

DROPS OF KNOWLEDGE FOR RIVERS OF CHANGE



GLOBAL TEACHING
AND LEARNING MATERIAL

A hands-on guide to teaching
and learning about
water, sanitation, hygiene,
and the environment

SWAROVSKI
WATERSCHOOL

ACTIVITY 5.4: PLANTING A SCHOOL GARDEN

School gardens are interactive areas where students can learn by doing. A garden can enhance and build students' values and appreciation for the environment, while strengthening their understanding of the use of water. As students care for their plants every day, they can also learn about different subjects by observing how food is grown and the interdependence between plants, water, trees, birds, and insects, among other important resources and beings of the planet.

Fostering patience can be part of the educational process: some plants take a long time to grow, sometimes years, before they can provide food, shade, or a pleasant environment for learning and playing. Some plants grow more quickly, and vegetable and flower gardens can serve as laboratories where children can learn from an interdisciplinary approach that considers real-life experiences and stimulates participation and action.

Time: 90 minutes to introduce (NOTE: the time for planning and planting a garden seems more time consuming. Could be listed as 4–5 hours/week for setup and 1–2 hours/week for upkeep) / **Thematic Areas:** Science, Health, Horticulture / **Goal for Learning:** Stimulate understanding of the importance of water to all forms of life, and develop appreciation and values related to caring for local environments and the planet.



Materials: Seeds / Organic matter / Shovel / Soil / Hole digging tool

ACTIVITY STEPS:

- 1 Decide who will be responsible for the garden. At first, it can be an experienced teacher; she or he will then gradually engage a group of students to take responsibility for building up and caring for the garden.
- 2 List the tools, equipment, seeds, and seedlings that will be needed. The cost need not be high, and it is always better to start a small garden with the possibility of expanding it in the future. The plantings and size of the garden will also depend on the available space.

- 3 Find the best place for starting the garden. It is very important to consider access to water: watering is one of the main activities for garden maintenance.
- 4 Decide what plants to grow, always considering space and climate. Children should participate in the decision of what to grow, but also be sure to choose plants that are easy to cultivate. (Note: You might want to plant a tree to see how much longer it takes to grow versus a particular flower or vegetable.)



- 5 Set a schedule for who will perform what tasks. Children can maintain the garden, and tasks can be divided among different groups. School gardens should be supported by the school director, teachers, parents, and the community in order to be a great success.
- 6 Prepare the soil to receive the plants, always considering organic approaches.
- 7 Plant seeds and saplings, considering the appropriate distance between them. Keep a timeline of growth benchmarks, such as the first sprout, the first flower, and the first full plant, vegetable, etc.

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OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION:

Talk about why it is important to water the garden and discuss with students the best timeline for watering (daily, twice a day, every two days) as required to keep the plants green and healthy.

Brainstorm the connection between caring for the garden and other parts of our lives.



SCHOOL GARDEN IN CHINA

ACTIVITY 5.4



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

ANIA (Association for Children and Their Environment), Peru,
www.aniaorg.pe

FAO, Setting Up and Running a School Garden: A Manual for Teachers, Parents and Communities, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2005. Available in web and PDF format at: www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0218e/A0218E01.htm

School Garden Wizard, United States Botanic Garden and Chicago Botanic Garden, <http://schoolgardenwizard.org>