

The Benefits Of Gardening With Children

Children outperformed their peers in every subject when using the environment (e.g. gardens) as an integrated context for learning in 92% of the cases studied. Through hands-on gardening activities, observation, games and exploration children can learn about:

- plant adaptation
- sun, soil and water sciences
- living systems & ecosystems
- natural history
- native species
- measurement, observation & science
- where food comes from
- health and nutrition
- organic gardening
- ...and more



Health Canada states that Canadian children are increasingly sedentary. Gardening is a great way to help children become more active. Gardening is North America’s second most preferred exercise and leisure activity (after walking).

When gardening, children are playing in (and helping sustain) healthy environments. Plants and gardens help contribute to fresh air, improved soil, and cleaner water.

What Teachers and Students Can Do

- start a small garden project at your school
- invite other classes to contribute to the garden -- pool resources and classroom efforts to make the garden and curriculum links a success
- ask local stores for donations to your garden project
- if you can’t create an outdoor garden, start an indoor windowsill garden in your classroom visit one of the 88 community gardens in Toronto
- learn how to identify local native species
- start a worm-bin composter in your classroom – make it a class project and keep track of data like how many worms there are, how much material they eat a week, what they like to eat, etc.



Websites, Books And Other Resources

Programs/Organizations

Children's Eco Programs, Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation

416-392-1329 or 416-338-5055, kidsgrow@toronto.ca, childresecoprograms.ca

Book a visit at the High Park Children's Garden or check out our web-site for activities and resources. A curriculum links guide to gardening and the K-8 Ontario curriculum is available.

Evergreen, School Ground Greening

<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/programs/schools/>

A valuable resource to school garden projects in Toronto and across Canada. Evergreen has produced a number of excellent gardening/outdoor learning resources for schools and teachers.

Toronto Community Garden Network

mail@tcgn.ca, www.tcgn.ca/wiki/wiki.php

The Toronto Community Garden Network is a group working to encourage a healthy Community Gardening movement in the City of Toronto, linking and supporting community gardeners. The network produces a newsletter and has many knowledgeable people in it to help you get started.

TRCA (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority)

<http://www.trca.on.ca/>

Formed in the aftermath of Hurricane Hazel, TRCA has a strong history in watershed management and leadership in applying sustainability practices. In addition to the broad range of programs offered at their conservation areas, TRCA offers overnight learning programs at its educational field centers, the Watershed On Wheels in-classroom programs, and professional development programs for teachers.

Green Thumbs Growing Kids (GTGK)

<http://www.kidsgrowing.ca/>

GTGK helps schools develop gardens and gardening programs. They have many resources and lesson plans for teachers, and can help bring a garden to your school.

Books

- [In the Three Sisters Garden](#), Dennee, JoAnne Vermont: Common Roots Press, 2001.
- [Cultivating a Child's Imagination Through Gardening](#), Jurenka, Nancy Allen and Roseanne J. Blass Englewood, Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press, 1996.
- [Roots, Shoots, Buckets and Boots](#), Lovejoy, Sharon New York: Workman Publishing Co., 1999.
- [The Jumbo Book of Gardening](#), Morris, Karen Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd., 2000.
- [The Butterfly Book](#), Stokes, Donald and Lillian Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1991.

Websites, Books And Other Resources Continued

Websites – Nature & Environmental

- The David Suzuki Foundation – www.davidsuzuki.org
- All About Birds, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology - <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search>
- Resources for Rethinking - <http://www.r4r.ca/>
- Learning for a sustainable Future - <http://www.lsf-lst.ca/>
- Soil Science Education - <http://soil.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- Green Learning - <http://www.greenlearning.ca/>
- The City of Toronto Environmental Portal - <http://www.toronto.ca/environment/index.htm>
- The Children & Nature Network - <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>
- Earth Day Canada - <http://www.earthday.ca/pub/>
- Green Roofs for Healthy Cities - <http://www.greenroofs.org/>
- Canadian Wildlife Federation - <http://cwf-fcf.org/en/>
- The Otesha Project - <http://www.otesha.ca/>

Websites – Garden & Food

- Food for Thought: a Classroom Guide to Agriculture, *Ecological Farmers of Ontario (resource page)* - <http://www.efao.ca>
- Just for Kids, *University of Illinois Extension* - www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/kids/index.html
- TheKidsGarden - www.thekidsgarden.co.uk
- KidsGardening - www.kidsgardening.org
- Learning for a Sustainable Future - www.lsf-lst.ca
- Pollination Canada - www.pollinationcanada.ca
- Seeds of Diversity - www.seeds.ca
- The Great Plant Escape - <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gpe/index.cfm>
- FoodShare - <http://www.foodshare.net/>
- Ecological Farmers of Ontario - <http://www.efao.ca/>
- Toronto Youth Food Policy Council - <http://tyfpc.ca/>
- Wild About Gardening - <http://www.cwf-fcf.org/en/discover-wildlife/gardening/>
- The Growing Schools Garden - <http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk/>
- You Grow Girl - <http://www.yougrowgirl.com/>

