



Community Chat: Plan Your Program! Notes

2/21/24

- **What do you use for planting guides to know what plants are best for your region and/or to know when to plant? What are your favorite plants to grow with kids? How do you pick crops that align with your program schedule?**
 - <https://www.almanac.com/gardening/planting-calendar>
 - <https://awaytogarden.com/when-to-start-seeds-calculator/>
 - <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/home-vegetable-gardening-in-washington-home-garden-series>
 - Local nursery or extension office for planting advice
 - Plant quick growing veggies, like radishes
 - Succession planting: green onions, lettuce, radishes, snap beans
 - Potatoes
 - Three sisters garden
 - Develop programs around themes (gets kids and adults excited) - e.g. pollinators, recipe gardens (pizza gardens, ketchup garden)
- **Who maintains the gardens the students plant, and how do you prevent deer, rabbits, etc, from eating them?**
 - Summer - families sign up (sign up genius); 1 family/week to maintain and harvest; "Summer Stewards"
 - When working with teachers at multiple schools, provide a list of "Have to do, Nice to do, To keep students engaged"
 - Fences work best
- **How can you involve parents?**
 - Inviting families to give input on which plants the plants they would like to see students grow in the garden; foods with cultural connections
 - Participate as "Summer Stewards"
 - Host seasonal work parties
 - Google spreadsheet as a shared place for participants to make note of when they might need help with their plots, make note of what they're harvesting that week so others can see
- **How can you involve kids in garden planning and help students feel ownership of the garden?**
 - Connect garden lessons with curriculum - even subjects beyond science; for example, provide a lesson for 3rd gr students to practice multiplication by planning out the garden with the beans that require 2" spacing and tomatoes that

require 12" spacing. How many bean plants can be planted in this 8'x4' bed, how many tomatoes can fit, etc... (Math in the Garden curriculum available from Kids Gardening referenced)

- Give each kid their own section of the garden (can be small like 1 square foot) and let them plant that section and maintain it
- **Tips for gardening with young kids (under 5)**
 - Plan for time to dig, play with water, practice walking with watering cans, generally get comfortable with the garden and tasks before having them do anything specific
 - Sprinkle flour on the weeds to help kids know what to pull
- **What to do for programming and planting if you have a limited amount of time (e.g. an 8 week program or shorter)?**
 - Radishes, spinach (short growing season and great cool season crops)
 - Start plants with a longer growing time (e.g. tomatoes) in 5 gallon buckets and kids can take these home after the program is done
 - Junior Master Gardener has short-term activities, Pollinator Patch activities from Cabot
 - Bring in guest speakers
 - Do art projects (e.g. stepping stones)
 - Start plants in milk jugs if it's too cold to direct sow or plant outside yet
- **Planting infrastructure ideas on a low budget**
 - Large barrels cut in half
 - Tires
 - Pallets (ask local businesses if they have any)
 - Straw bales
 - Wood beds in high humidity areas might break down faster - consider metal beds
- **Other tidbits shared**
 - When planting carrots, Amber mentioned having success with students planting pelleted carrot seeds (better spacing, no need to thin)
 - Can also use shakers (e.g. spice jars) for kids to plant small seeds (mix seeds with some soil in the container)
 - Incorporate art into the garden
 - Seed saving - partner with library to gather seeds and plant
 - Have participants bring food and snacks potluck-style
 - [Landscape Design for Youth Gardening course](#)
 - Ask master gardener and extension offices if they know where to get discounts on supplies