



Youth Climate Action Grants

Project Template: Native Plant Garden and BioBlitz

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

Project Overview

Create a native plant garden and learn how plants help wildlife, nature, and our climate.

Students will work together to plan, plant, and care for a garden using plants that naturally grow in their area. Before and after planting, students will take part in a BioBlitz to find and record the plants, insects, birds, and other wildlife found in the garden.

As the garden grows, students will watch how wildlife visiting the garden changes over time. They will learn how native plants provide food and shelter for wildlife. They will also learn how gardens and other green spaces can help communities adapt to climate change. Students will share what they learn with their school and encourage others to protect nature.

Why This Project Matters

Native plants provide food and homes for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Healthy ecosystems help keep our air and water clean, reduce flooding, cool neighbourhoods and support healthy communities. Planting native species helps support biodiversity and makes communities stronger in the face of climate change.

Project Goals

Students will:

- Learn how native plants help local wildlife.
- Learn how healthy ecosystems help communities adapt to climate change.
- Create habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.
- Learn how to record and share plant and animal observations.
- Build leadership, teamwork, and environmental stewardship skills.
- Encourage others to care for ecosystems and the plants and animals in them.

Project Results

By the end of the project, students will:

- Create a native plant garden at their school.
- Create a plan to care for the garden.
- Grow native flowers, grasses and/or shrubs.
- Complete a BioBlitz before and after planting.



- Make a list of plants and wildlife found in the area.
- Create signs and/or learning materials about native plants, wildlife, and climate change.
- 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 number of plants, insects, birds, and other wildlife seen before and after planting the garden.
- The number and types of native plants grown.
- The number of invasive plants that were removed (if any).
- The number of plants that survive after several months.
- The number of students, staff, and community members who take part.

What You'll Do

Get Organized

- Create a project team and choose a teacher or 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 about biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and climate change.
- Learn how native plants help pollinators and local wildlife.
- Explore how native plants can help cool cities and absorb rainwater.
- Learn how plants and soil can store carbon dioxide.

Plan the Garden

- Check the sunlight, soil, drainage and available space.
- Research which plants will grow best in your garden.
- Choose plants that provide food and shelter for wildlife during spring, summer, and fall.



Conduct a BioBlitz

Before planting:

- Use tools such as iNaturalist to identify plants and wildlife in the garden.
- Record plants, insects, birds and other wildlife you find.
- Take photos and/or videos of the area.
- Save your notes so you can compare them later.

Build Your Garden

- Gather materials such as soil, tools, seeds, and plants.
- Prepare the garden beds and planting areas.
- Plant native flowers, grasses, shrubs, and other plants.
- Add compost and mulch if needed.
- Install educational signs or plant labels.

Create a Garden Care Plan

Make a plan that includes:

- Watering schedules.
- Summer care.
- Weed control.
- Garden cleanup during different seasons.
- Replacing plants if needed.

Monitor Biodiversity

After the garden has had time to grow:

- Complete another BioBlitz.
- Record the plants and animals you see.
- Compare your results with the first BioBlitz.
- Take photos and notes to show changes over time.

Share and Inspire

- Share your findings at school events.
- Lead garden tours for students and the community.
- Create posters, displays, videos or newsletters.
- Encourage other students to help care for the garden.
- Celebrate what your team achieved.

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 plant the native plants
1 week	Complete the first BioBlitz, record wildlife notes, and take site photos before planting
12 weeks	Watering, weeding, caring for the garden and collecting information
2 weeks	Learning activities, outreach, and community engagement
1 week	Complete a second BioBlitz, review and compare results, and record changes
1 week	Share findings through presentations, displays, or garden tours, and celebrate the project's success

Suggested Project Supplies

- Native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and seeds
- Soil, compost, and mulch
- Garden beds or raised bed materials
- Shovels, trowels, gloves, watering cans, hoses, and buckets
- Seed starting trays and pots
- Clipboards and notebooks
- Materials for signs, displays and posters

Sample Project Budget

Budget Item	Description	Amount
Materials/Tools/Equipment	Native plants and 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 project participants	\$100
	Total Budget	\$1000



Project Team Roles

Project Coordinator – keeps the project organized, schedules meetings, and helps the team stay on track.

Garden and Stewardship Lead – helps organize planting, garden care, and maintenance activities.

Biodiversity Monitoring Lead – leads BioBlitz activities and records wildlife observations.

Education & Outreach Lead – creates learning materials and shares project information with the school community.

Reporting Lead - takes photos, tracks participation, and helps record project results.

Safety and Accessibility

- Wear gloves when handling soil and plants.
- Make sure an adult is present during activities.
- Ask for help when lifting heavy items.
- Avoid planting near busy roads, driveways, or steep slopes.
- Make sure everyone know their role and what they're doing.
- Keep walkways clear to prevent trips and falls.
- Wear appropriate clothing, sunscreen and closed-toe shoes.
- Drink water and take breaks when working outside.
- Use raised beds and pathways when possible so more people can take part.

Reflection Questions

- What did you learn about native plants and wildlife?
- Why is biodiversity important?
- How can native plants help communities adapt to climate change?
- Did you notice changes in wildlife after planting the garden?
- What skills did you develop during the project?
- How can your school continue caring for the garden?
- What would you do differently next time?

More Project Ideas

- Hold a BioBlitz every year to track changes in plants and wildlife in the garden.
- Create a student garden club to care for the garden.
- Host a native plant giveaway or seed exchange.
- Create pollinator habitat features such as bee hotels or bird-friendly plantings.
- Invite guest speakers to teach students about plants and wildlife.
- Lead community garden tours and nature walks.



Project Resources

- [TDSB School Garden Resources](#)
- [Educational Gardening Resources](#)
- [City of Toronto – Helping Bees & Native Pollinators](#)
- [TRCA Native Plants Program](#)
- [Toronto Nature Stewards – Plant Natives](#)
- [Toronto Public Library – Our Fragile Planet Program](#)
- [City of Toronto – Native Plants, Trees & Shrubs Finder](#)