garden visitors you may have (such as birds or bugs) or any decorations you have created.

Tips and Tools

Eating from the garden means there were no carbon emissions from food transportation. Engaging with this local food systems helps young people understand where their food comes from while learning about sustainable growing methods.

7.1 Materials:

- Garden journal

Optional:

Garden tools, such as gloves and scissors


7.2 Materials:

- Garden journal
- Pen or pencil
- Coloured pencils, crayons, markers or other craft supplies for drawing or colouring

Optional:

Smart phone or camera for taking photos

7.2.1 Example



"SQUASH" – A Haiku
by Nourish Nova Scotia

Yesterday a seed
Today a butternut squash
And tomorrow, soup

7.3 Writing about the garden

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete on the "Reflection" page (or the next pages, if more space is needed).

a. Write a poem or haiku about your garden. Draw a fancy border around your poem (such as a leafy vine, or colourful vegetables).

Write the title of your poem at the top. Suggestions for topics:

- Your favourite part of planning a garden
- An ode to your favourite vegetable or plant
- What you experience when you explore your garden with all senses
- How your garden might look in a different season - How do you think it will look later in the fall? In the winter? Next spring?

b. Find a recipe containing one or more of the vegetables you're growing, that you're excited to try. Write this recipe down in your notebook with a sentence or two about why you chose this recipe. Cook this recipe with the help of a friend or family member, and taste it together when it is finished. Draw or take a picture of the completed dish and glue it into your garden journal. Record your thoughts and your friend or family member's thoughts, about the recipe. How does it taste? Would you make it again in the future?

c. Write a pretend news story about your garden. Use your imagination! You could write about how your garden grew the biggest tomato in the world or how you discovered that a garden gnome was stealing your veggies - the possibilities are endless! Give your news story a fun headline and illustrate it with pictures or even photos of your garden.

Tips and Tools

Harvesting more produce than you can use yourself?

Consider sharing the abundance with friends, family, the food bank or a local food-based charity or organization.

Make the garden journal your own! Decorate the pages with coloured pencils, pens, markers or even photos if you haven't already done so.

Your gardening journal is a valuable tool. It can help you learn from your challenges and celebrate your successes!

7.3 Materials:

- Garden journal
- Pencil or pen

Optional:

Craft supplies, such as tape or glue, for decorating this activity page

Click for next lesson:

**Garden Lesson 8:
Putting the Garden
to Bed**