



Sierra Gardens for Schools Program

Sierra Harvest is dedicated to educating, inspiring, and connecting western Nevada County's families to fresh, local, seasonal foods. We accomplish this by offering farm to school programming, supporting farm fresh school meals, mentoring aspiring farmers and gardeners, celebrating our local food community and advocating for just, sustainable food systems.

As a tie in to our current Farm to School and Sierra Garden's for families programs, we offer support to schools in creating, maintaining and utilizing school gardens as a learning laboratory to explore science, language arts, math, and nutrition education.

Why garden-nutrition education is important

While, it is great fun to take our regular lessons outdoors to learn in a hands on, experiential way, garden-nutrition education has many important additional benefits. Students who participate in garden-nutrition education programs have been shown to have increased cooperation, have higher self-esteem and self confidence, have increased leadership skills, eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, have increased physical activity, have lower risk of obesity, diabetes & heart disease, have increased scholastic achievement and higher test scores, have better school attendance, have improved job skills and tendency toward green careers, and have positive environmental attitudes show a responsibility to care for the environment.

What we do

The Build: (If no existing garden) Site assessment, Site preparation, Garden build-out complete with fence, irrigation and compost

The Toppings: Garden mentorship, Soil fertility, Seedlings and Seeds ~ *the right varieties at the right time*

Teacher Training and Mentorship: 1-2day training for teachers on how to conduct lessons that fulfill common core standards while doing hands on gardening and nutrition activities. Provide on-going mentorship for teachers on math, language arts and next generation science lessons in the garden. **(This portion of the program starts in the spring)**

What we don't do

Sierra Harvest hopes to support the long term integration of gardening and nutrition education into the curriculum at your school. Our role is to support YOUR team in doing this rather than to BE your team. While we might occasionally teach a garden class as part of our mentorship, we do not provide weekly garden classes or day to day garden maintenance.

The Build:

The site assessment: We'll start with a site visit to discuss considerations such as location, sunlight, and water. We recommend growing vegetables directly in the ground but will determine the best layout based on the site, the needs of the gardener and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

The garden: Next we'll *work together* to install your vegetable garden. Installation will include turning the soil, incorporating compost, building a fence and establishing a water source or system. If you have an existing garden, it will include refreshing and adding fertility to your existing garden beds.

The Toppings

Sierra Harvest's mentor farmers will support school garden coordinators in the technical side of growing food using organic gardening methods in an educational setting. They will visit your garden at least four times a year to and will also be available by phone troubleshoot or answer questions. Sierra Harvest can support garden coordinators of all skill levels in maintaining a productive educational garden for the school community.

In your quarterly visits, your mentor will provide timely installments of seeds and starts and fertility to support year-round care of your garden and to take the guesswork out of timing your plantings.

Our starts and seeds will include your choice of :

Spring and Fall: broccoli , kale , cabbage, chard. green onion, Asian greens (pak choi, tatsoi), salad turnips, radish, carrots, beets, cilantro, arugula, lettuce, potato

Summer: culinary herbs, flowers, tomatoes, peppers, potato, basil, cukes, summer squash, lettuce, pole beans

Winter: Garlic, covercrop

You can add additional vegetables or varieties of course on your own.

Teacher training and Mentorship:

Sierra Harvest partners with Life Lab in Santa Cruz which has 30 years experience working with teachers, young people and gardens. We will bring senior Life Lab instructors to Nevada County for annual 1-2 day trainings in their award winning work in garden education for participating teachers. After the training, Sierra Harvest education mentors will support and mentor teachers in incorporating Growing Together curriculum into their teaching plans, will work directly with teachers as well as demonstrating lessons with groups of students. They will also support teachers with cooking lessons on preparing and sharing the garden bounty with their students.

The Curriculum: The Growing Classroom:

This award-winning resource book for educators contains 480 pages of science, math, language arts, and nutrition activities that you can do with your students in the garden. A searchable online database cross-maps each activity to Next Generation Science and Common Core Math

and English Language Arts Standards. Lesson topics include soil, plants, cycles, ecology, weather, nutrition, and food systems. The database also includes team-building and sensory exploration activities, organic gardening skills, and information on how to create and sustain a successful school garden program. The fourth edition includes a new chapter on Healthy Eating, an expanded resource section on Cooking with Kids, over 25 student lab sheets for experiments, and more.

Sample Lessons:

- *Space Travelers* - Students work in small groups to explore the composition of soil
- *Six of One, Half Dozen of the Other* - Groups of students use multiple senses to find and classify contrasting objects in the natural environment
- *A Day at the Races* - Students prepare soil flats using five different soil conservation techniques and then compare water flow and soil loss.

See more at: <http://www.lifelab.org/store/curriculum/#sthash.7XjVVDHK.dpuf>

What we ask of program participants: In order for schools to qualify for this program, schools must have at least two teachers who are willing and interested in using their school garden as a learning classroom. Usually the school provides sub-days for the training. They must have a lead garden coordinator. The garden coordinator can be a parent, teacher or volunteer who is willing to put a minimum of **two hours per week** maintaining their school's garden outside of classroom time. The garden coordinator must abide by the gardener's pledge. If the lead gardener is a teacher, the school often provides an extra prep period that can support garden maintenance and/or weekly sub time to allow that teacher to bring classes into the garden.

THE GARDENER'S PLEDGE

I WILL:

- Use ecological gardening methods
- Make sure my garden gets watered
- Harvest and eat the food I grow
- Give away, sell or barter extra produce
- Share my skills with others in my community
- Ask for help when I need it

The COSTS:

- 1. The Garden Build \$3680 for 125sq ft garden, \$4435 for 250sq ft garden (Other sizes would be determined through a quote after a site visit)**
- 2. Toppings for two years: \$2880** (for 125sq ft) If you already have a garden...starts, seeds, amendments, compost, irrigation and mentorship (includes 5 site visits) Would be: \$275.00 for each additional 100 square feet.
- 3. Teacher Training and Mentorship:** Growing Classroom training and mentorship for TWO years **\$1500**

Total costs for all three program components for a 125 sq ft garden: \$8060

Sierra Harvest discounts our Sierra Gardens for schools program based on the free and reduced lunch rate at your school. If 25% of the kids qualify for free and reduced lunch for example, you would get a 25% discount on the program costs.

Add-on's

After the first 6 months with a Sierra Garden, Sierra Harvest can support with additional elements to your garden: compost chickens, fruit trees, herbs, garden expansion or perennial vegetable, fruits or berries.