GARDEN PARTY PLANNING
ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE
- Meet with teachers, administrators and groundskeepers to select the Garden Party date and plan the location of the garden beds, compost bins, and soil and mulch piles. Complete a ‘Use of Facilities’ form for the event if necessary.
- Create a Garden Party workday plan: See “Typical Workday Activities” listed on page 2.
- Order or solicit donations of soil, mulch, organic compost, vermicast, tools, and garden bed materials as needed. Plan for pickups and deliveries.
- Announce Garden Party date (fliers, newsletter, website). Recruit volunteers. Ask volunteers to bring supplies as needed: refillable water bottle (to cut down on waste), snack or potluck dish (healthy, waste-free), tools labeled with their name, cardboard, etc.
- Arrange for a few volunteers to lead a kids' activity on Garden Party day (e.g. seed saving; food prep with garden produce, such as pesto; planting seeds in newspaper pots; painting bucket gardens; creating garden signs; decorating milk cartons for plant pots; other garden and recycle art activities).

THE WEEK BEFORE THE GARDEN PARTY
- Coordinate with school administration and groundskeepers for the unlocking of gates and nearby restrooms and classrooms (for electricity source) on Garden Party day.
- Ask the school administration to announce the Garden Party in the school’s marquee and/or on bulletin boards around campus.
- Send fliers home to families and post the fliers around campus.
- Gather unwaxed, corrugated cardboard as needed (if building new raised beds or sheet mulch gardens and/or adding cardboard and mulch to garden pathways). Ask supermarkets and other stores for cardboard. Ask your school cafeteria and custodians to save cardboard.
- Gather tools, wheelbarrows, and pickup trucks.
- If building new garden beds, measure and mark the location of the beds with measuring tape and spray paint or flags.
- Coordinate with school for mowing/weed whacking around garden areas as necessary.
- Optional: Invite local officials, businesses, and community groups to participate in your school’s Garden Party. Send out a press release to announce the event and your school’s garden program.

ONE DAY BEFORE THE GARDEN PARTY
- Thoroughly soak the ground with water where trenches for any new garden bed borders will be dug. This will make digging easier.
- Thoroughly soak the garden soil to facilitate digging.
- Write out the day’s step-by-step activities on a white board.
- Optional: Take “before” photos of the garden areas.

THE BIG DAY!
- Set up sign in and name tag area. Hang or post any banners or signs.
- Display the white board with step-by-step activities for the day.
- Set up kids’ activity area.
- Set up snack, drink, and zero waste station.
- Set up cardboard prep station (remove most tape, staples and plastics, open and flatten boxes).
- As volunteers arrive direct them to sign in, create a name tag, label their tools, and help with cardboard prep.
- After cardboard is prepped and volunteers have arrived, gather the group and make a welcome announcement. Describe the activities for the day: kids’ activity, snacks and drinks, label tools, garden work plan, thank you, etc. Encourage safety via proper tool use, staying hydrated, and washing hands well after gardening and before eating. Take a group photo!
- Split into even groups with at least one supervisor in each group. Volunteers will need to be guided through the activities.
- When building new garden beds, take the time to do it right – the beds will be there for a long time!
- When finished, thank everyone for coming and make sure volunteers enjoy the snacks. Good job!
How to...
Plan and Run a Garden Party Workday

TYPICAL WORKDAY ACTIVITIES
BEGINNING OF EACH SEMESTER
(At Least One Week Before Planting):
• Build garden beds, sheet mulch gardens, compost bins, trellises, and other structures as needed.
• Remove weeds, loosen and water garden soil.
• Harvest and sift compost.
• Add compost and other soil amendments to the garden soil (see “supplies” list).
• Add mulch around fruit trees.
• Add fresh cardboard and mulch to garden pathways.
• Create garden signs.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR:
• Harvest any remaining produce for volunteers to take home.
• Harvest and save seeds from the gardens.
• Remove weeds, loosen and water garden soil.
• Leave in place any perennial plants like herbs, collard greens, etc.
• Remove and chop old garden plants. Place chopped plant parts over the soil (except for weeds) and cover with a 2-3” layer of composted mulch. Water the layers well to aid decomposition. Take these steps to protect the garden soil and discourage weed growth over the summer.
• Add mulch around fruit trees.
• Add fresh cardboard and mulch to garden pathways.

OTHER WORKDAY SUPPLIES
• Sign in sheets, pens, and clipboard
• Folding table, tablecloth
• Name tags and pens
• Whiteboard and dry erase markers
• Banners or signs (to direct volunteers)
• First aid kit
• Camera
• Kids’ activity supplies
• Snacks and drinks: Think zero waste, local, and healthy! (e.g. fresh fruits and ice water in beverage jug for reusable water bottle refills)
• Zero Waste Station: Buckets labeled for trash, compost, and recycling

SUPPLIES

GARDEN PARTY TOOLS
• Picks (at least one per bed)
• Shovels
• Rakes
• Garden hoes
• Pitchforks (great for mulch)
• Spade forks (to loosen soil)
• Buckets
• Wheelbarrows
• Hand tools
• Pruners and loppers
• Gloves (adult and child sizes)
• Rototiller (optional)
• Water keys
• Hose
• Drill and drill bits (if necessary)
• Saw (if necessary)
• Extension cord (if necessary)
• Permanent pens for labeling tools

GARDEN BED MATERIALS
• Measuring tape
• Spray paint or flags
• Corrugated, unwaxed cardboard
• Newspaper (no magazines)
• Soil
• Mulch
• Soil amendments (compost, vermicast, composted manure, composted mulch)
• Garden bed materials: boards, posts, and screws

COMPOST BIN MATERIALS
• Wooden Pallets
• Discarded bicycle tubes
• Permanent pens for labeling tools

MARKING BED LOCATIONS
• Corrugated, unwaxed cardboard
• Newspaper (no magazines)
• Soil
• Mulch
• Soil amendments (compost, vermicast, composted manure, composted mulch)
• Garden bed materials: boards, posts, and screws

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