
Appendix C: Checklist and Worksheets for Getting Started

A Step-by-Step Guide to Get Your School Garden Growing

This is a checklist of tasks that will help you to create a sustainable school garden project in NYC. Each major task is accompanied by a worksheet within this guide.

To make this guide work for you, we recommend assigning a point person for each task. Write that person's name into the "Person Responsible" column of the guide and give her/him the accompanying worksheet. If you need support along the way, please visit our website www.grownyc.org or contact us at schoolgardens@grownyc.org. (212) 788-7900.

STEP 1: BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Task	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit school garden committee members (see Worksheet 3 below). In order to register your garden with GrowNYC School Gardens, your committee should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Principal<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Principal<input type="checkbox"/> Custodian Engineer<input type="checkbox"/> 2 teachers (minimum)<input type="checkbox"/> 2 other school community members (minimum)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Join the NYC Youth and School Gardens Google Group ; sign up for the GrowNYC Education newsletter ; and follow @GrowNYC on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter	
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan a site visit to a school garden and/or community garden near you. (Worksheet 1)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about greening organizations right here in NYC and what resources they might have for your school garden. Report back to your garden committee. Here are a few great ones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> GreenThumb<input type="checkbox"/> New York, Queens, and Brooklyn Botanic(al) Gardens<input type="checkbox"/> New York City Compost Project	
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a school garden committee meeting. Start planning a season in advance! If you want to garden in the spring, schedule a meeting in the fall. If you want to garden in the fall, schedule a meeting in the spring.	

STEP 2: CREATE A SHARED VISION

Task	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your school garden committee and talk about goals and future plans for your garden. (Worksheets 2 and 3 below)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft a letter of support for the garden and have your principal or administration sign it. Use this as an opportunity to put your goals in writing! (here's a template for the letter of support)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Find a school garden curriculum that fits your school's garden goals. Learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> NY Agriculture in the Classroom (all grades)<input type="checkbox"/> Nourish (middle school)<input type="checkbox"/> Edible Schoolyard NYC (elementary and middle school)<input type="checkbox"/> Inquiry based learning (all grades!)	

STEP 3: PLAN AND DESIGN YOUR GARDEN

Task – Select Garden Type and Site	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate the sunny areas at your school. Remember, edible plants need about 8 hours of sunlight each day in order to produce fruit and at least 4 to produce substantial leaf growth.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate all available water sources. As a last resort, consider hydrant access. Contact our team about getting a hydrant permit.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about different types of gardens and the benefits of each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Raised beds (can be built on concrete, pavement, or grass)<input type="checkbox"/> Sub-irrigated planters<input type="checkbox"/> Hydroponics and/or aquaponics<input type="checkbox"/> Living walls<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse<input type="checkbox"/> Rooftop	

Task— Create a Garden Map	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Draw a school garden map, indicating current or planned location of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Cardinal directions<input type="checkbox"/> Water source<input type="checkbox"/> Dimensions of beds and garden space<input type="checkbox"/> Surrounding buildings, fences, streets, trees, shrubs, and other objects<input type="checkbox"/> Entrances and exits	

Task— Test your Soil (if you'll be working with ground soil at all)	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Cornell, Brooklyn College Urban Soils Lab, and UMass Amherst will all test soil for a small fee. Collect samples and mail them in to test for heavy metals, soil pH, and standard nutrients.	

Task— Make a school garden supply list	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Take an inventory of all garden equipment already at the school.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of needed tools and materials. (Worksheet 4)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Find a place where you will be able to store garden equipment after you have purchased it. Consider building a shed with a rainwater harvesting system.	

Task—Make a timeline (Worksheet 5)	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule regular garden committee meetings. (Worksheet 6)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Set date for workday to build beds, move soil, etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Set date for ribbon cutting ceremony, if you plan to have one.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tell students, faculty, and staff about the garden and get their input. Invite them to the workday.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a planting schedule with what to plant when.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Research school garden professional development opportunities in your community and schedule your teachers and garden committee members to attend. Learn about professional development at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> GrowNYC Education events calendar <input type="checkbox"/> GreenThumb <input type="checkbox"/> Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens Botanic(al) Gardens <input type="checkbox"/> Edible Schoolyard <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture in the Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> The Horticultural Society of New York <input type="checkbox"/> Just Food <input type="checkbox"/> Farm School NYC 	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create and fill a class-use and maintenance schedule. (Worksheet 7)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on a summer maintenance plan. Note: Planting a cover crop for the summer when you're not there counts as a great plan! Or, different volunteers can sign up to "adopt" the garden for a set amount of time.	

STEP 4: REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL GARDEN

Task	Person Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collect the first and last names, email addresses, and phone numbers of garden committee members. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Go to grownyc.org/school-gardens and click “Register”. That will take you to a full listing of DOE public and charter schools. Find your school and click the “Select” button. That will take you to our registration page. You will first fill out your log in and contact info. <input type="checkbox"/> Email schoolgardens@grownyc.org if you don’t know the login info or can’t find your school. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Go to the “Register” page and log in. <input type="checkbox"/> Add in contact information for the rest of your garden committee by clicking “Add New Participant” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Each garden contact can use his/her email address with your password to log in to the registration <input type="checkbox"/> You can always edit the contacts in your committee by clicking the “Edit” button next to each name. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Click “Enter a New Registration” to start your registration form <input type="checkbox"/> Fill out the relevant information for your school garden. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remember to click “Save Registration” after each section to save your work. (Note: clicking “Save Registration” does not mean your registration has been completed). <input type="checkbox"/> You can always edit your registration form by clicking the “Edit” button next to your registration. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Upload these documents into your registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Signed Letter of Support from your school Administration (such as Principal or Assistant Principal) on school letterhead (here's a template for the letter of support) <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Map (if you have one) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> When your registration is complete, click the box that says “Garden Registration is Completed” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Schools must log into their registration page once a year to re-register. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Click the “Add New Registration” button. <input type="checkbox"/> A new registration form will generate with most of your garden information pre-filled. Check that the information provided is still correct, add in any new changes and click “Garden Registration is Completed” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Email any questions to schoolgardens@grownyc.org. 	

STEP 5: SECURE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR YOUR GARDEN

Task	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Find community partners and organizations that can donate resources (show them your materials list and see how they can help). (Worksheet 8)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a budget. (See Appendix D for sample budgets) Consider the following categories for your budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Materials for beds <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing <input type="checkbox"/> Planting containers <input type="checkbox"/> Soil and fertilizer <input type="checkbox"/> Mulch/Woodchips <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For students <input type="checkbox"/> For teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Watering/Irrigation <input type="checkbox"/> Seeds/plants/seedlings <input type="checkbox"/> Education curriculum and resources <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development for teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Materials for outdoor classroom (tables, chairs, clip boards, etc.) 	
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a fundraising plan. (Worksheet 9)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Place order for soil, seeds, and/or starter plants. Make sure to check the Grow to Learn calendar for seed and seedling giveaways. You may be able to get these materials for free!	
<input type="checkbox"/> Place order for garden tools and supplies.	

NEXT STEPS: ONCE YOUR GARDEN IS UP AND GROWING...

Task	Person Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a garden sign and plant labels to teach the community about your garden.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a list of garden rules that reflect your garden goals and school culture.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Host ribbon cutting ceremony. Invite your community and, if you're up for it, the press.	

WORKSHEET 1: Visit school gardens and/or community gardens near you.

Instructions and Notes: Make a list of school and community gardens near you. Then visit some of those gardens to get inspiration for your own garden project. Find community gardens by searching on GreenThumb: <https://greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/gardensearch.php>

You can also contact us at schoolgardens@grownyc.org and we can look for other schools with gardens near you!

Garden	Address	Contact	Phone/Email

Visit a garden, take notes, make sketches, and take pictures (if allowed):

Garden Name _____

Address _____

Contact Person _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

Appointment Date and Time _____

Helpful tips from garden visit:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WORKSHEET 2: Develop a school garden committee

Recruit garden committee members and define their roles. In order to be eligible for GrowNYC resources and apply for a Mini-Grant, your school garden committee must include the seven starred committee members as listed below. For your co-coordinators, consider school sustainability coordinators, wellness council members, school librarians, community gardeners, farmers, custodians, cafeteria staff, parents, and students.

POSITION	NAME	ROLE IN THE GARDEN	PHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL
*Principal				
*Asst. Principal				
*Custodial Engineer				
*Teacher 1				
*Teacher 2				
*Coordinator 1				
*Coordinator 2				
Additional member (optional)				
Additional member (optional)				
Additional member (optional)				

Important considerations:

- Who will be the committee leader?
- Where will meetings take place?
- How often will meetings be held?
- How will communication happen between meetings? Email? Google Group? Private Facebook page?

Need help defining school garden committee roles? Check out these links for ideas and suggestions:

[Kids Gardening- Forming a Garden Committee](#)

[Eartheasy- How to Start a School Garden: Your Complete Guide](#)

WORKSHEET 3: Create school garden vision.

Instructions and Notes: Answer the following questions with your school garden committee. This worksheet can be used as an agenda for your first school garden committee meeting.

What are our school garden goals? Why do we want to have a garden at our school?	
Where might we want to place our garden? Brainstorm all possible locations, indoor and outdoor.	Notes:
Which classes/grades will work in the garden? Which subjects will we teach in the garden? Check all that apply and write in the name of a teacher who teaches that subject and might want to get involved. Subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Math▪ Science▪ History▪ ESL▪ Art▪ Nutrition▪ English Language Arts▪ Foreign Language▪ Physical Education▪ Social Studies	Notes:

Grades: _____

You can use your garden to teach one or all of these subjects.

What is the educational theme of our garden?

Check all that apply. Feel free to add in your own ideas. Common Garden themes:

- Edible
- Alphabet
- Herb
- Heirloom
- Flower
- Nutrition and Health
- Rain Garden
- Pizza
- Butterfly
- Sensory

Notes:

Mix and match themes.

How will we involve the community? Special Events? Volunteer Opportunities?

If the garden is doing well, do we want to expand? How? Feel free to add in your own ideas.

- Composting system
- Lunchroom composting
- Outdoor classroom
- Garden club
- Summer garden program
- Chickens
- Garden to School Café
- After school programming
- Rainwater harvesting

Notes:

Visit other gardens for more ideas.

WORKSHEET 4: Draft a principal's letter of support for the garden and have your principal sign it.

Instructions and Notes: You will need a signed letter of support from your principal or assistant principal on official school letterhead in order to register with GrowNYC School Gardens. Here is a sample template which you can feel free to use as-is or modify:

[INSERT OFFICIAL SCHOOL
LETTERHEAD]

[Date]

GrowNYC
100 Gold Street, Suite 3300
New York, NY 10038

Dear GrowNYC,

I proudly write this letter in support and approval of the school garden/outdoor learning project here at [insert school].

[OPTIONAL narrative:

- Our school goal is to form a shared garden space that will serve as a partnership with our community
- We would like to partner with organizations for outdoor learning and urban farming
- students will have a hands-on approach to nature and the environment that they live in
- will problem solve and develop strategies to improve their community and to protect the climate
- learn to respect the environment and improve their health through growing vegetables and plants
- the students will take care of the garden and the outdoor space

Our garden will serve as an important communal space for student well-being and as an educational space to explore topics such as agriculture, food access, nutrition, science, climate, sustainability, art and other curricular goals.

I am excited to be a part of this network, and a part of the larger movement for school gardens in New York City and abroad.]

Sincerely,

[Principal Signature]

[Principal Name]

WORKSHEET 5: Create a garden materials list.

Instructions and Notes: Here is a list of common garden needs. Check off everything that you want to have (immediately or in the future). When you create your budget, write in all of your immediate needs and then add in the other items as your budget allows. Later you can approach local hardware stores and nurseries for donations.

SCHOOL GARDEN WISHLIST	
<input type="checkbox"/> Growing media <input type="checkbox"/> Soil <input type="checkbox"/> Compost	<input type="checkbox"/> Mulch (often used in walkways)
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials for beds <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber <input type="checkbox"/> Screws/Nails <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape fabric/weed barrier	<input type="checkbox"/> Containers <input type="checkbox"/> Stock tanks <input type="checkbox"/> Cedar planters <input type="checkbox"/> ½ Wine barrels <input type="checkbox"/> Buckets
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Tools <input type="checkbox"/> Garden rake <input type="checkbox"/> Spading fork <input type="checkbox"/> Cultivator <input type="checkbox"/> Hand trowel <input type="checkbox"/> Hoe <input type="checkbox"/> Pruners <input type="checkbox"/> Spade shovel <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelbarrow	<input type="checkbox"/> Kids' Tools <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' gloves <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' shovels <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' hoes <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' steel rakes <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' leaf rakes <input type="checkbox"/> Kids' hand trowels
<input type="checkbox"/> Seeds and Plants <input type="checkbox"/> Seed packets <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Trees <input type="checkbox"/> Herbs <input type="checkbox"/> Perennials <input type="checkbox"/> Plant starts <input type="checkbox"/> Bulbs <input type="checkbox"/> Cover crops (for the winter)	<input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Rain barrel <input type="checkbox"/> Hose <input type="checkbox"/> Hose caddy <input type="checkbox"/> Spray nozzle <input type="checkbox"/> Water wand <input type="checkbox"/> Watering cans
<input type="checkbox"/> Supports (for tomato and other plants) <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing <input type="checkbox"/> Soil test kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional materials <input type="checkbox"/> butterfly nets <input type="checkbox"/> magnifying glasses <input type="checkbox"/> insect collection boxes and jars

WORKSHEET 6: Make a timeline for your garden committee and schedule monthly meetings. Figure out who will do what when!

Instructions and Notes: Use this timeline as a model to start a spring garden. Fill in dates and names in the grey spaces, as seen in the example below. To gain an understanding of what is involved in running a garden committee month-by-month throughout the year, check out our in-depth guide "[A Year in the Life of a School Garden](#)".

EXAMPLE TIMELINE

SEPTEMBER				
Task	Objective	Date and Time	Persons participating	Person Responsible
Hold September planning meeting	Make yearly timeline and plan.		Full Committee	
Schedule additional professional development if necessary.	Teach teachers about basic gardening design and maintenance.		Teachers involved in garden program	

EXAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

Date:

Time:

Location or Online:

Agenda

1. **Review notes from last meeting**
2. **Old business**—Updates from individual committee members
3. Important news from GrowNYC Education Newsletter and NYC Youth and School Gardens Google Group--have one committee member sign up and report each month.
4. **New business**—see "[A Year in the Life of a School Garden](#)" for recommended agenda items by month

WORKSHEET 7: Create and fill a class-use and maintenance schedule. These schedules can be updated weekly or as needed.

Instructions and Notes: Fill in the chart below, indicating which classes and/or volunteers will work in the garden.

Class Use

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Period 1							
Period 2							
Period 3							
Period 4							
Period 5							
Period 6							
Period 7							

Maintenance/Watering Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Person Responsible							

WORKSHEET 8: Find community partners and organizations who can donate resources.

Instructions and Notes: Visit local organizations. Share your material list and see how they can help.

Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:
Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:
Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:
Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:
Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:
Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:
Business Name: Address: Contact: Telephone Number: Email: Contribution:	Notes:

Worksheet 9: Make a fundraising plan.

Instructions and Notes: Meet with your committee to fill out this worksheet. Have this meeting after you have completed your budget and received garden donations. Make sure to decide who will write each grant or spearhead each fundraising project.

How much money do we need to raise?	Notes:
How do we plan to fund the school garden?	Notes:
Are we going to apply for a grant? If so, for how much will we ask? What items will we request? Who will write the grant?	Notes:
Will we apply for other grants? Who will research grant opportunities? Who will write the grants?	Notes:
Create list of open grants with requirements and due dates.	Notes:
If we need more funds, what sort of fundraisers will we organize? Who will organize them? Check all that apply. Feel free to add your own ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Plant sale (Christmas, Mother's day, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Fall pumpkin sale <input type="checkbox"/> Walk-a-thon, Read-a-thon	Notes: