



# Youth Climate Action Grants

## Project Template: School Food Garden

This template can help you get started. Feel free to change it and add your own ideas!

### Project Overview

Create a school food garden where students can grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs while learning about food, climate change and the environment.

Students will work together to plan, build, and care for a food garden at their school. They will learn how growing local food can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen food security, and support more climate resilient communities.

Students will share what they learn through garden tours, signs, presentations and other activities that encourage others to support local and sustainable food.

### Why This Project Matters

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of weather events like storms, droughts and hot weather, which can make it harder to grow food. Growing food close to where people live can reduce pollution from transportation, help communities become more prepared for climate change, and teach people about healthy and sustainable food choices.

### Project Goals

Students will:

- Learn about sustainable food systems and climate change.
- Understand how growing local food can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build community resilience.
- Plan, build and care for a food garden.
- Build gardening, teamwork, and leadership skills.
- Teach others about local food and climate action.

### Project Results

By the end of the project, students will:

- Create a food garden at their school.
- Create a plan to care for the garden.
- Grow and harvest fruits, vegetables, and/or herbs.
- Create signs and/or learning materials about food and climate action.
- Engage students, staff, families, and community members.



- Share what they learned with others.

## Data Collection

Students may collect and track:

- Photos of the project before, during and after the garden is built.
- The size of the garden and/or number of garden beds.
- The number and types of plants grown.
- The amount of food harvested.
- The number of students, staff, and community members who took part.
- Comments, stories or storeys from participants.

## What You'll Do

### Get Organized

- Create a project team and choose a staff supervisor.
- Give each team member a role.
- Decide what you want the project to achieve.
- Work with school staff to choose a place for the garden. TDSB projects planting directly in the ground may need a Viability Review.
- Create a project timeline.

### Learn and Explore

- Learn how local food can reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Learn about food security and climate change.
- Explore composting, sustainable gardening practices and other ways to reduce food waste.
- Research which plants will grow best in your garden.
- Learn about garden care and plan to care for the garden over the summer.

### Record Your Starting Point

- Take photos and videos of the area before planting.
- Measure the garden space and record information.

### Build Your Garden

- Gather materials such as soil, tools, seeds and plants.
- Prepare garden beds and planting areas.
- Plant fruits, vegetables and/or herbs.
- Install educational signs or plant markers.
- Set up a watering, weeding and maintenance schedule.



## Care for the Garden

- Water, weed, and care for plants throughout the growing season.
- Watch and record plant growth.
- Record how much food is harvested.
- Track student and community involvement.

## Share and Celebrate

- Share your project through assemblies, newsletters, posters, or social media.
- Give garden tours, host workshops, or host community events.
- Invite students, families, and community members to help care for the garden.
- Reflect on what you learned and what could be improved.

## Suggested Project Timeline

| Time     | Activities                                                                                                      |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 weeks  | Planning, choosing team roles, selecting a garden site, researching, designing the garden and getting approvals |
| 2 weeks  | Prepare the garden area and planting fruits, vegetables and/or herbs                                            |
| 12 weeks | Watering, weeding, caring for the garden and collecting information                                             |
| 2 weeks  | Harvesting food, educational activities, outreach, and community engagement                                     |
| 1 week   | Reflecting on the project and sharing results                                                                   |

## Suggested Project Supplies

- Fruit, vegetable, and herb seeds or starter plants
- Soil and compost
- Raised garden beds, stock tanks, or planters
- Garden signs and plant labels
- Seed-starting supplies (pots, trays, labels)
- Watering supplies (hoses, watering cans, buckets)
- Gardening tools and safety equipment (shovels, trowels, gloves)

## Sample Project Budget

| Budget Item                   | Description                                                        | Amount        |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Materials/Tools/Equipment     | Fruit, vegetable, and herb seeds, seedlings, and starter plants    | \$250         |
| Materials/Tools/Equipment     | Soil, compost, and mulch                                           | \$150         |
| Materials/Tools/Equipment     | Raised garden bed, stock tank, or planters                         | \$250         |
| Materials/Tools/Equipment     | Gardening tools and safety equipment (trowels, gloves, hand tools) | \$100         |
| Materials/Tools/Equipment     | Watering supplies (watering cans, hose, buckets)                   | \$50          |
| Education/Awareness Materials | Garden signs, plant labels, learning materials                     | \$100         |
| Barrier Reduction             | Snacks and refreshments for participants                           | \$100         |
| <b>Total Budget</b>           |                                                                    | <b>\$1000</b> |

## Project Team Roles

*Project Coordinator* – keeps the project organized, plans meetings, and communicates with school staff.

*Activity Lead* – helps lead garden activities and makes sure everyone works safely.

*Data Collection Lead* – Takes photos, records student and community participation and records project results.

*Education & Outreach Lead* – shares information through newsletters, posters, social media, or invites students to get involved.

*Reporting Lead* – helps the team share what they learned through reports or presentations.

## Safety and Accessibility

- Wear gloves when gardening.
- Make sure an adult is present during project activities.
- Wear sunscreen and drink plenty of water when working outside.
- Use tools safely and store when not using.
- Ask an adult for help with power tools or heavy equipment.
- Consider accessibility when planning the garden, including paths and raised beds where possible.

## Reflection Questions

- Why is it important for people to have access to healthy food?



- What did you learn about where food comes from and how it is grown?
- How can growing local food help communities adapt to climate change?
- What new skills did you learn?
- What challenges did your team face, and how did you solve them?

### **More Project Ideas**

- Host a bioblitz to identify pollinators visiting the garden.
- Hold a seed saving workshop.
- Organize a seed swap.
- Invite a guest speaker to teach gardening skills.
- Host a cooking or food-preservation workshop.
- Learn how plant-based foods can reduce environmental impacts.
- Learn about composting and reducing food waste.
- Add native plants to the garden.
- Learn about native edible plants.
- Explore about indoor gardening.
- Create a recipe book using local foods.

### **Project Resources**

- [TDSB School Garden Resources](#)
- [City of Toronto - How to Buy and Grow Local Food](#)
- [Cooking Up Local Food Literacy: Tips for Schools](#)
- [Get Growing Toronto](#)
- [Food and Climate Change](#)