



PROGRAM: GARLAND SCHOOLYARD GARDENS AS LIVING CLASSROOMS

The garden is a place for learning and there is no better location for one than in a schoolyard where it can provide a panoramic backdrop for thousands of lessons. If you are still thinking about whether a schoolyard garden is worth the effort, I recommend visiting this website and watching the video for "The Learning Garden" at Venice High School. <http://www.thelearninggarden.org/about-us/>

The Garland Schoolyard Gardens as Living Classrooms is stewarded by Loving Garland Green, a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization in conjunction with student youth groups, other local service groups, and inspired teachers and citizens of Garland.

Loving Garland Green's mission is to increase the number of people in our community who grow some of the food they eat because we believe this will build a happier, healthier and wealthier local economy. We work toward the accomplishment of this goal in numerous ways:

- Through our stewardship of the Garland Community Garden where we try different methods for growing edibles and report back to the community on our successes and failures.
- By developing gardening curriculum and teaching gardening classes to the youth of our community.
- By hosting tours of the Garland Community Garden
- By working side by side with youth service groups to install gardens in their school yards
- By making presentations at various community events and health fairs.
- By serving as the example by protecting pollinators such as Monarchs and bees and promoting

Locally grown food builds community vibrancy and retains local traditions while establishing a local identity through a unique sense of community. In other words, it is healthy to be connected to the people in your community and one way to connect is through locally grown food and gardens.

A study conducted by the Concerned Union of Scientists found that only 9% of customers in chain supermarkets had a social interaction with another customer and 14% had an interaction with an employee, but at farmers' markets, 63% had an interaction with a fellow shopper and 42% had an interaction with an employee or farmer report. Local markets and locally grown food are healthy for people. [Source http://www.ucsus.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/food_and_agriculture/market-forces-report.pdf#UCSUSA accessed 11/1/2015]

We believe it is our responsibility as adults to provide the residents of our community and the youth in particular with an abundance of healthy choices.

HOW TO BRING A GARDEN TO YOUR SCHOOL:

This process is extremely simple and it can begin with with a team of two: one motivated teacher and the principal of the school.

1) Obtain the necessary funds to begin your garden. The cost will vary, but we recommend about \$500 as a minimum to begin. You may even have some left over for next year's expansion. Five hundred dollars should be enough for two 4 feet by 10 feet plots. This would include all necessary soil amendments, seeds, plants and installation of a trellis if needed.

SOURCES FOR FUNDS:

- PTA or other Parent Groups
- <https://survey.garden.org/index.php> Go to this survey and complete it before December 1, 2015. It is the 2016 Youth Garden Grant Application. Their website is <http://grants.kidsgardening.org/2016-youth-garden-grant>

- In the section **Program Website**, put this link http://lovinggarlandgreen.org/files/3414/4642/0055/school_gardens_program.pdf. It will provide them with access to a PDF of this document I'm sending to you. Thus it will explain the process you will be following.

2) Plan the Layout of Your Garden and take into consideration water sources.

Plan the garden as close as possible to a water faucet on the school property. After the first year, provided the beds are constructed according to the format of a hugelkultur, you will not need to water. However, watering will be required the first year.

Remember, you don't have to construct the entire garden the first year, but it might be necessary to have a vision of how large you want the completed garden to be—especially when applying for grant money.

For example, for the first year you might want to only create two beds—each bed four feet wide and ten feet long. You don't want the beds to be any wider than four feet and they should be accessible from all sides.

In addition to installing a vegetable garden bed, we recommend that you install a garden with flowers and plants for pollinators. We are also recommending these beds be constructed as hugelkulturs since schoolyards are typically deserted during the summer. More information regarding hugelkulturs is available on our website at <http://lovinggarlandgreen.com>.

Another recommendation that we make for your edibles is that at least 1/3 of that bed be perennials that will come back year after year. Asparagus and blackberry bushes are two examples of perennials.

3) Obtain commitments for Labor

Loving Garland Green can assist you (free of charge) in choosing the best site for the garden and also we can make recommendations regarding plants and design of your garden. We can also work with you in soliciting other volunteer labor as needed from the community.

Depending upon the ages of the students we may be able to secure all the commitment needed from the students themselves. However if the students are younger, we will need adult assistance.

ABOUT LOVING GARLAND GREEN

We are a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. Our incorporation dates to January of 2014. Since our inception we have received a statewide Third Place recognition by *Keep Texas Beautiful* as a Civic Organization. This is quite an honor since it that award was given for our first year as an organization. Recently we received special recognition from the Office of the Mayor of Garland Texas honoring us for our continuing stewardship of the Garland Community Garden.