



School Gardening  
Resources

PRIMARY LEVEL

**BORD BIA**  
IRISH FOOD BOARD

# Garden Maintenance, Allocating Projects and Community Involvement





## Year Round Garden Plan



### September

- ★ Make the garden plan.
- ★ Make raised beds and pathways.
- ★ Start a compost heap/worm bin.
- ★ Plant bulbs for the spring (anytime from September to November).
- ★ Mow meadow (caretaker or parent).

### October

- ★ Make outdoor vegetable beds.
- ★ Plant over-winter crops: garlic, onions, green manure, over-winter grain.
- ★ Visit local native woods and collect tree seeds/nuts.
- ★ Create a tree nursery.

### November

- ★ Plant mixed native hedgerow.
- ★ Plant a native woodland (anytime until March).
- ★ Put out bird-feeders/bird tables.
- ★ Put unused beds to rest for winter.
- ★ Weed, add seaweed or manure and mulch with black plastic/cardboard.
- ★ Collect leaves to make leaf mould/ compost.
- ★ Make bird- or bat-boxes.
- ★ Plant rhubarb.
- ★ Take cuttings.

### December

- ★ Plant heritage apple tree orchard.
- ★ Prune and maintain existing fruit bushes.
- ★ Add manure / compost to base of plant, set up water harvesting system.

### January

- ★ Plant soft fruit bushes and small fruit.
- ★ Plan rotation of vegetable beds and draw a plan.
- ★ Plant a living willow fence/ archway; weave, prune, clip and tidy existing living fences/hedges.
- ★ Tour of school grounds - create a nature trail.
- ★ Make outdoor seating for garden.
- ★ Start a log/rough pile in the garden.
- ★ Divide herbs plants, e.g. chive, mint.
- ★ Plant strawberries in pyramid pot system.

### February

- ★ Start sprouting potatoes on windowsill.
- ★ Start sowing indoor plants projects.
- ★ Plant climbers into hedge.

## March

- ★ Seed vegetable plants indoors.
- ★ Start planting beds with early potatoes, garlic, onions.
- ★ Sow heritage grains

## April

- ★ Plant beds with potatoes, garlic and onions, keep seeding vegetable plants indoors.
- ★ Start hardening-off seedling plants.
- ★ Protect all plants from slugs.
- ★ Direct seed carrots, parsnips, radish and rocket.
- ★ Harvest nettles and comfrey to make liquid feed.
- ★ Don't mow grass in woodland and orchard, develop it as a wildflower meadow.
- ★ Plant spreading herbs under the orchard and fruit bushes (companion planting).

## May

- ★ Plant out lettuce, parsley, sunflowers, calendula, sweet pea.
- ★ Plant seeds of pumpkins, courgette, sunflowers.
- ★ Plant late potatoes.
- ★ Plant out and make supports for peas and beans, weed beds - add to compost, sow wildflower seeds for autumn flowering.



## June

- ★ Plant out pumpkins, courgette, sunflower.
- ★ Harvest first early potatoes, lettuce, parsley.
- ★ Weed beds.
- ★ Tour of garden - look at veg, plants, wildlife, butterflies, birds.
- ★ Plan watering and care of beds over summer.
- ★ Liquid feed plants.
- ★ Mow meadow (caretaker).

### Ideas for any time of the year



- ★ Make a school garden plan.
- ★ Establish green school committee or garden committee.
- ★ Make a plan of action for the year in the school garden.
- ★ Tool safety talk.
- ★ Harvest and cooking day.
- ★ Turn compost heap, compost 'web of life' project.
- ★ Erect polytunnel in garden.
- ★ Save seeds from plants and flowers in the garden for next year.
- ★ Plant comfrey and nettles; divide and spread comfrey roots.
- ★ Make/build pond.



## Allocating Projects

### Class by Class Garden Projects

#### Allocating Projects

Teachers have a huge amount of work to do already. The garden does not have to be seen as extra work. One option for a whole school approach is that each teacher is given a food growing project and a habitat or area in the school ground to care for, maintain and study as part of their curriculum. The teacher can then become familiar with growing a certain food & caring for a habitat and does not have to be overwhelmed by all the jobs to be done in the garden. It also means that not one teacher is left looking after the whole garden, although it is important to have a main point of contact - this could be a green schools/school garden role.

#### **Class Group: Junior and Senior Infants/Naíonán Beaga & Móra**

Growing Projects: Sunflowers and Pumpkins, Strawberries in Pots.

Habitats to care for/study: Herbs & Flowers.

#### **Class Group: 1st Class/Rang 1**

Growing Projects: The Onion (Allium) Family, onions, garlic, spring onions, leeks, chives, Lettuce & Salad Plants.

Habitats to care for/study: Wildlife Pond (and Bog habitat).

#### **Class Group: 2nd Class/Rang 2**

Growing Projects: Heritage grains.

Habitats to care for/study: Fruit Orchard & underplanting with herbs.

#### **Class Group: 3rd Class/Rang 3**

Growing Projects: Green Manures (living compost), The Cabbage Family (brassicas).

Garden Project & Green Schools: Compost & Recycling, Soil & Mini-Beasts.

Habitats to care for/study: Wild Areas, wildflower meadow, log piles.

#### **Class Group: 4th Class/Rang 4**

Growing Project: Root vegetables - beetroot, carrots, parsnips, radishes.

Garden Project & Green Schools: School Site Plan.

Assessment, make a tree nursery.

Habitats to care for/study: Woodland Habitat .

#### **Class Group: 5th Class/ Rang 5**

Growing Project: Pea Family (Legumes), Sweet Peas (Willow Pea Fence).

Garden Projects: Water collection & conservation, Making a Nature trail.

Habitats to care for/study: Fruit Bushes.

#### **Class Group: 6th Class/Rang 6**

Growing Projects: Potato Family (Solanum) - potatoes, tomatoes. Also try Spinach, chard.

Garden Project: Woodwork: Bird and bat boxes.

Habitats to care for/study: Hedgerow Habitat.



## Community Involvement

### Allocating Projects

- ★ Ensure that all teachers in the school are aware of the garden.
- ★ Get the caretaker on board as they will be involved in mowing & hedge trimming.
- ★ Propose that the school becomes chemical free as there is food being grown in the school grounds.
- ★ Involve the Board of Management and The Parents Association make a presentation to bring them on board and keep up to date with the project.
- ★ The more the garden is used the better it will be!
- ★ Start a gardening club open to all ages, this could be run after school or at lunchtime.
- ★ Get parents involved as much as possible - offer free fruit and vegetables in return for their skills, time and resources.
- ★ Involve the local county council, environment officer, heritage officer, rural development & other community development bodies, local environmental educators, local food producers for support or information.
- ★ Look into programmes that will make the garden a more integrated part of the formal & informal curriculum. These programmes include: Food Dudes/healthy eating, Discover Primary Science, Green Schools, INTO/Heritage in schools scheme.
- ★ If there is a local community garden or allotments, there may be local knowledge, expertise & resources that could be tapped into.
- ★ Let the local press or radio know about your school food garden.
- ★ Have a harvest open day for the school garden - this could be in June or September. Use it as a fund raiser to raise money for new projects in the school.

