



teacher exercise: **Garden Bed Theme Challenge**

overview

A teacher exercise outlining the steps to develop a thematic edible garden bed design that also supports learning goals of a particular subject area. Edible gardens promote students' affinity for fresh fruits and vegetables. Edible gardens can also be used as the foundation for lessons addressing content and process skills associated with various units of study in all subject areas. This exercise helps guide teachers through this process.

objectives

Teachers will learn:

- to practice the skills necessary to collect the information available in a seed catalogue.
- to introduce the steps involved to create a planting plan that incorporates the characteristics of the plants such that the garden has a cohesive theme that supports learning in a particular subject area.

materials

- Seed Catalogues

scenario

When creating a planting plan for a school garden, it is important to not only know how to grow plants but to focus attention on a theme so that you can develop relevant lesson activities. It is necessary to familiarize yourself with the plants you plan to include to ensure that the plants in the garden grow well together.

You should also consider the plants in relation to a particular unit of study to provide a connection to classroom curricula.

Your principal has requested that each grade level participating in the school garden includes groupings of edible plants that support classroom learning and are distinct from each other.

Your task is to consider the plants that can be included and to focus the learning activities on a particular subject area: ELA, Social Studies, Natural Sciences, or Math.

Complete the following steps to satisfy the request:

- **Create a plant list.** Brainstorm and develop a list of edible plants. Browse seed catalogues to assist you.
- **Begin to consider combinations of plants that can be grown together and relate to a theme.** Consult the "Top 20 School Garden Planting Combinations" Tip Sheet.
- **Identify a subject area that makes the most sense for your grade level** to focus on that supports developing a unit of study that you already address.
- **Create a sequence of lessons that complement the garden theme** and address content and/or process skills of the particular unit of study.



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examples

ELA – Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

Garden – Grow a garden with peanuts, strawberries, and wheat. Create lessons that encourage students to consider the sequence of steps to grow the garden and make the sandwich.

Math – Spring Salad Garden – Grow a spring salad garden. Create lessons that encourage students to measure and count. Prepare a salad dressing to explore proportions and fractions of the ingredients.

Social Studies – Three Sisters Garden – Grow corn, bean, and squash. Create lessons that introduce students to the lifestyle of the Native Americans and the importance of these staple crops of their diet.

Natural Science – Tops and Bottoms

Garden – Grow a variety of plants that features at least one example of each plant part. Create lessons to investigate the parts of a plant and the diversity within each plant part category.