

Garden as Classroom

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- *Inspiration for a Potager food garden in schools*
- *Designing a school garden, while engaging students in hands-on, life-long learning*



Nightingale Elementary School

- Nightingale Elementary is part of the 5 inner-city schools served by **KIDsafe Project**;
- **3 programmers** work during the Summer Break: garden, science and literacy coordinators
- As **Garden Coordinator I** coordinated the school garden at Nightingale Elementary and bring the garden into the classroom, during the school year



Food Security Goals

- **Fostering** community involvement;
- **Growing** food and encouraging healthy eating;
- **Encouraging** awareness of where our food comes from;
- **Inspiring** children to eat their vegetables
- **Introducing** children to hands-on activities such as gardening

Process....

- Developed and implemented the herb garden, then...
- I worked one day per week at the school;
- Meeting with teachers during the lunch hour, to see what topics were up for discussion in the classroom;
- I adapted the program to reach students in Kindergarten to grade six



Fear Factor Food Sampling

- Winter months: a time to do some cutting and chopping with the children.....
- Some examples:
- Grade 2 celebrating Ukrainian New Years...made lazy man's holopsi, using ground tofu, tomatoes, onions and cabbage
- Grade 4's lesson on Salmon...Teriyaki Salmon
- Introduction to Heritage Apples, types and samples
- Potatoes, Tomatoes and Eggplant: ratatouille

Sow seedlings indoors

- Plant tomatoes, and sunflower seeds in February or March.
- Watch them germinate in the classroom.
- Transplant outdoors after hardening off plants and soil temperature is warm.



Getting your Hands Dirty



Key factors: Plan, Design, Implement, Sustain

- Get support from Administration: Principal
- VSB Maintenance approval may be required
- Source funding grants and apply prior to year required
- A Teacher as Champion of the project
- An excited group of student leaders and/or PAC



Guiding Principles and Maintenance

- Look at needs of the students and get them involved
- Consider the intent of the planting as it links to the curriculum
- Set a realistic time-line
- Year round care, following the cycle of the seasons
- Maintenance over the summer: Watering and weeding and feeding
- Befriend the custodian; they know the workings of the grounds at the school...water access, storage for tools etc.
- Good Soil, the foundation for growth
- Engage some neighbourhood support or Service groups like the Master Gardeners

Get the word out: It's fun!

- Celebrate successes along the way
- Publicize events in local newsletters
- Take pictures of the process along the way
- Have snacks at workshops and planting days



Lead with your heart....



Dare to dream!...the end.

