



# tip sheet: **10 Site Assessment Tips**

## overview

It is important to evaluate your school campus to locate the best places for your school garden. School gardens require several infrastructure elements to function, and care should be taken to identify each.

## objectives

### *Participants will learn:*

- how to evaluate your school campus to locate the best places for your school garden.
- to identify infrastructure elements essential to a functioning school garden.

## suggestions

### *Suggested Site Assessment Guidelines:*

**1. Accessible Water Source** – Identify all potential sources for potable water. Gardens require water. A reliable spigot within 100 feet of the furthest spot of the proposed garden location is advised. A variety of irrigation systems can be employed depending on the attention you are able to provide.

**2. Level Footprint** – Consider spaces that afford a level or near level foundation to build your garden. This allows for the straightforward construction of planting beds, reduces soil erosion, and provides accessibility to gardeners.

**3. Safe Access** – Identify locations that are secure and easy to access. Good garden sites offer safe and proximal access for classes and caretakers as well as provide security from garden pests and vandalism. Consider locations with direct sight lines to school entrances and access to vehicle loading/unloading zones for the delivery of materials like compost and mulch.

**4. Good Sun Exposure** – Plants require sunlight and most prefer direct sunlight. Consider locations that afford a minimum of six hours of direct sunlight. Sites with greater direct sun exposure will yield larger and healthier plants.

**5. Space for Accessible Planting Beds** – Consider locations that will allow room for planting beds accessible on all sides. When designing the garden layout, limit bed width to three feet, in order to allow all students ability to reach all planting areas.

**6. Space for Generous Garden Paths** – Identify garden locations that provide sturdy footing and enough space to include generous path widths. When teaching classes in a garden setting, it is important to include spaces to gather, as well as paths that allow students to pass each other without the threat of falling into garden beds.

**7. Sturdy Work Tables** – Consider sighting the garden near existing picnic tables or in a space that can absorb the addition of tables. Tables are useful to many garden projects and helpful when managing groups of children.



# tip sheet: **10 Site Assessment Tips**

## **suggestions (continued)**

### ***Suggested Site Assessment Guidelines (continued):***

**8. Shelter** – Gardens that are near structures that provide cover in the event of inclement weather are recommended. Gazebos, picnic pavilions, tents, etc. offer cover during rain events as well as relief from the sun.

**9. Space for Tool Storage** – Gardens typically generate an inventory of tools and supplies. Including a shed or lockbox to securely store these items, that is near the garden proves beneficial.

**10. Clean Soil** – Appropriate locations should be tested to confirm the planting medium is clean. We recommend soil for both edible and ornamental gardens is tested to ensure the health of all students and stakeholders that come into contact with it.