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LEARNING GARDEN & OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

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BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Texas Health Community Hope is excited to bring you the Learning Garden and Outdoor Activity Pathways Series. This series takes you on a journey of exploration through hands-on learning centered around gardens and the outdoors. Texas Health Community Hope is the outreach arm of Texas Health Resources, working to create a healthier community through innovative partnerships, programs, and opportunities like this one.

Learning gardens and outdoor spaces enrich our lives in so many ways. Participating in outdoor learning not only enhances academic performance, it promotes physical health, emotional well-being, and a deeper connection to the environment. Studies have shown that students who engage in school gardening and outdoor learning tend to perform better academically and develop problem-solving, teamwork, and time-management skills. Gardens deliver the opportunity to increase physical activity, deepen understanding of nutrition, and learn gardening skills for life, thus making gardening and outdoor learning one of the most popular activities among students and staff in schools.

Beyond the classroom, gardens and outdoor spaces can be used as focal points and hubs to foster community connections and involvement. They offer great opportunities for schools to highlight their rich cultural diversity within the school and the wider community, as well as a place to gather families together.





GREEN THUMB NOT REQUIRED



DEVELOPED WITH HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

This series of guides and activities has been developed by Mary Jo Greene and Anne Santana of Made Greene, a team of learning garden experts who work with schools to create engaging outdoor living spaces, facilitate rich experiences, and enable school communities to cultivate a deeper connection with nature and nutrition. Between them, Greene and Santana have more than 52 years of hands-on, hands-in-the-dirt experience in learning garden development and curriculum.



OPTIONS FOR EVERY LEARNER

With a mix-and-match approach and more than 30 outdoor and indoor activities and lessons, there is something here for everyone. Pathways activities offer students, teachers, and the school community engaging and educational learning experiences that support the entire curriculum of learning in a school. Anyone, from classroom teachers to afterschool practitioners and school supporters, can use these hands-on, easy-to-follow activities. Best of all, they're fun and no green thumb is required!



GET STARTED

Learning Garden and Outdoor Activity Pathways activities are available to all partner schools and organizations that work with students. To access, you will first be asked to complete a brief questionnaire. Once approved to participate, you will be given access to materials for starting your Pathways journey!

So, grab your garden tools and get ready to dig in as we begin this exciting journey using the outdoors as nature's classroom.



HOW TO GET GROWING

- Your first step is to complete the [Pathways Online Request Form](#). You'll be asked to provide some basic information about your site's demographics and garden, and a brief overview of how you hope to use these resources to help your garden grow.
- At that time, you'll also select your first Pathways unit. Units 1 through 4 offer activities that primarily support educators and learning garden curriculum. Unit 5 can be used by anyone in any garden setting. While there is no set order for requesting units, you may only request one unit at a time.
- Once your request is received, you'll be given access to your first selected Pathways unit, plus the Pathways How-To Guides. These guides will help ensure your garden is set up for success and provides an environment for students that is conducive to fun and learning. You'll also get a copy of the North Texas Planting Calendar, which you'll use throughout the year for many Pathways activities.
- When you're ready for your next Pathways unit, you'll submit a brief questionnaire about your past activities. You'll also receive a certificate for the prior unit that you can customize for each activity and student. At the end of the school year, we'll ask you to complete a survey about your overall Pathways activities and experience.



PATHWAYS ACTIVITIES

UNIT 1: Outdoor Gardening

Bring out the budding horticulturalists in your students. These comprehensive planting guides give you all the information and techniques you need to plant a garden full of taste, color, and flavor. Time to grab garden tools and dig in!



- Perfect Bed Preparation
- Growing Leafy Vegetables
- Growing Easy Root Crops
- Growing Potatoes and Onions
- Growing Climbing Plants: Peas and Beans
- Engineering Challenge: Trellises
- Growing an Herb Garden
- Growing Trailing Plants
- Growing Brassicas and Cole Crops

UNIT 2: Outdoor Learning

Step out beyond the garden as nature becomes a broader classroom. These outdoor educational activities allow students to blend curiosity with hands-on natural education.

- Garden Treasure Boxes
- Outdoor Scavenger Hunts
- Nature Journals
- Weed Math
- What's Under Your Feet?
Sampling Outdoor Spaces

UNIT 3: Composting

Learn the art of recycling kitchen leftovers and meet new creature friends through the fascinating world of soil. These activities showcase the sustainable and environmental benefits of composting.

- Creating Your Compost Pile
- Worms and Wormeries
- Kitchen Scrap Science
- Decomposers: Who's Eating Your Compost
- The Nitty Gritty of Soil

UNIT 4: Indoor Gardening

Take your projects indoors for those days when going outside just isn't possible. Bring the wonder of the outdoors inside with these experiential and practical activities.

- Root Viewers
- Wildflower Seed Spheres
- Pressed Flower Keepsakes
- Fruit and Flower Take-Apart
- Making Garden Signage

UNIT 5: Community and Family Engagement

Gardens aren't just a place for plants. Gardens provide rich environments where families and communities can grow together. From community events to open houses to spring flings, we offer engaging activities for families to explore and connect in nature while at school or in their neighborhood. Many of these activities can be conducted in virtually any garden!

- Supporting Fall School Festivals with Gardening Stations
- Garden Workday
- Valentine's Family Day
- Spring Community Events
- Earth Day Celebration



HOW-TO GUIDES



Discover the secrets to success when using the outdoors as an educational tool. These “How-To” guides will help you plan, manage, and tackle challenges when navigating nature as a learning environment. You’ll receive the How-To Guides with your first Pathways Activities unit request.

- Creating a Learning Garden Committee or Work Group
- Designing Your Learning Garden Space
- Tools, Equipment, and Materials Lists
- Engaging and Creating a Network of Volunteer Support
- Planning for the Summer Break
- Strategies for Taking Groups into the Garden
- Effective Watering
- Safety in Your Learning Garden




































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NORTH TEXAS PLANTING CALENDAR

Every gardener needs a tool for planning. We've created a simple School Year Planting Calendar to make garden planning in our North Texas climate easy for you.

KEY: Seed  Plant  Fast Growing  Average Days to Harvest 

Fall			Winter		Spring			Summer				
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	
Garlic Bulb ✂️ 140			Winter Break	Potato ✂️ 120		Sweet Potato ✂️ 130						
Onion  ✂️ 120	Onion Sets ✂️ 120			Onion Slips ✂️ 100								
Brassica  <i>Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Kohlrabi & Collards</i> ✂️ 55-70				Brassica  <i>Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Kohlrabi & Collards</i> ✂️ 55-70			Brassica  <i>Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Kohlrabi & Collards</i> ✂️ 80-100					
Radish  ⚡️ ✂️ 30				Radish  ⚡️ ✂️ 30								
Beet, Carrots & Peas  ✂️ 60-80				Beet, Carrots & Peas  ✂️ 60-80		Southern Peas  ✂️ 70		Southern Peas  ✂️ 70				
Spinach, Greens, Swiss Chard & Mustard  ✂️ 55-70				Spinach, Greens, Swiss Chard & Mustard  ✂️ 55-70		Okra  ⚡️ ✂️ 55						
Lettuce  ⚡️ ✂️ 45				Lettuce  ⚡️ ✂️ 45								
Strawberry 				Strawberry 		Tomato  ✂️ 60		Tomato  ✂️ 60				
Eggplant & Peppers  ✂️ 75												
Corn, Cucumber, Squash & Melon							Corn, Cucumber, Squash & Melon  ✂️ 60-100			Corn, Cucumber, Squash & Melon  ✂️ 60-100		
Beans  ✂️ 70						Beans  ✂️ 70			Beans  ✂️ 70			
Turnips & Rutabaga  ✂️ 60			Turnips & Rutabaga  ✂️ 60		Pumpkin  ✂️ 75-100		Pumpkin  ✂️ 75-100			Turnips & Rutabaga  ✂️ 60		
Perennial Herbs  <i>Thyme, Sage, Rosemary, Oregano & Mint</i>			Perennial Herbs  <i>Thyme, Sage, Rosemary, Oregano & Mint</i>									
Cilantro, Parsley & Dill  ✂️ 60						Basil  ✂️ 40		Basil  ⚡️ ✂️ 30				