



LEARNING GARDEN TOUR

6TH THROUGH 8TH GRADES

KEY

In this activity, students will...

UNDERSTANDINGS

- become familiar with Learning Garden vocabulary and tasks.
- be able to identify what plants need to grow.
- be able to identify six plants growing in the Learning Garden.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- Prep at least three activity stations:
 - Bed Preparation: compost, fertilizer, bucket or bag for weeds
 - Seeding: seasonally appropriate seeds for planting
 - Transplanting: seasonally appropriate seedlings for planting
 - Watering: watering can or upcycled watering cans
 - Thinning: a clean container for thinned (or harvested) crops
 - Harvesting: a clean container for harvested crops
- Research six plants you want to highlight during the tour
- Familiarize yourself with the basics of what plants need to grow L.A.W.N. (light, air, water, nutrients)

TEACHER BACKGROUND

In order to survive and thrive, plants (just like humans) have basic needs that must be met. All plants need food, water, a place to live, and optimal temperature to grow and reproduce. These needs can be summarized by the acronym L.A.W.N., light, air, water, and nutrients.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome your students to the Learning Garden. Let them know that today they will be familiarizing themselves with the Learning Garden and learning a few garden-based tasks.

Student will first take a self-guided tour of the learning garden. Let the students know that in order to familiarize themselves with the Learning Garden, they will complete a 5-minute self-guided observation tour. Ask the students to think about the following questions while they are making observations:

1. **What do plants need to grow?** (light, air, water, and nutrients)
2. **What is in the soil to help plants grow?** (nutrients – nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, worms and other helpful organisms)
3. **Where do plants get water from?** (rain and your schools water source)



4. What plants are growing; do you recognize any?

Review the observation questions from above.

Take students on a 5-minute teacher-led tour and identify six plants growing in your Learning Garden.

Slowly walk around the garden and highlight six plants, say them loud and clear as you point and pause. Have students repeat the plant names as they follow you around the garden.

Ask students if they have ever eaten any of these fruits or veggies before. If students have eaten these fruits and vegetables before, ask them to describe the dish(es) in which they were found.

ACTIVITY

Let to students know that next we will review three different tasks that can be done in the Learning Garden. After the task review, break students into groups. Each group should spend about 5 minutes at each station completing and modeling the task. Rotate each group through the three tasks. As the teacher, consider rotating from group to group as needed.

Based on the needs of your Learning Garden, choose at least three of the stations below for student rotation. Big Green provides seasonal seeds and seedlings for your Learning Garden. In addition, your resource binder contains more information about the other stations.

Station One: Bed Preparation

- Demonstrate how to properly prepare a bed for planting. This may include removing weeds, lightly turning over the soil with your hands in the bed and applying compost or organic fertilizers.

Station Two: Seeding

- Demonstrate how to properly seed a selected seed (of your choice). Show the seed packet and quickly review the seed spacing and depth information. Plant seed(s) accordingly.

Station Three Transplanting

- Demonstrate how to properly transplant a seedling (of your choice). Review the seedling tag which should include information on spacing and plant depth. Plant seedling(s) accordingly.



Station Four: Watering

- Demonstrate how to top water with a watering can. Show a thorough water of each plant in one garden bed as well as watering the soil in between all of the plants.

Station Five: Thinning

- Demonstrate how to properly thin various crops. Thinning is an important step in small scale gardening and allows for an early harvest and room for larger plants to grow.

Station Six: Harvesting

- Demonstrate how to properly harvest various crops that are ready to be harvested. Be sure students are using clean containers and wash their hands prior to harvesting.

CONCLUSION

Have students share key parts of the activity and review the Key Understandings.

Emphasize the importance of watering our garden.

