

**Important Note:** This activity was developed for the original Green Lunchroom Challenge program, a voluntary pledge program for K-12 schools to improve the sustainability of their food service



operations. The project was coordinated by the [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center Technical Assistance Program](#) with funding from US EPA Region 5.

The following page(s) represent the content of this activity as it appeared on the original project web site, complete with available points and instructions for submitting documentation. **The project is no longer funded and as of June 2018 schools may no longer submit activity documentation to earn points and recognition as described.** The activity is presented for your information to guide your organization's sustainability efforts.

If your school or district implements the suggested activity and wishes to share its experiences, please email [Joy Scrogum](#). Your story may be incorporated into a blog post on this web site, the main ISTC site, or shared on social media to foster networking and inspiration among peer institutions.

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# Have students help maintain a school garden to provide fresh seasonal produce on-demand

**Activity Category:** Food Sourcing

**Activity:** Have students help maintain a school garden to provide fresh seasonal produce on-demand

**Rationale:** School gardens can increase interest in and preference for eating fruits and vegetables among students, which is important to food waste reduction goals. Involving students in the process of maintaining a garden can further encourage a respect for the time, effort, and resources involved with food production, while also providing hands on lessons in biology, ecology, botany, nutrition, etc. Additional benefits can include increased respect for nature, increased science achievement scores, and improved social skills and behavior to name a few.



Photo from USDA flickr account,  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/15866713021>

**Activity Description:** Work with teachers and administrators to get a class or club involved in a school garden—even if that “garden” is an indoor container garden. For the purposes of this activity, the garden may take the form of traditional garden plots in the school yard, container gardening (indoor or outdoor), window boxes, or a rooftop garden. This activity may involve a previously established garden or one established or expanded after you signed up for the Challenge. **While students may be involved in the establishment or expansion of a garden for other Challenge activities in this activity category, this particular category requires that students be regularly involved with garden maintenance, distinct from actions taken to establish or expand the garden.**

**Earn Challenge Points (150 points):** To earn points for this activity, write a brief description (1-3 pages) of your school garden and how students have been involved in maintaining it. Include whether the maintenance is part of a class, club, or other offering, and how many students are involved. Note any evidence or observations you may have related to positive impacts on student attitudes toward produce or waste reduction. Additionally, submit **ONE** of the following:

-  If students have been asked to keep a journal, log, or submit some other form of report in association with this activity, please include 2-4 pages of scanned examples (this will not count toward the page limit on the description).
-  Provide 1-2 images that show students working in the garden.

**Your description plus either assignment examples or photos should be put together into one Word or PDF document, not to exceed 7 pages in length.** Email this document to Joy Scrogum at [jscrogum@illinois.edu](mailto:jscrogum@illinois.edu).

#### Resources:

-  [Research Supporting the Benefits of School Gardens](#)
-  [The Edible Schoolyard Project](#)
-  [School Gardening](#)
-  [University of Illinois Extension: Garden at School](#)
-  [National School Garden Network](#)
-  [KidsGardening.org Garden Resources](#)
-  [Serving School Garden Produce in the Cafeteria](#)
-  [Illinois Farm to School Network: School Garden Resources](#)
-  [Kitchen Community: Classroom Resources](#)

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