



# March

Márta – Fócas ar Ghlasraí

*Paddy Madden continues his series of SESE tips*

## zoom in on vegetables

### Definition

**Vegetable** – www.thefreedictionary.com defines a vegetable as “a plant cultivated for the edible part, such as the root of the beet, the leaf of the spinach or the flower buds of broccoli or cauliflower”.

### A sorting exercise

Children should investigate and observe the parts of the vegetable that are eaten. This grid will help

#### Part eaten

**Leaf**

**Root**

**Stem**

**Bud**

**Seed**

**Tuber (swollen stem)**

**Bulb**

**Fruit used as vegetable**

#### Vegetables

**Spinach, lettuce, cress, nettle, sorrel**

**Carrot, parsnip, beetroot, turnip, radish**

**Celery, rhubarb, asparagus**

**Cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli,**

**Brussels' sprouts (flower buds)**

**Pea, bean**

**Potato**

**Onion, garlic, scallion**

**Tomato**

*Vegetable garden in St Thomas's SNS, Jobstown*



### Grow vegetables in school

A plan of work for an 8 teacher school could look like this.

#### Junior Infants

Sprout mangetout peas by placing them in a damp paper kitchen towel. Put towel in plastic lunch bag and leave in a dark, warm place for a couple of days. Sow them in biodegradable pots and leave in a light box in the classroom. When they are c. 2.5 cm high bring them out during the day to harden them off. Bring them in before the children go home. Sow outside in a large, round grow-bag in which a cane wigwam has been constructed when they are c. 15cm high.

#### Senior Infants

Do. With ordinary peas. Sow in a well-manured bed when they are c. 15cm high and stake with twigs.

**1st Class** Sow carrots indoors in gutter pipes. Plant them outside in a raised bed when they are c. 1cm high.

#### 2nd Class

Sow lettuce indoors in biodegradable pots in late March. Two seeds per pot. When they germinate remove weaker plant. Harden off outside for about a week before planting in bed about 15cm apart.

Don't remove from pots! Sow more seeds 2 weeks later for a continuous crop.

#### 3rd Class

Sprout potatoes indoors in February. Plant in March in 4 different bags: Bag 1 – Soil only (Control) Bag2 – Soil and school compost; Bag 3 – Soil and peat-free compost; Bag 4 – Soil and manure. Record progress.

#### 4th Class

Sow carrots in dustbin. Put holes in bottom. Half-fill with old polystyrene for drainage. Fill nearly to the top with soil. Sow seeds thinly on top. Thin them to width of carrot when they are 5cm tall. (Sowing carrots at this height from the ground deters the carrot root fly. It can't fly higher than a metre!) A container half the size of the dustbin could be placed beside it and planted likewise and results compared.

#### 5th Class

Sprout potatoes indoors in February in shadiest part of classroom. Sow in bed in late March. See www.blackrockec.ie – 'Paddy's School Garden' on 'How to plant potatoes'. Again use fair test to de-

termine which grow the best. Drill 1 – Nothing; Drill 2 – Dung; Drill 3 – School compost; Drill 4 – Peat-free compost. Make chart and record results.

#### 6th Class

Make scarecrows for the 4 raised beds. See www.blackrockec.ie Click on 'Paddy's School Garden' – January. In their own raised bed set up a fair test to determine which materials will deter slugs and snails from eating lettuce. Cut the rims off 15 cm plastic plant pots and place around 7 equal-sized lettuces in the bed. Place the following materials inside each rim and around a lettuce plant:

Rim 1 – Wood ash.

Rim 2 – Crushed razor shells.

Rim 3 – Chopped up horse-hair.

Rim 4 – Chopped up pine needles.

Rim 5 – Crushed, baked eggshells.

Rim 6 – Chopped up seaweed.

Rim 7 – Grit.

Rim 8 – Control – no material.

Monitor carefully over the course of 3 weeks.



*Slug deterrent test*



*Fair test on potato growing mediums*



*Potatoes in Scoil Mochua, Aghards, Celbridge*





Peas in light box



Mangetout in grow bag

### Useful resources and websites

- ✦ [www.blackrockec.ie](http://www.blackrockec.ie) – short videos on growing vegetables in a school. See 'Paddy's School Garden'.
- ✦ [www.giy.ie](http://www.giy.ie) – Useful website on what to grow, when to grow and how to grow. Seed catalogue for purchasing online.
- ✦ [www.quickcrop.ie](http://www.quickcrop.ie) – School packs, raised beds, cloches, advice, seeds.
- ✦ [www.raringtogrow.com](http://www.raringtogrow.com) – Monthly planner.
- ✦ [www.growingschools.co.uk](http://www.growingschools.co.uk) – Dedicated totally to school gardening.
- ✦ [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie) – Curriculum linkages and lesson plans.
- ✦ *Grow* magazine Excellent new publication on growing vegetables with very useful planning guide. Available from [www.giy.ie](http://www.giy.ie) for €4.50.
- ✦ *Go Wild at School* by Paddy Madden (School Wildlife Gardening Association, 2011). Chapter 8 explains how to sow vegetables in school.
- ✦ *The School Garden – What to do and when to do it* by Paddy Madden (School Wildlife Gardening Association). Explains what to do each month in the school garden.
- ✦ *The Year Round Organic School Garden* (Living Classroom Publications, 2008).
- ✦ *Organic Gardening for Primary Schools Bord Bia* DVD.

### Breaking news

A new organisation called SEED – School Earth Education – has been formed from Irish Seedsavers' Association, Kerry Earth Education Centre, The Organic Centre, Sonairte, Nano Nagle Centre, County Wexford Organic Centre, Marino Institute of Education, and Blackrock Education Centre. Its aim is to promote living classrooms in every school in Ireland.

### Feeding

NPK: N stands for nitrogen. Good for producing healthy green leaves. P stands for phosphorous. Good for producing healthy roots. K stands for potassium. Good for producing fruit.



**PADDY MADDEN** lectures on SESE in Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education. He is a Heritage in School specialist-see [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie). His latest book, the third reprint of *Go Wild at School* is available now for €15 plus €2.50 p&p. To purchase contact [paddy.madden@mie.ie](mailto:paddy.madden@mie.ie). He is also the author of *The School Garden – What to do and when to do it*. This is available from the same email address for €10 plus €2 p&p.

**Strand Units covered this month**  
Environmental awareness, caring for the environment, plant and animal life, the local natural environment.