

Growing Schools Programme



Concern that young people have become distanced from nature has increased in recent years, with many not making the connection between the food they see in supermarkets and the land that produces it. This combined with a lack of understanding or interest in food and what makes a healthy diet, means pupils struggle to understand the interdependence between urban and rural environments and the countryside, wildlife and people it sustains.

Growing Schools is a government funded programme tasked to address this issue. Its principal aim is to encourage, support and inspire all schools (nursery, primary, secondary and special) to harness the full potential of the living world as a cross-curricular teaching and learning resource, both within and beyond the school grounds. The programme focuses particularly on food, farming and environmental issues and on ensuring pupils are given first-hand experience in the outdoor classroom.



The Growing Schools Garden

If you are a teacher looking for further inspiration and training why not visit the Growing Schools Garden. The garden aims to encourage schools to harness the full potential of their own school grounds as a learning resource.

The garden demonstrates how barren playgrounds can be transformed into exciting and welcoming green spaces. The design incorporated the ideas from 21 schools around the country as well as features they had made and plants the pupils had grown from seed.

Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools were all represented in the garden; some large, some small; some rural, some urban; some from prosperous areas, others from areas of acute deprivation. Common to them all was a real enthusiasm and commitment to outdoor learning and enormous creativity in the use of their own outdoor spaces at school.

It was a huge hit with the public, and received massive media attention. The Royal Horticultural Society judges, declared it an inspiration to young people, and awarded it

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a prestigious silver-gilt medal. It provided an excellent example, for teachers, pupils, governors, parents and the general public alike, of what schools can achieve, regardless of location, budget or resources.

To visit the garden or find out about training courses, please contact:

**Growing Schools Garden Co-ordinator, Environmental Curriculum Centre,
77 Bexley Road, Eltham, London SE9 2PE Tel: 020 8294 5864.**

Fax: 020 8294 5864 or e-mail growingschoolsgarden@widehorizons.org.uk

The Growing Schools programme will be launching a new garden at this year's Hampton Court Flower Show in July 2007. The garden will be designed by Chris Beardshaw, TV & Radio garden designer. The key themes will be food growing, health & wellbeing and culture/heritage. After the show the garden will be moved to a permanent site at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

For more information on the gardens mentioned above and for a wealth of resources and places to visit go to the Growing Schools Website

www.Teachernet.gov.uk/Growingschools

