EARTHDAY.ORG PRESENTS

ADVOCACY PACKETS

SCHOOL GARDEN

How to start a garden chapter in your high school

INTRODUCTION

As young individuals, we see environmental issues in our community and on the news and want to take action to protect our future. Often it can be difficult to know where to start or how to enact lasting change as a student. But students around the globe are working to change the world one step at a time - and so can you.

This series of advocacy packets, created by students for students, provides introductory knowledge on these ideas and concepts and walks you through steps on how to begin implementing change in your classroom, home or community. By using our voices and gathering support for these sustainable initiatives, we will change the world.

This specific packet on creating a school garden walks you through the process of advocating for and building a school garden. Leading you through this process will enable you to present your idea to important stakeholders and explain the importance of implementing a school garden, including providing teachers and students with more interactive educational resources as well as serving as a community tool. Additional resources can be found in this link, which will appear multiple times throughout this advocacy packet.

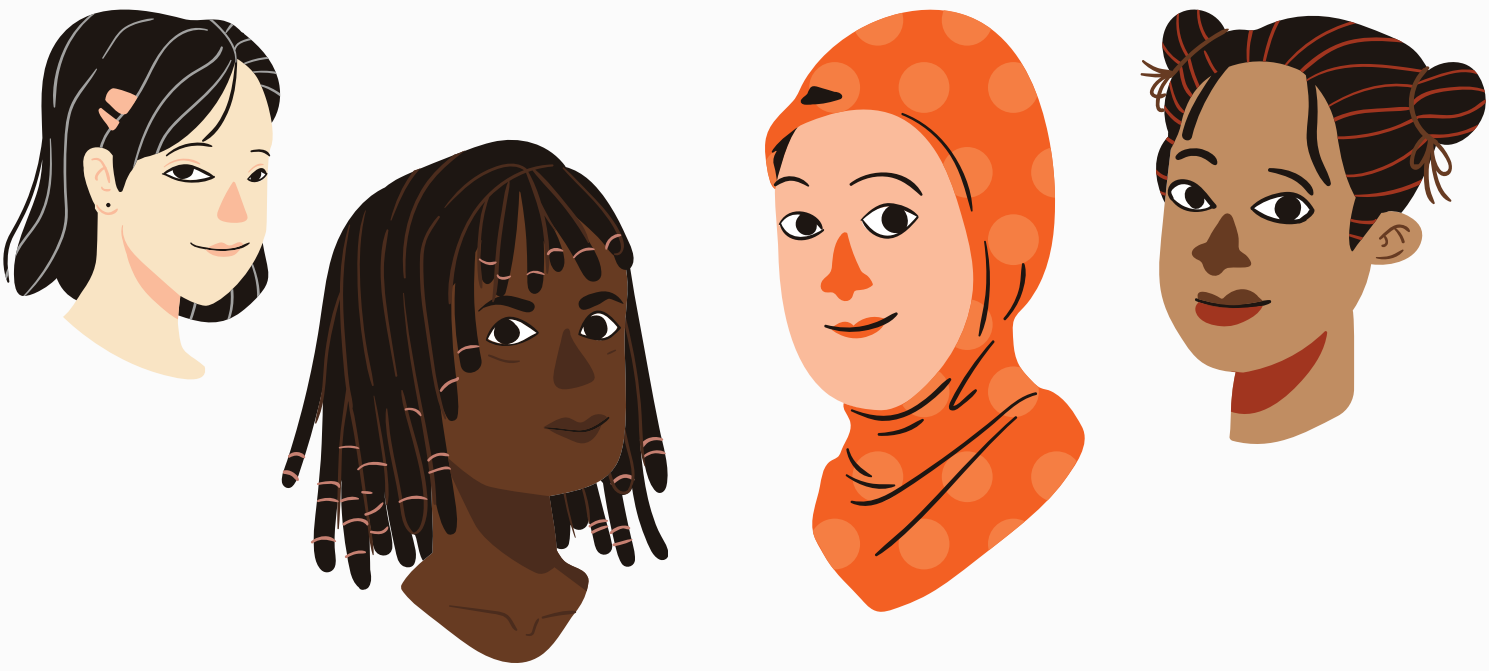
IMPORTANCE

Currently, 55% of the global population lives in an urban area. Further, the average American kid spends around 4 to 7 minutes per day outside, not including structured play time, and 7 hours indoors on electronics. As a result, this has created a disconnect between children and the environment, seen in one example by a UK study in which 4 out of every 5 children responded that they have "no connection" or question their connection to the statement: “being outdoors makes me happy” (among others). This, in turn, poses a threat to the viability of the environment, as youth that are unconnected to nature will be less likely to fight against climate change and for environmental initiatives.

Gardening among youth is important because it serves individuals, communities, and the environment! It provides more interactive and engaging educational opportunities for students and teachers, can boost bonding experiences, and help reduce carbon emissions!

Building a school garden can also serve to promote accessibility to healthy foods. Gardening teaches students the work that goes into planting, harvesting, and ultimately acquiring food. Further, it empowers students by illustrating the power of community based initiatives. **Go to this link for more information.**

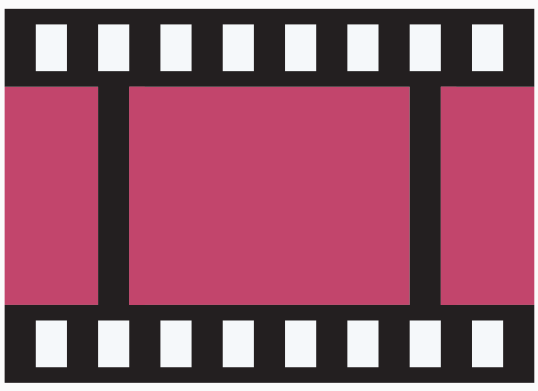
STAKEHOLDERS



CLUB MEMBERS/ADVOCATES

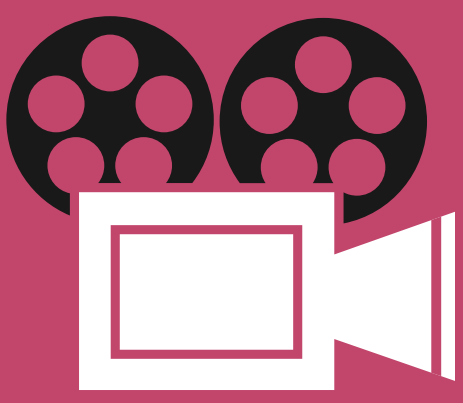
If you have an environmental club or a group of advocates, the following ideas can be used to help become more educated on this topic, mobilize your initiative and spread awareness!

PowerPoint: Create informational slides about the impact and importance of gardening!



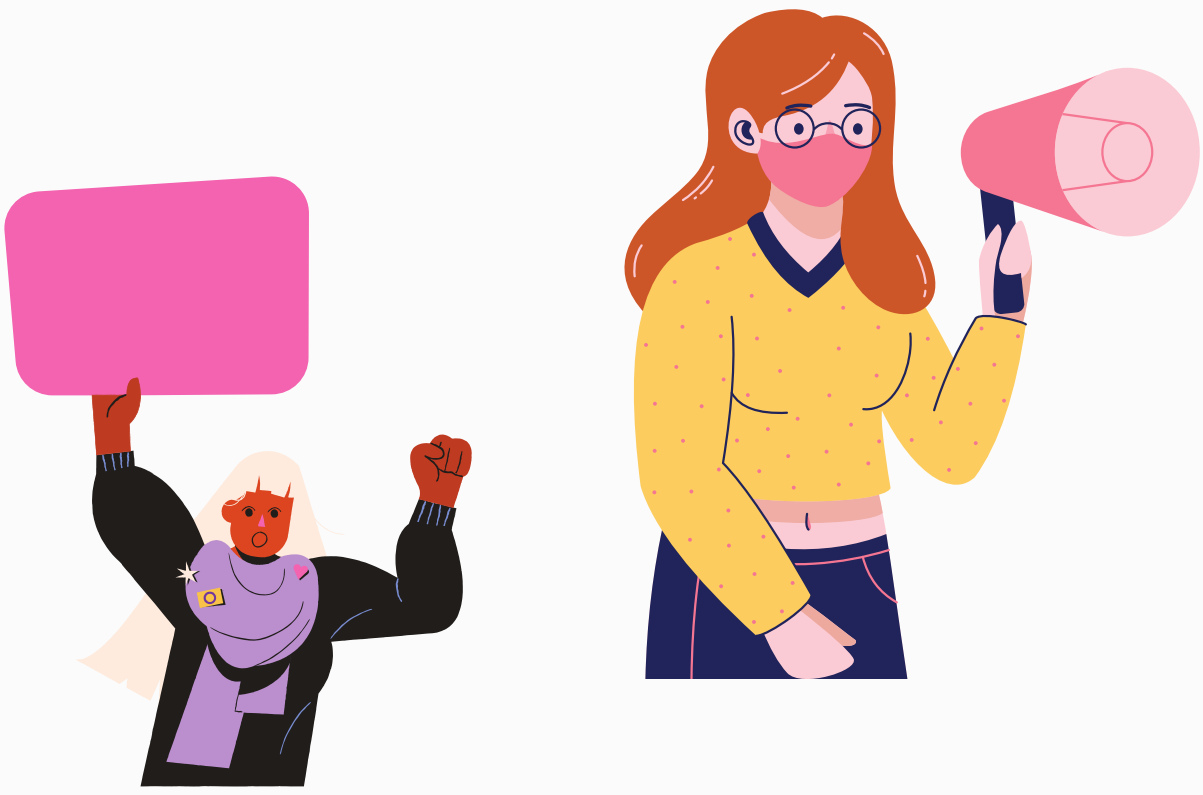
Video Project: Give an overview of the impact and importance of gardening! What more can you add to the information provided in this packet?

FlipGrid: Let your club members share their own knowledge with the group! Possible Prompts: (1) How can a school garden be integrated into our school's learning experiences? (2) What excites you about building/having a school garden?



Kahoot: Create a fun way to learn about gardening impacts/fun facts! Test your friends on their knowledge!

COMMUNITY & PEER HELPERS



This could include other students in your school and any other members of your community who are interested in helping out.

One thing you can do to spread awareness and support is to share a petition. Below is an example blurb to introduce your petition. There is also a link to petition-creating websites and a document that can be printed out to collect physical signatures with. Finally, tips on creating a flyer are provided.

RESOURCES

This link has both a printable petition as well as an opening statement that can be used for your petition.

Making a Petition, Online:

Change.org
Community.sumofus.org
Sign.moveon.org

FLYER

Components to Include: Header (Ex: School Garden), 'calls to action' (Ex: Help support the creation of a school garden by signing the petition, below), insert a scannable QR code/link for your peition, & images!

FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

These would be community members who would help financially support your garden project. In the next section you will find the necessary information for building a garden. Based on this, you can gather information on the estimated cost of your garden. Use the following letter outline to share with possible donors.

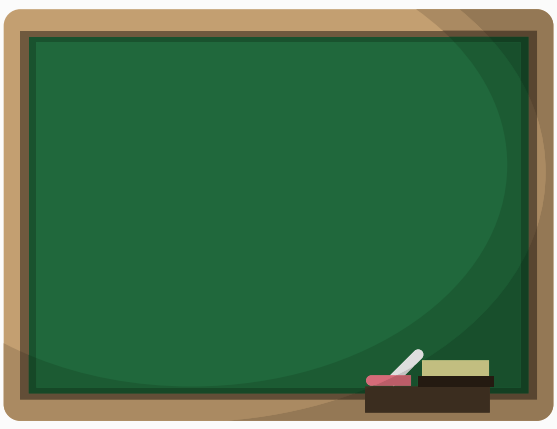
RESOURCES

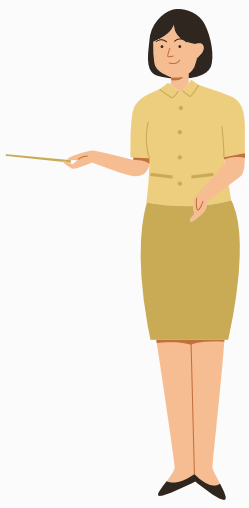
Use **this link** to access an email outline. You can send this to possible financial supporters in your area, including community members, your school board, local churches and businesses, chain businesses, and more.

TIP

Add in some information that pertains to your particular community and/or school to make a more personalized message!

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS





This stakeholder is arguably the most important one, due to their impact on whether or not your project goals can be approved. In order to get their approval and begin discussing this possible project, use the following email outline to get in contact with your school administrators.

RESOURCES

Use this link to access an email outline to send this to your school administrators. Your email should serve as a starting point, from which you can set up a phone call/in-person talk with your administrator.

TIP

Add in some information that pertains to your particular community and/or school to make a more personalized message!

HOW TO BUILD A GARDEN

While this packet is not designed for the purpose of giving detailed instructions on how to build a garden, the following gives a brief outline of the necessary steps. Research best practices for gardening and plant choices in your region. Finally, there a link with articles, websites, and videos to help aid in your project building process.

STEPS

1. Get permission to build your garden
2. Pick a location
3. Pick what you will be planting- be purposeful
4. Get supplies and tools
5. Prepare your garden space
6. Start planting your seeds!
7. Continue caring for your garden
8. Harvest
9. Start an eco-club to keep your garden healthy for years to come

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This link, under the "Building a Garden" section, provides resources to help aid in your project building process. Start by going through the steps above and narrowing down the necessary tools and proper location, seeds, etc. It is encouraged to reach out to community members for help.