



Why Should Schools Have School Gardens?

“Learning comes alive in a school garden! All subjects can be taught in this dynamic hands-on environment. From reading to science, math to nutrition, it’s all possible.

California Academic Content Standards are growing, too! Everything we know about good teaching is magnified in a school garden: student engagement, meaningful, relevant lessons, use of manipulative, cooperative learning, and exploration and discovery.

There is no better environment than the garden in which to plant the seeds of knowledge, experience the joy of learning, and harvest a bountiful crop of lifelong learners.”
--- Martha Deichler, former Principal, Borrego Springs Elementary



Increased Academic Performance/Higher Test Scores

Numerous studies have proven that garden-based education improves academic performance and some of the strongest academic gains appear to be in the areas of math and science. Overall improvement on standardized achievement tests has been well documented.

- Science achievement of students who participated in a hands-on gardening program was higher than that of students who only engaged in classroom curriculum. (*Klemmer et al. 2005*)
- Participants in a school garden program in California experienced significant gains in overall GPA in math and science, and improvement on a standardized psychosocial questionnaire. (*Murphy 2003*)
- Garden-based learning associated with increased scores in science achievement tests in a controlled study. (*Smith and Mosenbocke 2005*)
- A broad study of 40 schools across the U.S. shows that environment-based education curriculum results in better performance on standardized achievement tests. (*Lieberman & Hoody 1998*)
- Involvement with school nature areas has direct relationship with improved academic performance. (*Bell 2001*)

Educational Resources are Abundant

A Child’s Garden of Standards, a resource that links CA standards to garden activities from various learning guides, downloadable online. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/Ls/nu/he/documents/childsgarden.pdf>

CA School Garden Network, represents a variety of state agencies, private companies, educational institutions and non-profit organizations all dedicated to the mission of creating and sustaining gardens in every willing school in California. The Network serves as a central organization to distribute school garden resources and support throughout the state. <http://californiaschoolgardennetwork.org>

Math in the Garden, features hands-on math activities for grades K-8 to use in the garden.

The Growing Classroom, a comprehensive, easy to use text that supports science.

TWIGS, easy to use text for primary grades that connects growing food and eating to nutrition.

AG in the Classroom, specific lesson plans have been developed for use by primary grades through high school in the areas of language, reading, science and math. All plans and more information are downloadable online. Main goal is to increase understanding of agriculture and where food comes for California’s teachers and students through the CA Curriculum Guidelines for Ag Literacy Awareness. CA Foundation for Ag in the Classroom <http://www.cfaitc.org>

Teachers Like School Gardens Too!

84% Teachers exposed to school gardens think gardens help students learn more effectively.

73% Teachers surveyed think experiential learning in gardens is effective. (*Skelly and Bradley 2000*)