

# Designing Your School Garden

## Trainer Outline

### **Section Theme**

This section addresses the elements of design for a school garden.

Participants will

- Explore a garden site via a scavenger hunt to discover basic garden elements.
- Review images of other garden sites for comparison.
- Then, as school teams, consider their own garden sites and identify what elements they have and what elements they wish to add or enhance.
- Begin to design the layout of their school garden.

### **Logistics**

*Time:* 45 minutes

*Location:* In the garden followed by table work, either indoors or out

*Workshop goals addressed:*

- Become familiar with design elements of educational gardens
- Have an initial plan for their school garden program

*Handouts:*

- Garden Design Scavenger Hunt
- Sample Simple Garden Map
- Sample Complex Garden Map
- Instructional School Garden Elements
- Garden Bed Types (from the Soil and Planting Section)

*Gardens for Learning pages:*

- Designing Your School Garden, 39 – 47

*Web Resources*

- Check web resources on Designing Your School Garden at [www.csgn.org/csystg](http://www.csgn.org/csystg)

*Materials:*

- Garden Design powerpoint or same images in accessible hard copy format
- Blank graph paper, pencils, rulers
- Optional: clip boards and measuring tapes
- Optional: additional sample maps from your region

## ***Garden Design Scavenger Hunt***

(Small group activity)

Handouts: Garden Design Scavenger Hunt, Sample Simple Garden Map, Sample Complex Garden Map

Gather participants in a circle in the garden. Explain that this section allows individuals or school teams to identify basic educational garden elements and consider which they want to include as they begin to plan the design of their own school garden.

- Divide your group into school teams or mixed small groups to explore the garden using the Garden Design Scavenger Hunt.
- Assign different starting points in the scavenger hunt list for each team so that the teams are not all exploring the same areas at the same time.
- Trainers should circulate in the garden to point out areas of the garden and briefly answer any questions that arise.
- Come back together and share points of discovery.
- Review the Sample Garden Maps. Can they find scavenger hunt items on these maps? Are there others they saw or would include?

## ***More Garden Design Ideas***

(Discussion)

Remind groups that they need to first consider these most basic issues in garden site design or development. The following concepts are explained in depth on pages 42-44 of *Gardens for Learning*:

- Where is the water source?
- What is the pattern for sunlight and shade through the seasons?
- Are there prevailing winds that impact potential sites?
- What is known about soil quality that might impact site choice or bed design?

Next, use the Garden Design powerpoint to show a wide variety of design ideas and elements from other educational gardens. Emphasize diversity of good choices available to school garden programs. The point is to provide examples, variety, and inspiration. If group size or other logistics make using a powerpoint for this section inappropriate, consider sharing the powerpoint images as laminated cards, on a bulletin board, or in a photo album.

## ***Designing the Garden Site***

(Team planning session)

Handouts: Sample Garden Maps; Instructional School Garden Elements; additional garden maps (optional); Garden Bed Types Handout from Keep it Growing section

### **Your School Garden Elements**

School teams work together in small groups of between three and six people. Team members start by filling out the Instructional School Garden Elements worksheet. This process generates a good opening discussion on what they already have and what they most want to add to their site.

### **Developing a Simple Garden Map (Optional)**

If there is time within the workshop, teams can move on to the garden design process. If not, this can be the next step for groups once they are back at their school sites.

Teams outline the task of making a simple garden map for their school garden. Refer them again to the “Sample Garden Map” or to other resources that include model garden maps with ideas to help them achieve the level of detail and preciseness they want in their own garden. If they already have some elements of a garden in place, they can start with those and then add in location and rough dimensions for elements they want to add.

Emphasize that this doesn’t have to be exact on the first draft. An initial step may be to choose the elements they will start with and place them all on a map. A map of their garden space, even if very simple, gives their school team a tool that will be used repeatedly in future garden planning efforts and events.

Trainers circulate during small group work to answer questions, offer suggestions, etc.

## ***Wrap-up***

(Large group sharing)

Trainer facilitates one or more groups sharing one new garden design element idea with the larger group. Remind all teams that these design efforts can involve children in different ways and at different stages.