



Produce Safety

School Gardens





Objectives

At the end of this training session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify appropriate practices for site selection, materials, water sources, fertilizers, and compost use in school gardens.
2. Use appropriate harvesting and handling practices with produce grown in school gardens.

An Educational Tool: School Gardens

- Growth in popularity
- A district-sponsored learning environment
- Typically on school property
- Involves students, staff, and community
- May include flowers, trees, fruits, and/or vegetables



USDA Food and Nutrition Service

School Garden Q & As

- Allowable expenses using school nutrition program funds
 - Equipment
 - Materials
 - seeds, compost, fertilizer
- FFVP program funds may not be used



www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2009/SP_32-2009_os.pdf

Be a Food Safety Advocate

- Handout: *Food Safety Tips for School Gardens*
- Nutritious food must be safe food
- Food safety education opportunity
 - Students
 - Staff
 - Community



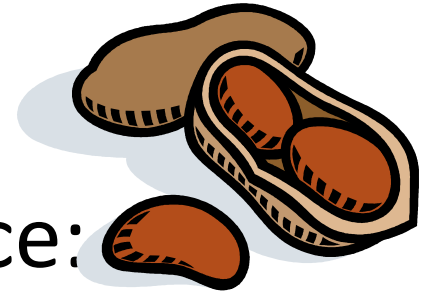
Site selection

- Locate away from contamination
- Know what's below; call 811 before you dig
- Construct reasonable barriers



Soil History

- Test soil
- Find your county extension office:
www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/
- Consider purchasing soil from a commercial source that is:
 - Traceable
 - Intended for growing food crops



Plant Selection

- Avoid growing known allergens, i.e. peanuts
- Avoid growing toxic plants, i.e. rhubarb



Check with your local Cooperative Extension Office if you have questions.

Safe Materials

Use non-toxic, non-leaching materials

- Cedar, untreated pine, or fir
- Terra cotta pots
- Concrete
- Unused livestock water troughs (drill drain holes)
- Burlap filled with straw



Materials to Avoid

- Pressure-treated lumber or plywood
- Used tires
- Rail road ties
- Old bricks with paint



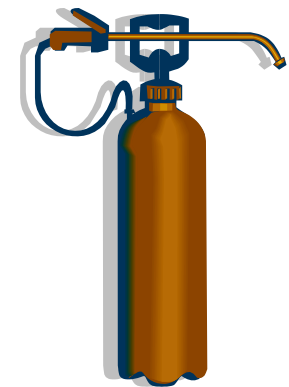
Safe Water Sources

- Test all non-municipal sources
- Transport water in food grade containers if it comes into contact with produce



Pesticides and Fertilizers

- Best practice = no pesticides
- Contact local Cooperative Extension Office for pest control recommendations
- Maintain current Material Safety Data Sheets
 - Available from the manufacturer
- Follow manufacturer's directions for fertilizers





Compost and Manure Use

- Do not use raw, uncomposted manure
- Consider purchasing commercially prepared compost
- Contact local Cooperative Extension Office for assistance with composting
 - Use only plants, such as fruit and vegetable trimmings, grass, leaves, and twigs
 - Avoid animal products, animal waste, and cafeteria waste
 - Consider vermicompost
- Wear gloves
- Locate compost pile away from sources of contamination

Growing and Harvesting Produce

- Provide training
- Monitor hand washing and personal hygiene
- Clean and sanitize harvest containers
- Clean harvest tools



Using Garden Produce in School Meals

- Ask about growing practices
 - Good Agricultural Practices should be followed
- Receive and inspect
- Store properly
- Maintain traceability



Fresh Produce Donations

- Communicate with stakeholders
- Check local and/or state regulations
- Discuss liability
- Maintain traceability





School Garden Activity and Discussion