

NHSA & Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation's GroMoreGood Garden Grant Program

How Gardening Combats Food Insecurity - February 23, 2023



Webinar Agenda

- Welcome
- Growing Food Gardens— KidsGardening
- Grantee Spotlight— Acelero Freehold Head Start
- Grantee Spotlight— Verner Center for Learning
- Closing Q&A

Welcome

This webinar series is a collaboration between NHSA, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation and KidsGardening to inspire and support the growth of garden programs for young children.

For more information, visit:

<https://nhsa.org/gromoregood-garden-giants/>





About the Partners



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION



Poll Question #1

- Who is on the webinar today?
 - Early Childhood Educators and Staff
 - Program Managers/Directors
 - Curriculum Specialists or Engagement
 - Parents/Parent Policy Council
 - Other

Poll Question #2

How many of you have gardened with young children either at school or at home?

- Currently gardening in an ECE setting
- Led garden activities in an ECE setting in the past
- Gardened at home with young children
- Gardened, but never gardened with young children before
- Never gardened or gardened with young children

Growing Food Gardens

Sarah Pounders
*Education Specialist,
KidsGardening*



Benefits of a Food Garden

- Many ties to learning objectives
- Provide motivation to try fruits and vegetables
- Builds excitement with kids, parents and supporters
- Social and emotional benefits
- Foundation and inspiration for local food access

Expectations for Food Garden

- Need dedicated time for care and maintenance
- More sensitive to weather and other environmental conditions
- Be realistic with your harvest capabilities (start small but dream big!)
- Remember to factor in safety considerations

Planning and Maintaining a Food Garden

Safety First

- Learn the history of your site
- Conduct a soil test
- Test your water source
- Assess your surroundings
- Be careful when obtaining compost and composted manures
- Exclude animal visitors as much as possible



What can a food garden look like?



Garden Techniques - Container Gardens

- Easiest way to get started
- Complete control over soil
- Can use simple food grade 5-gallon buckets
- Straw bale gardens
- Can be inexpensive and can be moved
- *Ideal for extending gardens to home



Garden Techniques - Raised Beds

- More growing space
- Still have control over soil content
- Bigger initial investment than containers, but often longer lasting
- Available in a wide range of materials (for a wide range of budgets)



Garden Techniques - In Ground Gardens

- Can be an inexpensive option
- Challenges: space available and soil quality
- Weeds can be frustrating and exhausting
- Remember the mulch!
- Make a [lasagna garden](#)



Photo courtesy Charlie Nardozi.

Garden Techniques - Indoor Gardens

- Year round access
- Can grow leafy crops, herbs and root crops
- Windowsill and grow lights
- Containers and hydroponics



Planning and Maintaining a Food Garden

Selecting your plants, choose varieties that:

- Are easy to grow in your area.
- Will grow well in the conditions provided in your garden.
- Compliment your program schedule and capabilities

Additional considerations

- How long is your growing season?
- Will you be buying starts to transplant or direct seeding?
- Do you have volunteers to help with maintenance?

Easy to Grow Cool Season Edibles

- Greens - lettuce and kale
- Cole Crops - broccoli
- Root Crops- radishes (carrots)
- Green Beans
- Sugar Snap Peas
- Herbs: dill and parsley



Easy to Grow Warm Season Edibles

- Beans
- Cherry tomatoes
- Peppers
- Sweet potatoes
- Basil
- Cilantro
- Mints



Make it Fun

Edible Garden Themes

- Eat a Rainbow
- Pizza Garden
- Salsa Garden
- Salad Garden

Connect to Literature

- Tops & Bottoms
- Oliver's Vegetables
- Stone Soup



Connecting to Home

- Family involvement key
- Ask families to help in garden and cooking activities
- Ask families to help with garden maintenance
- Offer tasting events at pick up time
- Send home extra seeds or seedlings
- Send harvest and recipes home
- Provide garden education to help them start home gardens

Increasing Harvest for Families

- Increase garden capacity in size or type of crop grown
- Partner with local community gardens
- Partner with local Farm to School Programs and/or connect with local farmers or Farmer's Markets

Additional Support Resources

- KidsGardening.org
- [Resources for Early Childhood Educators](#)
- [Seeds of Success Toolkit](#)

Program Spotlight: Acelero Freehold Head Start

Jen Bagdanov
Center Director

Monmouth County, New Jersey



2022 NHSA
Gro More Good
Garden Grant
Recipient

The Little Sprouts Garden

What's gonna work? TEAMWORK!

- The idea for the garden grew from a seed of a thought by a group of talented and engaged teachers. Once planted, it grew to touch our **Family Advocates, our parents, our kids and our community**. Without all of these pieces, it would have never worked.

Welcome to Acelero Freehold Center!

*What do
we
KNOW???*

A light gray thought bubble with a black outline, containing the text "What do we KNOW???" in a teal, cursive font. The bubble has three smaller circles leading to it from the bottom left.

Welcome to Acelero Freehold Center!

- **Acelero Learning has provided Head Start services since 2001. Today, Acelero Learning directly serves 5,000 children and families in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Wisconsin.**
- **Acelero Learning Monmouth/Middlesex county consists of 10 centers in 2 counties, serving mostly urban and suburban areas.**
- **Acelero Freehold has 9 classrooms in 2 centers located in downtown Freehold.**
- **About 80% of our families live in apartments or small housing with little to no outdoor space.**
- **The Freehold Main st Center is located in the First Baptist Church and we share outdoor space with the Church. We have a small playground, mud kitchen and our garden - in a formally unused space by the Pastor's Home.**



How does your Garden Grow???

- In 2015, we started our school gardening journey by creating a container garden. This proved difficult as we did not have an outdoor water source and limited funding.



How does your Garden Grow???

- During the 2017-2018 school year, we were given the space behind the school and Pastors' House to begin using as a garden. Through multiple Community Partners including, the Master Gardeners, Boy Scouts, and Home Depot, we were able to build 3 small raised beds.



Getting ready!



- During the pandemic, our garden sat sad and alone, as we had virtual school. However, during the 2021-2022 school year, we were excited to not only be back, but to be one of the recipients the NHSA Grow More Good grant!

Getting ready!



Getting Ready!



What do we
Wonder???

Getting Ready!

- 1) How can we provide a space for our students to learn and our families to feel welcomed?
- 2) What will we grow in our garden?
- 3) How can we continue this learning throughout the seasons?
- 4) How do we peak interest and involvement in staff, families and students?

What do we
Wonder??



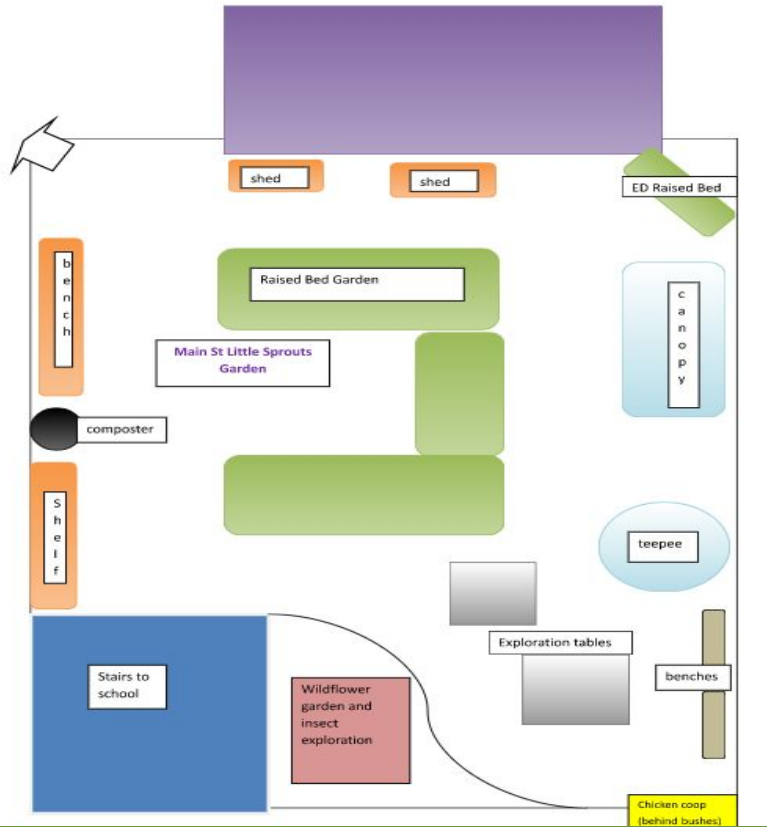
Garden Grant Goodness!

Step 1: Form a Committee!

- Find out who likes gardening and build on that.
- Offer PD credits/hours for any meetings or research done
- Let them do the fun stuff - planting, shopping, harvesting, lesson plans, new books, etc.
- Encourage them to run PD's for the rest of the staff - and families!- around gardening.

PLANNING makes almost perfect ;)

Step 2: Map out the garden - and your money!



PLANNING makes almost perfect ;)

Step 2: Map out the garden - and your money!

docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rU0gqqSMmbkK6SYW_z1MexQPFYhtRRbb7THwhRHJJuHc/edit#gid=801239381

Garden Grant: Freehold Center 2022-23

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help Last edit was on June 28, 2022

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		Sheds	Exploration Tables	kitchens	picnic tables	water tables	Rasied-Beds	Planters	easel	arbor/sitting
2	KAPLAN	N/A			\$1,010	\$1,400	\$835	\$410		
3	KidsGardening									
4	Enasco	n/a								
5	Community Playthings	4655	nature tray \$25	1290	1025	1200-2000				
6	discount school supply	na	399	450	356					
7	Nature Explore	n/a	\$1,200	na	na	\$229	\$690	\$300	1895	
8	Tractor Supply Co	400				several	200			200-300
9	ETSY/ Make it outselves				yes	yes	yes			
10	Amazon									
11	Natural Playgrounds									
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										

Shopping list items:

- benches
- composter
- Shelf
- Stairs to school
- Main St Little Garden

Navigation: DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH | shopping sheet | Materials | spending and receipts | Explore

PLANNING makes almost perfect ;)

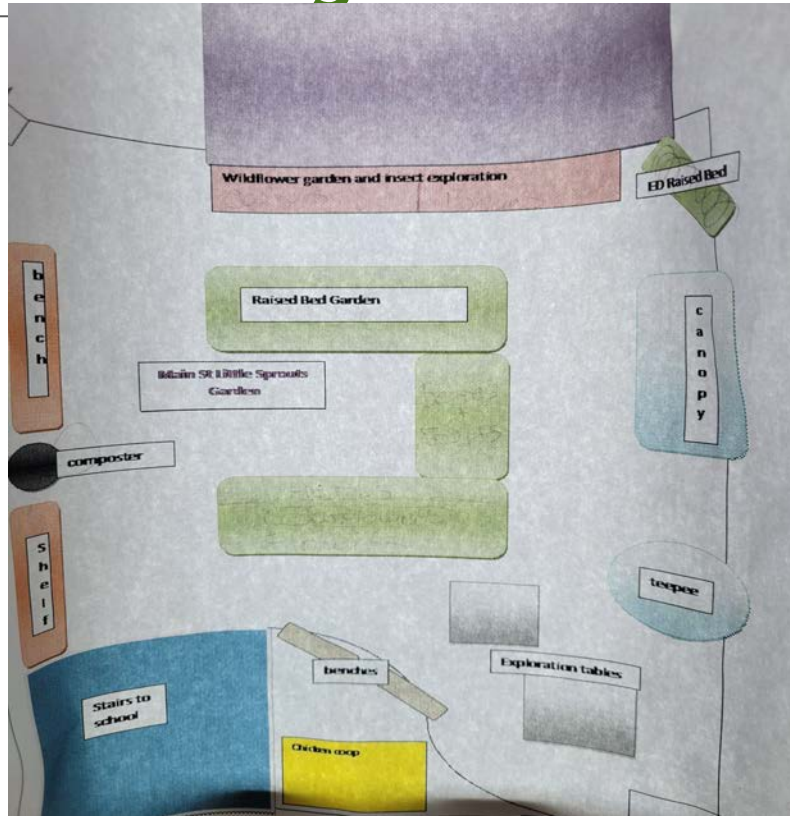
Step 2: Map out the garden - and your money!

The Garden Committee decided on these seeds and sprouts for our new garden:

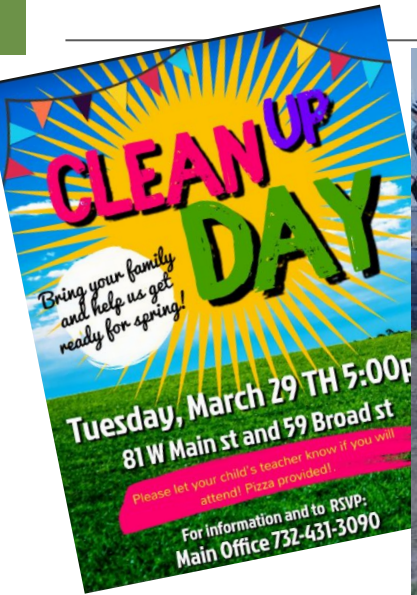
- A “Berry Garden” with raspberries, blueberries and strawberries.
- A Flower Garden with wildflowers and sunflowers and insect homes to attract pollinators
- A Herb Garden with Cilantro, Basil, Parsley, Rosemary and Lavender
- A “secret garden” with all things growing underground - potatoes, radish and carrots
- A “tall and small” green garden with Brussel Sprouts, Kale and Broccoli as our Tall and Cauliflower, cabbage and lettuce as our small
- Tomatoes and peppers of all sizes and colors!

PLANNING makes almost perfect ;)

Step 2: Map out the garden - and your money!



Step 3: Parent involvement



The Little Sprouts Garden!



The Little Sprouts Garden!



The Little Sprouts Garden!



Step 4: Spend Wisely!

The Little Sprouts Garden!



Tip #1 - Buy in BULK! We used local topsoil and mixed it with bags of Scott's Miracle Gro to save some money!

Tip #2 - for medium to bigger gardens, don't waste your money on the Raised Bed Kits - buy cedar, seal it and build them yourself. (and take advantage of Home Depot or Lowes which cut the wood for you!)



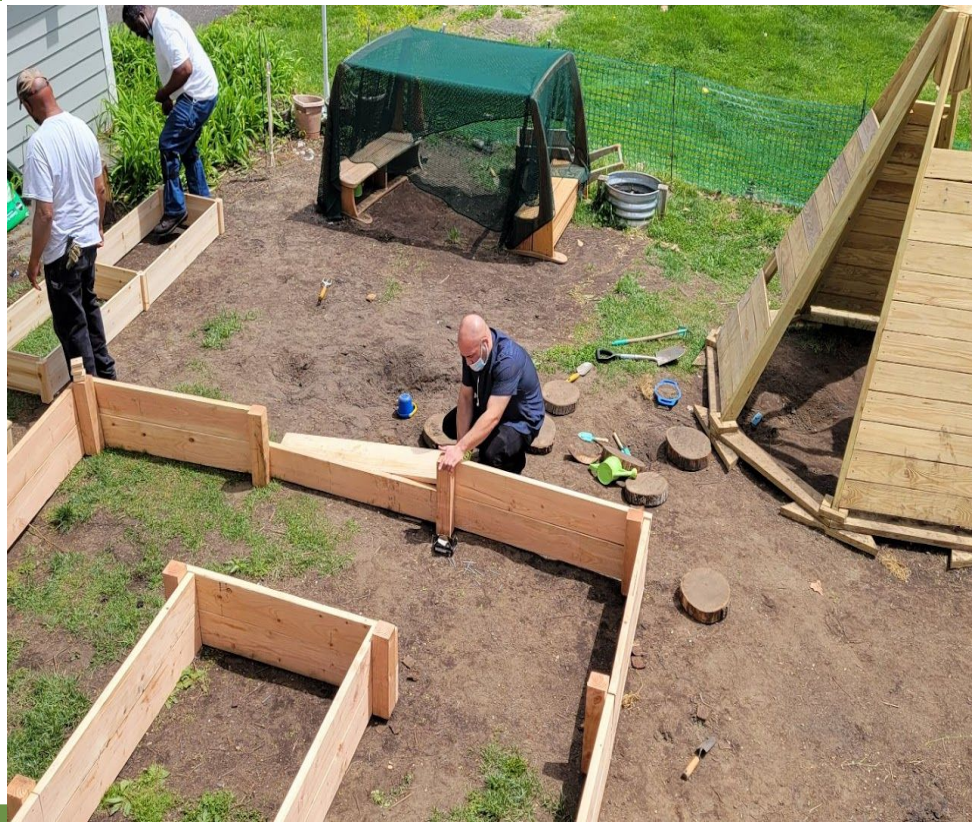
Step #5: Let's get dirty!

The Little Sprouts Garden



Tip #3 - Get everyone involved!! The students were thrilled to be a part of the building of the beds - and getting to use the power drill!! Parents also came to help and each one who put their effort into helping us made this project more meaningful - for us and them!

The Little Sprouts Garden!



The Little Sprouts Garden!



The Little Sprouts Garden!

Step #6 - Put it in writing

Ready to Shine Curriculum "Growing" (week 1)

Approved (CD initial & date):

Center/Classroom: _____ Freehold 6 _____ Teachers: _____ Ms Soledad/ Ms Margarita _____ Week of: _____ 3/28-4/1 _____

Planning for Your Classroom: Please describe any changes or additions that you are making to this week's plan, and briefly state the rationale for each.

Ms Soledad will be doing opening group on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday

Ms Margarita will be doing opening group on Tuesday and Friday

changes to small group are below

changes to read aloud are below

*PEER Activity Card Bring Back Activity – "Flower Sculptures" Remind families about the activity and offer support as needed for individual families who may need materials or time at school to complete the activity. (we will send materia to do the activity)

the teacher will set up a day for parents to join us via [zoom](#) to read a book or talk about plants that they have at home, if nice weather will invited parents to come during outside time

(A) General Information

BIG IDEAS this week: In this first week of the "Growing" theme, we will explore the idea that plants and flowers are living things, which need air, water and sunlight to grow. Children will have the opportunity to plant seeds, learn about the parts of a flower, and begin a Lois Ehlert author study.

We began our Growing Theme and teachers added parent involvement, outdoor activities and learning in the garden to their plans

The Little Sprouts Garden!

(C) Group Experiences

Ready to
"Grow!"

Center/Class

Planning for

Ms Soledad v
Ms Margarita

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(A) Gen

BIG IDEAS thi

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time / Opening Meeting	<p>QOTD: "How do you think watermelons grow?" (on a tree / a vine / a bush / underground)</p> <p>Song: "The Green Grass Grew All Around" Provide <u>visual</u> (see <i>suggestions in Activities packet</i>). (five little Flowers)</p> <p>Discussion: How do fruits grow? Show different types of fruit and their tree, plant or vine. Help children match fruits to their plants and compare.</p> <p><u>Introduce</u> fruit/vegetable market in Dramatic Play.</p>	<p>Morning Message: <i>I eat apples, grapes, mangoes and strawberries. What fruits do you eat?</i></p> <p>Movement: "Growing Vegetable Soup" (see below)</p> <p>Discussion: Where do apples grow? Where do bananas grow? Explain that each fruit grows best in different parts of the country (and world). Use weather concepts like hot, cold, rainy, dry, etc. We will explore the garden today to see if anything has started to grow!</p>	<p>QOTD: "Which fruit do you like better?" (Apple / orange / banana)</p> <p>Song: "The Green Grass Grew All Around"</p> <p>Review: "Exploring Fruit" small-group activity: Ask children to recall what they did – referring to <u>chart(s)</u> you created during the activity.</p>	<p>Morning Message: <i>I eat mushrooms, onions, broccoli and potatoes. What vegetables do you eat?</i></p> <p>Movement: "Growing Vegetable Soup" (see below)</p> <p>Discussion: Where do mushrooms grow? Where do potatoes grow? Explain that each vegetable grows best in different parts of the country (and world). Use weather concepts like hot, cold, rainy, dry, etc.</p>	<p>QOTD: "Which is your favorite book that Lois Ehlert illustrated?" (<i>Growing Vegetable Soup / Planting a Rainbow / Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i>)</p> <p>Song: "The Green Grass Grew All Around"</p> <p>Draw: Plants, Fruits and Vegetables — Pass out drawing supplies and ask children to draw plants and the fruits and vegetables that grow from those plants.</p> <p>Review progress of plant experiment(s). Ask children to predict what changes they will see next week. ** Double session classes – do this Thurs. or next week</p>
Read-Alouds (see Planned Read Aloud)	<i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i> by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault (<u>Make connect</u> to Lois	Read in the Garden and plant flower seeds: Grow Flower Grow! by Lisa Bruce	<i>The Carrot Seed / La semilla de zanahoria</i> by Ruth Krauss (read in Spanish if possible,	<i>Growing Like Me</i> by Anne Rockwell (initial reading – focus on basic comprehension)	<i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i> (rereading; invite children to chime in on repeating text and play with alliterative

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Ready to Shine Curri (C) Group Experiences

“Growing” (week)

Center/Classroom: _____

Planning for Your Class Meeting

Ms Soledad will be doing opening
Ms Margarita will be doing opening

changes to small group are being
changes to read aloud are being

*PEER Activity Card Bring B
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the teacher will set up a day
during outside time

(A) General Info

BIG IDEAS this week: _____

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Read-Alouds (see Planned Read Aloud	<p><i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i> by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault (Make connect to Lois</p>	<p>Read in the plant flower</p> <p>Grow Flower Bruce</p>

Week of:	Activity:
May 2nd	<p>Soil- Soil is just rocks, broken up into tiny pieces over thousands of years by storms, climate and other conditions - like animals, glaciers, wind, rivers, rain, etc. Soil is made of three things: Sand, Silt and Clay. You will know it's mostly sand because it feels GRITTY. Silt is SOFT - like baking flour - when dry. Clay feels STICKY when it gets wet.</p> <p>Book: <i>Dirt: The Scoop on Soil</i></p> <p>Activity: Kids will gather soil and make mud pies. Talk about how soil becomes mud when it is wet. How does it feel different?</p> <p>Extension: Put soil in a jar with water and let it sit - it will separate into different parts (Experiment in the book)</p>
May 9th	<p>Composting: Let's reuse as we recycle our food! Classrooms will begin composting fresh fruits and veggies left over from breakfast and lunch! Compost is like food for plants - it loves all the vitamins that compost gives the soil, so plants grow bigger and stronger! When we put our fruits and veggies in our composter, they start to get moldy, then they turn into tiny pieces, like dirt, and are ready to be used again! Worms are our helpers - they love to eat the food and poop it out - the poop has lots of vitamins too and the plants love it!!</p> <p>Book: <i>Composting: Nature's recycling</i></p> <p>Activity: Begin adding items from meals to the classroom composting bucket</p> <p>Extension: Look in the composter in the garden and see what has happened to the food from last year!</p> <p>Take care of worms inside the classroom then add them to the composter outside.</p>
May 16th	<p>Insect Hunt!</p> <p>Our garden is more than a place where our plants grow - its a</p>

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The Little Sprouts Garden: Chickens!

All our eggs in one basket



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Lala



Marshmallow



Ladybug



Rainbow Lollipop
Unicorn

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Harvest!!



Harvest!!



Know, Wonder...



- 1) When the lesson plans were created and encouraged outdoor learning in the garden, the teachers became more involved.
- 2) Parents became more involved when children were invited to participate as well
- 3) Less is more! Plant what you will use - and things the kids can pick themselves!
- 4) Everyone loves chickens!! Being able to have the chickens in our center was a huge bonus. Not only did it get the kids excited for going outside, they were a wonderful help with learning in all areas!

Know, Wonder...



Learn!

- A “Berry Garden” with raspberries, blueberries and strawberries.
- A Flower Garden with wildflowers and sunflowers and insect homes to attract pollinators
- A Herb Garden with Cilantro, Basil, ~~Parsley~~, Rosemary and Lavender
- ~~- A “secret garden” with all things growing underground – potatoes, radish and carrots~~
- A “tall and small” green garden with ~~Brussel Sprouts, Kale~~ and Broccoli as our Tall and Cauliflower, ~~cabbage~~ and lettuce as our small
- Tomatoes and peppers of all sizes and colors!
- MORE flowers = more insects!
- MORE tomatoes, strawberries, peppers, and things kids can eat right away.

The Little Sprouts Garden!

Next steps:

- Smaller selection but more of it!
- Parent involvement from day 1
- Create more spaces for reading and outdoor learning.
- Continue to add gardening and outdoor learning plans to weekly lesson plans



Program Spotlight: Verner Center for Early Learning

Polly Phillips
*Family and Community
Engagement Partnerships
Coordinator*

Asheville, North Carolina

2022 NHSA Gro More
Good Garden Grant
Recipient



Who is Verner?

- We are an Early Head Start (Children 0-3) and a North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten provider (Children 4-5).
- Our blended program provides care for families with vouchers and those who do private pay. At our East location, we have a 80/20 ratio of private pay to EHS children.
- Our **mission** is to foster holistic learning environments where young children and families thrive.



Creation of VEG

- VEG (Verner Experiential Garden) was created in 2015 in collaboration with three nearby organizations: Roots Hummus, Warren Wilson College, and North Carolina Outward Bound.
- VEG is an experiential garden, not a production garden. The main objective of VEG is exploring, sensory experiences, and outdoor play.
- Verner East consists of 8 classrooms. Each classroom visits the garden at least once a week.

Goals for our GroMoreGood Funding

- Transition from ground planting to metal raised beds. Things we needed to purchase:
 - Vego raised planters
 - Bulk Compost and planting mix
 - Plant starts for fruits and veggies that cannot be directly sowed into the ground
- Remulching all the pathways
 - Purchase bulk mulch and delivery
 - Landscape fabric and nails

Goals for our GroMoreGood Funding

- Purchase tools children can use in the garden and classroom to extend the learning experience
 - Child-safe knives
 - Cutting boards
 - Stainless steel bowls
 - Industrial salad spinner
 - Apple peeler
 - Mortar and pestle
 - Child-size shovels, rakes, hoes
 - Watering cans



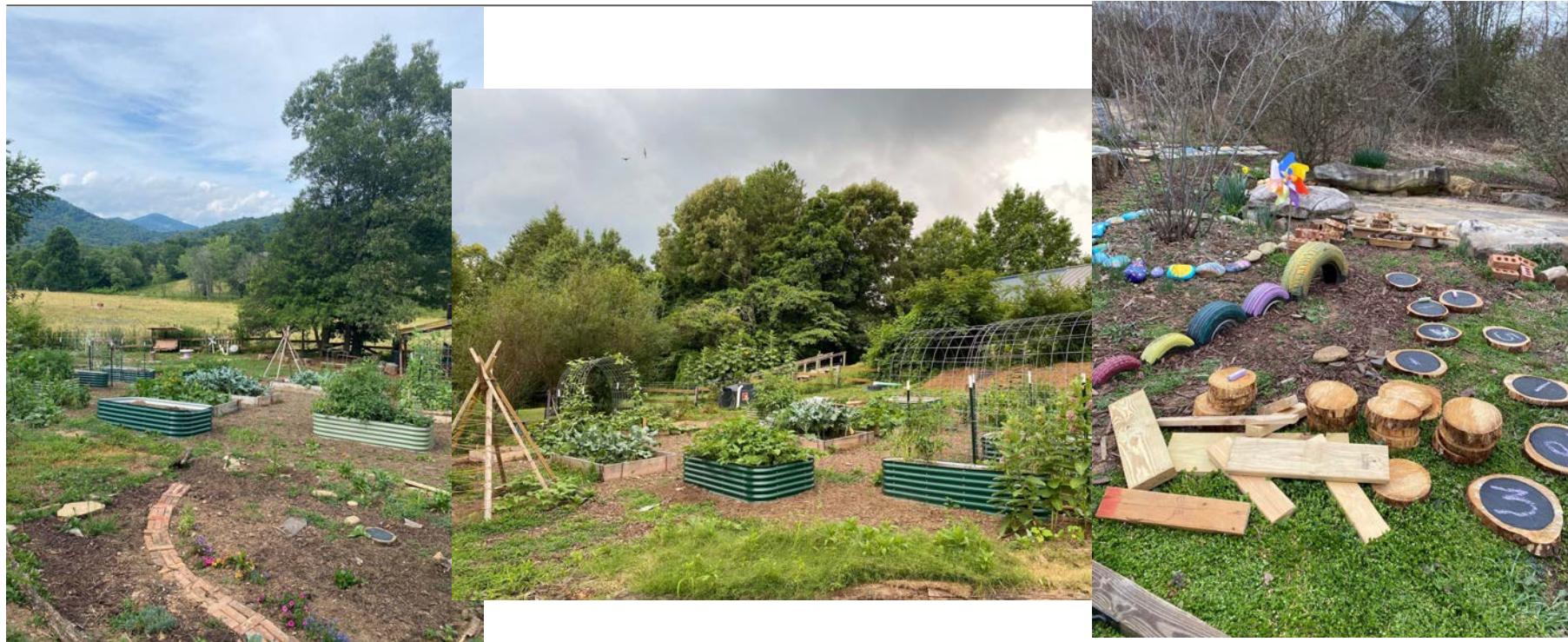
Things to Keep in Mind When Purchasing Items

- Always ask for a school or non-profit discount.
- When buying tools, pick metal over plastic. They last longer and are better for the environment.
- Research free compost opportunities in your community.
- If possible, choose metal raised beds instead of wood.
- Ask nearby Universities about hosting a garden intern. Many environmental education majors are interested in this opportunity.

Before Raised Bed Installation



After Raised Bed Installation



Outcomes from Improving our Garden Space

- When the kids come home from school, they talk about their positive experiences in the garden. This creates more parent/caregiver by-in. We hosted four garden socials this year and the turnout was great!



Outcomes from Improving our Garden Space

- More food resulted in the creation of the “Giving Fridge.” This is where we store extra produce from the garden for families to take home.



Outcomes from Improving our Garden Space

- Most importantly, children felt safe, engaged, autonomous, and trusted. Our garden gives them an opportunity to to feel free in an outdoor environment, which is all we can ask for as educators.



Questions?



Garden Story Time: Spring!

Wednesday, March 8, 2023
1:00 PM Eastern Time

Scan the code below to register



GroMoreGood Gardening with Kids Basic Course

- For early educators interested in bringing gardening to their programs! Gain a basic understanding of how to get started as well as guidance on how to sustain the project.



Webinar Library

Check out ALL of our amazing GroMoreGood webinars!

- Learning from Head Start Gardeners
- Fall in the Head Start Garden
- Therapeutic Value of Gardening for Children
- **And more!**



Thank you!

If you have any questions, please email
gardens@nhsa.org