

FRESH from the Garden

LAST CALL for the School Garden Summer Institute

[Register by June 30](#) (Limited seats available).

Amy's top 5 reasons YOU should attend the School Garden Summer Institute:

5. Learn management strategies and increase your confidence teaching outside
4. Learn ways to expand your garden or bring the garden into the classroom through hydroponics and vermicomposting
3. Tour Cabarrus County's largest produce farm
2. Get reenergized for the upcoming school year
1. Enjoy an amazing networking and resource sharing opportunity

Get all the details: dates, times, topics, and more [here](#).



Pop-up Farmers Market...for the Car-rider Line

"Pop-up" venues are all the rage. How about a Pop-up Farmers Market using the produce from the school garden? How about locating it next to the car-rider line? A couple weeks ago we gave it a try at two schools and by all accounts it was a huge success. We utilized the car-rider line as our customer base, starting about an hour before dismissal and ending before the line began to move. PHHI provided the tent, some display



containers and moral support, while the schools provided the rest (produce, signage, manpower).

At Pitts School Road Elementary in Concord, students offered a tasting and recipe for kohlrabi apple slaw, to complement the kohlrabi they were selling from their garden. Teacher Erika Currin reports that they made \$106 and while the car-rider line worked well, they hope to host a pop-up market at their next curriculum carnival.

She says, "The kids did a good job taking orders and following the routine we went over, but we had too many students out there at one time."



Jackson Park Elementary's Pop-up Market made \$130, and teacher Alison Craft says, "I was blown away!" They will use the money to add a weather station to the garden. She says, "We have had so many parents and teachers commenting on what a wonderful idea it was and how great our produce was! I thought it was such a great real-world experience for our students and touched on so many standards, from our economics unit on needs and wants, to math with money and adding/subtracting.

The kids have begged to do it again soon, and I agree, I would love to do it again." Next time she hopes to advertise more in advance, create order sheets, and attract parents who are pedestrian pick-ups, not just car-riders.

Amy Bowman, PHHI STEM educator says, "It was so much fun to see how excited the students were to sell their crops. There were several future salesmen in the bunch! My favorite moment was seeing Principal Christopher Smith (Pitts School Road Elementary) take several students back to the garden to harvest MORE strawberries and kohlrabi when we ran out. What a vote of confidence and support!" If you have the crops and a willingness to try something new, this might be a great venture for your class or school. Let us know if you want to try one in the fall, we would love to bring our tents and help out.

Reflections from Amy and Doug:

Some of the benefits we saw:

- Students taking leadership roles
- Parent excitement and increased awareness of the garden
- Opportunity to reinforce the value of the school garden
- Introduction of soft skills to students
- Money raised to support the garden program
- Community provided with fresh produce

Some things to consider:

- Assess your area for the best placement of the market. Consider visibility, safety and traffic flow.
- Advertise ahead of time. Place posters or hand out flyers in the car rider line a few days ahead of time letting parents know what you will be selling and to bring cash.
- Limit the number of students involved to a manageable number (consider short shifts to involve more).
- Have specific jobs for each student.
- Make sure you have a cash box with change and a system for taking money and making change.
- Consider having recipes or even tastings of unusual crops, such as kohlrabi.

- Pair younger students with older students to ensure safety.
- Recruit parent volunteers to help with oversight.
- Choose just a few crops and plant enough to have plenty to sell and a few to keep for tasting.



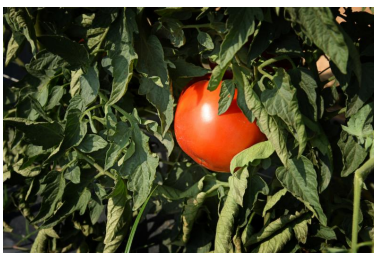
In the Garden Now



Plant

It's time to plant sweet potatoes, which will grow through the summer and be ready to harvest when school starts. Soil temps should be above 65F. Fertilize your soil with an organic fertilizer prior to planting. As soon as you obtain your sweet potato slips you need to get them in the ground. Use a pencil or your finger to poke a hole in the soil, stick the sweet potato slip down in the hole with the broad leaves above the soil line, then gently pinch the hole closed. You will need to water steadily for about a week to establish roots. The leaves may seem wilted for a couple days, but with adequate soil moisture they should root and take off. If it's extra hot, sprinkling over the leaves will help reduce plant stress. Once rooted, watering once or twice a week, depending on temperatures and rainfall, will be sufficient. The vines will cover the bed quickly and reducing weed growth through the summer. Sweet potatoes grow underground and will be ready to dig 90-120 days after planting.

If you are planting a cover crop such as buckwheat you need to broadcast seed now and water until seeds



Harvest

The summer-like temperatures in late May brought the strawberries and cool season crops to season's end. You may still have some root crops, like carrots, in the ground. Be sure to harvest before school ends and share with the class, even if they are small.

If you planted squash, cucumbers or tomatoes in mid-April, be watchful for ready to harvest vegetables. You may have to lift the leaves to spy squash and cukes; cucumbers are often camouflaged, and it's easy to miss one that's ready.

Once you see a baby squash or cucumber, it will be ready to harvest in 2-4 days. Many students may have never experienced the prickly/fuzzy leaf texture of squash and cucumber. Make sure they have the opportunity to use all their senses in the garden.



Maintenance

If you are not planning to have a summer garden, choose one of these three options to be ready to plant when you return to school. Start by removing spent plants and place garden refuse in the compost pile.

1. Plant a cover crop such as buckwheat. Three weeks prior to planting the fall garden, you will work this into the soil so that it can breakdown and enrich the soil.

2. Plant sweet potatoes. They will need minimal care through the summer, they will suppress weeds, and you will have a crop to harvest the first month of school.

3. Completely cover your beds with a tarp or some other material that will block out light and prevent weed growth.

germinate. Prepare your soil by loosening the top 2 to 4 inches of soil with a rake or shovel. Watering once or twice a week once plants are established should provide adequate water for your crop.

Find more School Garden Resources on our website:

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Questions? Contact us!

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