

GETTING STARTED...

Garden Clubs are a fun and educational way to engage students with the natural world and can be a unique entry-point into art, science, writing, math and cooking in the garden. For schools already active in garden-based learning, Garden Clubs provide great lesson extensions and a way to involve students in regular garden maintenance and care.

Setting up a Garden Club:

GROW YOUR TEAM!

1. Seek approval from administration before initiating a Garden Club or setting up any garden infrastructure. Ensure that your principal, vice principal, custodial staff and other key players are on board.
2. Recruit! Find parent and community volunteers to assist with garden activities, support with garden maintenance, donate supplies, or join in as guests.
3. Send home a letter to parents requesting support.
4. Plan your enrollment cap with no more than 10-12 students for every 1 adult. Create a registration form for parents to introduce Garden Club and enroll students. Include allergy info, photo release info, and a general description of activities. You may need to create a waitlist or recruit more help if you exceed 10-12 students per adult.

PREPARE YOUR PLANTING AREA!

1. If your school does not have available garden beds in place, make sure you have an approved campus space which receives at least 8 hours of sunlight per day. Avoid locating beds between buildings or under trees or eaves.
2. A close source of potable water should be accessible from garden beds for watering and hand washing.
3. Reserve an area near the garden for composting so you can continue to build soil health. Aerobic composting, vermicomposting, and bokashi are great garden activities for kids! Find ĀINA How-To Resource Guides at kokuahawaiifoundation.org/resources
4. Find an existing space to store tools and supplies or utilize a KHF Project Grant to fund your storage shed and other supply needs (more info on p. 2).



RECOMMENDED GARDEN SUPPLIES:

- Assorted arts and crafts supplies for garden signs
- Clipboards (DIY: Use firm cardboard and attach paper with clothespins or binder clips)
- Garden gloves
- Harvest baskets
- Journals
- Magnifying glasses
- Hand trowels, rakes, hoes
- Watering containers (DIY: Collect old detergent containers and drill holes into the caps)
- Wheelbarrows (1-2)
- Whiteboard



COOKING IN THE GARDEN (OPTIONAL):

- Blender
- Cutting boards, Kid-safe knives
- Extension cord
- Induction cook-top
- Pots, pans, potholders
- Spatulas, stirring spoons
- Scrub brushes
- Waste-Free Classroom Celebration Kit*



*Check out the KHF "Waste-Free Classroom Kit" resource guide at kokuahawaiifoundation.org/resources. Create your own kit or purchase online at preserveproducts.com.

How to... Start a Garden Club



Growing healthy keiki, schools, and communities
A program of the Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation

GARDEN SAFETY & BEST PRACTICES:

- **Establish a routine:** An oli (chant), song, chime, or minute of guided or silent observation at the beginning of each class helps to create a routine for students when they enter the garden.
- **Create “Garden Agreements”:** Emphasize that time in the garden is a privilege and that students are expected to be safe, kind, respectful, and responsible with their time.
- **Set expectations:** Build responsibility into the daily routine. Students should be responsible for cleaning up, counting tools and supplies, and keeping an inventory.
- **Emphasize food safety:** Thoroughly wash hands and all garden produce before and after harvesting and eating from the garden. If you notice any discoloration, holes, or slug trails, DO NOT EAT. Be aware of student food sensitivities and food allergies. (See kokuahawaiifoundation.org/resources for more info.)
- **Encourage students to try new foods:** Create a “No Yuck” rule to remind students to keep negative comments to themselves.



REGULAR GARDEN CLUB TASKS:

- Watering the garden
- Turning compost
- Caring for worms (If you have a vermicompost system in place)
- Weeding
- Pruning; removing bug-eaten leaves
- Measuring plants and recording data
- Amending soil with compost, mulch, vermicast, or finished bokashi
- Journaling
- Cleaning and washing produce

Tip: List garden care tasks on a whiteboard at the beginning of each Garden Club to establish a consistent practice. Activities can be reframed with creative task titles (e.g. “Longest weed” contest).

THEMED GARDENS IDEAS:

- **Pizza Garden:** Tomatoes, basil, rosemary, oregano, chives peppers, broccoli, arugula, chard
- **Hawaiian Garden:** Kalo (taro), ‘uala (sweet potato), mai’a (bananas), kō (sugar cane), kī (ti), māmaki, ‘ōlena, and other native or canoe plants
- **Three Sisters Garden:** Sweet corn or popcorn, squash, beans
- **Fairy Garden:** Aloe, nasturtiums, marigolds, “fairy furniture”
- **Butterfly Garden:** Flowers such as marigolds, nasturtiums, cosmos, and zinnias attract pollinators. If space allows, a crown flower tree is a great way to attract monarch caterpillars and māmaki is a host plant for Kamehameha butterflies.
- **Healing or Herb Garden:** Aloe, lemongrass, turmeric, mint, basil, lavender, sage, thyme

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

- **Work with school administration** to subscribe to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program for families and community members. CSAs will often offer schools a percentage of school subscription profits.
- **Start a school Farmers’ Market** and sell garden produce or seedlings to help fund your Garden Club.
- **Host a “Farm-raiser”** featuring student-grown plants, smoothies and healthy snacks, and in-kind donations from school community members.



GRANT RESOURCES:

- **Kōkua Hawai’i Foundation Project Grants** help teachers to advance environmental education goals. Apply at kokuahawaiifoundation.org/projectgrants
- **Kōkua Hawai’i Foundation Green Grants for Schools Resource Guide** offers a catalogue of excellent grant resources in PDF form: kokuahawaiifoundation.org/resources
- **Annie’s Grants for School Gardens provide funds to purchase gardening tools, seeds, or other needed supplies.** annies.com/giving-back/grants-for-gardens
- **Captain Planet Foundation Grants** support hands-on environmental projects for school and community groups. captainplanetfoundation.org/grants
- **Whole Kids Foundation Grants** support edible education and garden building. wholekidsfoundation.org/programs/school-gardens-grant
- **You can also reach out** to local businesses and vendors for in-kind donations and volunteer support. Invite a Chef to cook with the students or find a Master Gardener in your community to serve as a garden consultant or guest speaker.

BACK POCKET ACTIVITIES

(UNDER 15 MIN)

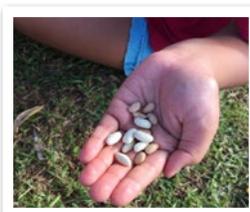


PLANT PART MATCHING GAME

Teaching students about the parts of a plant is crucial to their understanding of plant life cycles. Introduce students to plant parts (seeds, roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) and talk about the role of each plant part. Create a matching game with full-grown plants, seeds, and edible parts. Invite small groups of students (3-5 at a time) to match the plant parts. Encourage students to identify the parts we eat and do not eat. Next, send them out on a scavenger hunt in the garden to look for different plants and their parts.

SEED SAVING

Introduce the value and different techniques of seed saving. Once flowers begin to wither, cut from the stem and dry. Have students remove and dry seeds for future planting. Try out sunflower, basil, cilantro, or beans.



Tip: For small seeds like basil or lettuce, gently rub the whole dry flower in a sheet of folded paper. Shake out the seeds and remove and compost (or press!) flowers. Store seeds in a cool, airtight environment for best germination. Students can also learn about other ways to start plants, such as from cuttings. Examples of plants that grow from cuttings include sweet potato vines, pineapple tops, taro stems, sugarcane stalks, and ti leaf stalks.

COLOR EXPLORATION

Acquire a wide range of paint swatches and cut into individual strips. Talk about how the weather influences plants and what they need. Hand out different color paint swatches and encourage students to search for matching colors in the garden. Show students how to harvest a leaf or petal without damaging the plant. When all students return, create a rainbow of different color plants.

NATURE BRACELETS AND BOOKMARKS

Using a piece of wide duct tape or twisted ti leaves, loosely wrap around student's wrist so that the adhesive is on the outside (if using duct tape). Encourage students to pick flowers, leaves, etc. from all around the garden to stick on their nature bracelets or weave into ti leaf bracelets. Can be modified for bookmarks as well.



GARDEN SCAVENGER HUNT

Give students a list of items in the garden to find and draw... "An edible root," "a pollinator," "a bird home," etc. Get creative and engage the senses!

SOIL SORTING & SEARCHING FOR SOIL FBI

Teach students about the importance of beneficial insects and microorganisms such as the soil "FBI" (fungi, bacteria, and invertebrates) and how they help soil. If you have finished, aerobic compost available, have students harvest and sift. Ask them to name as many creatures as they recognize and talk about beneficial organisms vs. pests.

Food For Thought:

As often as possible, try to involve students in the decision making process in growing their school garden. Encourage them to help create the garden vision, what they will plant, and what kinds of healthy snacks they can prepare. This is a great way to help students gain ownership and pride in their garden.

How to... Start a Garden Club

LONGER ACTIVITIES

(30+ MIN)

BLIND TASTE TEST

Bring a variety of chopped fruits and veggies with enough for each student to have a bite-size taste. Split students into two teams and pick a "Master Taster" from each. Blindfold each student and provide a sample fruit or veggie and see who can name it first. After each round, pass the snack around so all of the students can sample.



Tip: Remind kids of the "No Yuck" rule and use familiar fruits and veggies such as bananas, sweet potato, carrots, strawberries, snap peas. Also ensure that you are aware of any student food allergies or sensitivities before cooking or tasting.

NATURE MASKS AND GARDEN HATS

Print mask templates on firm card stock or for younger students, create hats out of newspaper. Have students cut out masks or make hats and then gather leaves, flowers, seeds, etc. from the garden to use as decorations. Students can paint, draw, glue and decorate.



PLANT PAINT AND DYES

Grow beets! They are fast, versatile, delicious, and make for excellent art projects. Juice, blend, or soak raw beets in water for beautiful magenta paint or dye. Create beet "stamps" or paint directly onto fabric or paper. Try it with 'olena too. This is a great activity for holiday cards!

PLANT ID GAME

Give each student a clipboard with a cutting from the garden (leaves, stems, flowers, etc.). Design a worksheet with plant ID questions like name, edible parts, how it's grown, etc. Leave space to draw a diagram.

"EAT A RAINBOW"

Teach kids about the importance of eating a wide variety of fruits and veggies and how color can provide nutritional clues. Have a student lie down on a large sheet of butcher paper and outline them. Have students use colored markers to create visual representations of how each color helps the body. (Pairs well with Blind Taste Test game).



GARDEN VEGGIE WRAPS

Purchase vietnamese rice paper wraps, tortillas, or large pieces of lettuce. Harvest garden veggies like lettuce, tomatoes, kale, carrots, nasturtiums, etc. Have students thoroughly wash hands and produce. Demonstrate basic knife safety like creating a "bear claw" with their non-dominant hand to protect fingers. Slice veggies into bowls and allow students to create their own wraps. Some students can slice while others create 1-2 sauces or dressings.

GREEN SMOOTHIES

Start a party with smoothies! To make things simple, start with a base of frozen bananas, non-dairy milk, and ice. Add in fruits like guava puree, liliko'i juice, papaya, mango, or frozen berries. Throw in garden produce like mint, basil, and kale. Try to incorporate as many students as possible, harvesting and washing, scooping or peeling fruits, measuring liquids, etc. Smoothie sales can also be fun and profitable fundraiser items. Set up a stand with Garden Club students and offer recipe cards to families.

Easy Green Smoothie Recipe:

Makes 10 sample size servings

- 1 peeled orange
- 2 frozen bananas
- 2-3 slices pineapple rounds
- 1 handful kale, spinach, or other mild, dark greens
- 1 1/2 cup non-dairy milk
- 1/2 cup ice

Blend all ingredients thoroughly to break up greens and enjoy!

More Free Activity Resources:

- ĀINA in Schools curriculum includes garden activities, classroom management tips, food safety guidelines, and essential skills developed in garden education at kokuahawaiifoundation.org/aina/resources
- Nourish Curriculum offers insight on mindful eating and activities at nourishlife.org/teach/curriculum/
- LifeLab Curriculum can be accessed at lifelab.org/store/curriculum/

