



Seed to Salad: Finding a place to garden

You don't need much space for salad! Look for an area where your group can create enough small plots (approximately 3'x3') for each person (or pair) with at least 3' paths between.

When space is difficult to find...

Some schools have little or no green space. If this is your situation, consider large container gardens or building raised beds on top of a paved area. This will add a bit to the cost of your project but consider the containers, raised beds, and soil an investment that can be used for several years.



Reclaim neglected spaces. Some schools may have designated garden spaces that are currently in use or neglected. This offers a compromise. Your administration may view it easier to extend an existing garden area than to create a new area. Reclaiming an area that has been neglected provides your program with a space and the school grounds with a face-lift.

Create new gardens. Some community organizations, such as schools, may welcome the idea of a temporary garden space. If administrators are uneasy about making the commitment you may want to offer a trial to till a small area of lawn, plant as a garden, and then, reseed as lawn. Others may welcome the idea of creating a permanent new gardening space. Consider raised beds to help define an area and ease maintenance and weeding concerns.

Communicate. Overall the most important step in determining a gardening space for your program is to communicate with administrators, custodial, and grounds staff. Be sure to have ongoing conversations with grounds and custodial staff during the planning and design phase.

Plan. Come prepared with how much space you think you will need as well as other requirements such as light exposure and access to water. Get familiar with the grounds before meeting so that you are aware of what kinds of spaces are available. Develop a maintenance plan that includes "who, how, when." Be ready to answer questions about funding. "Who will pay for this?" may be one of the most frequently asked questions.

A little inspiration...

During the Ithaca Children's Garden Seed to Salad pilot at Northeast Elementary School, we reclaimed three garden areas that were no longer actively managed. Many hands made light work and during the pilot program we prepared three reclaimed areas for 11 new salad garden plots during one Saturday morning work party involving student and parent volunteers.

Reclaimed garden spaces at Northeast Elementary School:

