projectgreenchallenge

pgc

2013

CURRICULUM

Lesson Plans for a conscious lifestyle

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GARDENING

Introduction

Organic gardening can be described as growing produce in harmony with nature, without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or other toxins that upset the balance of the eco system. Whether you decide to go big and start your own garden, get regularly involved in a school or community garden, or begin with one small herb on your windowsill, you must first start with a seed (Non-GMO of course!). Gardening is a great way to think sustainably, focus on healthy eating, and to support your community. When food is grown in your "backyard" and not transported thousands of miles from farm to table, it cuts down on gas emissions, eliminates needless pollution and health concerns associated with toxic fertilizers, supports the local economy and tastes a whole lot better! An easy way to establish a connection with our food is to garden, so reach out to one near you and become part of the garden to table process!

Author Michael Pollan says, "I want to talk about growing some, even just a little, of your own food... Measured against the problems we face, planting a garden sounds pretty benign, I know, but in fact it's one of the most powerful things an individual can do – to reduce your carbon footprint, sure, but more important, to reduce your sense of dependence and dividedness..."

Resources

- ***Pinterest Board***
- ***Project Green Challenge 2012 Gardening***
- ***Project Green Challenge 2011 Gardening***

Objectives

In today's lesson, students will:

- Illustrate the significance gardens have in their community and in communities around the world
- Prepare a proposal for the Whole Kids Garden Grant
- Plant (Non-GMO)seeds to care for in the future

Materials Needed

- Computer lab
- Projector
- Soil
- Water
- Seeds
- Different planting pots (see related activity for examples)
- Old newspapers
- Included powerpoint

Lesson Plan

Start of Class: 10 minutes

Gardens are transforming and revitalizing communities all over the country. They come in many shapes and sizes, are located in urban cities, rural communities, schools, backyards, in fact, just about everywhere. With all of this development comes a whole new set of terminology to go with it. The first task today is to guide your students through an exploration of the role gardening plays at home, school, and in the community. On half sheets of paper, have each student answer three questions.

1. In your own words, what is a garden?
2. Is gardening important?
3. What are examples of gardens in the community? (home gardens, etc)
4. Have you gardened before?

Following this inventory, go over answers in class to understand where students stand with gardening experience and attitudes before the next activities.

Gardening 101 Activity: 15 minutes

When people hear the word gardening, they might visualize a limited definition of what gardening is and can be. However, gardens today continue to take many different forms. Use the provided Powerpoint to expose students to several different gardening styles. Use the following resources to help educate yourself about the various topics and share what you like with the class:

keystonegardens.com

thedailygreen.com

nongmoproject.org

tlc.howstuffworks.com

en.wikipedia.org

Also, you can project this ***infographic***, which highlights some of the health benefits of gardens. This ***video*** highlights environmental and health benefits of plant life in urban areas.

Interdisciplinary: History/Social Science Activity (2 class days, one for preparation and one for presentations)

Like language or religion, gardens from around the world give insight into different ways of life to help us better understand other cultures. In this research activity, in pairs or individually, students will select a specific garden from somewhere in the world. They should find a picture of it, show where it is on a map, when the garden was created, what each garden contains, and why it is significant.

The students will then arrange this information in a 3-5 slide Powerpoint to present to the class in a brief, two-minute presentation. Before the presentation, students will submit their slides to the teacher to assemble into one Powerpoint.

Some possible gardens to include could be:
The Garden of Cosmic Speculation: Scotland
Keukenhof Gardens: The Netherlands
Suan Nong Nooch: Thailand
Versailles: France
Jardim Botanico de Curitiba: Brazil
Butchart Gardens: Canada
Yuyuan Garden: China
Shalimar Garden: Pakistan
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden: US
Ryoan-ji: Japan
Charbagh (Mughal/Persian gardens): India
Hanging Gardens of Babylon: Iraq
Boboli Gardens: Italy
Jichang Garden: China
Singapore Botanic Gardens: Singapore
Rikugien Garden: Japan
Fin Garden: Iran

Lesson Plan cont.

Alhambra: Spain
Colonial Revival Garden: US
Bahá'í Gardens: Israel
Huntington Desert Garden: US
Dumbarton Oaks: US
Taj Mahal Garden: India
Cape Floral Kingdom: South Africa
Labyrinth Maze of Barvaux: Belgium
Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden: South Africa
La Majorelle: Morocco
Las Pozas: Mexico

Also, ahead of time you can look for any local gardens or botanical gardens in your state that you would like to include, to show students that gardens can be anywhere, even in their own backyards.

Planting A Seed Activity: 30 minutes

The week before, have students bring in a variety of old items to be upcycled into a flower pot. The options are endless, but some ideas include: two liter bottles, old cans (coffee, paint, etc), old trash cans, old cookware, clean milk cartons, buckets, yogurt containers, old boots, old wicker baskets, glass jars, anything else you or your students can think of! Collect seeds from an organic fruit or vegetable you already have (like an apple in your school cafeteria) or purchase several seed packets (organic and Non-GMO), purchase some organic potting soil, and find a suitable location to do gardening. Set up newspapers on the floor in the classroom to prevent spills, and help your students plant their seeds.

Note: If you need help selecting Non-GMO seeds or organic soil, check out the following resources:

urbanorganicgardener.com

wikihow.com

organicmechanicsoil.com

Assessment/Checks for Understanding

If your school does not have a garden, consider starting one! Ahead of time, look for a school garden grant. One incredible program is the Whole Foods Market Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant: http://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/gardengrants.php

Engage your students in the entire process of building the garden, from the proposal writing for the grant, all the way through the hopeful planting of the seeds and caring for the plants. This will not only teach students the important steps behind grant writing, designing a plan, and budgeting, but also teach them about all of the stages of a plant's life, and how to give it appropriate care. Have your students create a plan that will stand out, with photos, images, diagrams or whatever else will make the strongest impression to help your school garden win the grant!