



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD COUNCIL



Westland MS



Rock Creek Forest ES



Flower Hill ES - raised bed

## The Benefits of School Gardens

### EDUCATIONAL IMPACTS

Schools with school gardens have seen standardized test scores increase significantly\*, with particularly large increases in science\*\*

Provides multi-sensory, hands-on experiences that engage students with different learning styles \*\*

School gardens have been shown to boost kids' interest in school and encourage a sense of community\*

The hands-on nature of gardens improves social skills and encourages students to work better in groups\*\*

Students have the opportunity to learn where their food comes from and learn about good nutrition\*

\*[realschoolgardens.org](http://realschoolgardens.org)

\*\*[kidsgardening.org](http://kidsgardening.org)

*Raised beds are a great way to make the garden handicap accessible!*

Raised beds are above ground containers usually made of wood or stone. After filling the structures with soil you'll be ready to plant!

Montgomery County Food Council  
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806-395-5593 - [mocofoodcouncil.org](http://mocofoodcouncil.org)

### CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

**MATH:** Students can draw maps, take measurements and collect data; calculate volume, perimeter and area of garden

**ENGLISH, SOCIAL STUDIES:** Students can learn about crops and agricultural practices in different cultures and time periods

**SCIENCE:** Students can study plant structure, pollinators, photosynthesis and life cycles



Flower Hill ES

### FUNDING & GRANTS

[Kids Gardening Grants](#)

[Whole Kids Foundation](#)

[Education Outside](#)

[Annie's Grants for School Gardens](#)

[Youth Garden Grant](#)

[Lowe's Toolbox for Education](#)

[Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation](#) (grants announced in January and due in March)

### NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

Provides an opportunity for hands-on learning that may lead to healthier eating habits

Provides students with the opportunity to learn about health and nutrition

Increases fruit and vegetable intake

Improves attitude towards good nutrition and environmental sustainability

Encourages physical activity

### RESOURCES

[MCPS Gardens on School Grounds](#)

[REAL School Gardens](#)

[GreenKids - Audubon](#)

[USDA School Gardening Resources](#)

[UMD Extension](#)

You can find the electronic version of this flyer at:  
[mocofoodcouncil.org/food-literacy/](http://mocofoodcouncil.org/food-literacy/)  
to access clickable links.



## Further Questions Answered

Gardens seem **expensive** and we don't have the **resources** to implement one.  
What can we do?

All you need to plant a garden is **soil, sunlight** and **seeds**. Containers don't have to be new and raised beds can be constructed with simple, untreated lumber. There are plenty of **grants** and funding opportunities for establishing school gardens, including for materials and tools. Other sources of income might include donations and fundraising events.



What do I need to start a garden?

**To build:** containers (lumber for raised beds, containers for container gardens), compost, soil-less potting mix and seeds.

**To maintain:** gardening tools, hoses, and mulch and of course, a dedicated workforce: parents, teachers and staff will play a big role in aiding the students to maintain the garden.

A garden is too much commitment.  
Who will take care of the garden?

Parents, teachers, staff, and students can collectively care for the garden. Many PTAs incorporate a **Garden Committee** into their leadership structure. Teachers interested in incorporating the garden into their lesson plans can help as well. Eventually, schools might fully **integrate gardens into specific courses**, in which case those teachers and students can be responsible for the garden.

Who will take care of it in the summer?

Many schools strategically plant **fall and spring crops**, such as sugar snap peas, salad greens, radishes, herbs, spinach and garlic, to be planted and harvested during the school year. If planting summer crops, parent and student volunteers, dedicated PTA members, and/or staff can create a **watering, weeding, and harvesting schedule**. Summer camps taking place at your school may be excited at the opportunity to help out and eat some of the harvest.

Will a garden attract unwanted pests?

Gardens can attract rabbits and deer, which can be deterred with chicken wire and other fencing. Crop-specific insect pests can be repelled using select herbs and other **companion planting** techniques. Nasturtiums, marigolds and chrysanthemums repel insect pests, add color and can attract **beneficial insects**.