

Health & Safety and Basic Materials required

Time of Year

All year round.

Cross Curriculum Relevance

SESE:	Living things, environmental awareness and care.
Languages:	New words/spelling/literacy.
SPHE:	Active and responsible citizenship.



1

Work Safely in the Garden

- Identify and demonstrate safe work practices.
- Develop safe work practices in the use of equipment and other materials before commencing to the garden.
- Explain what each tool is used.
- Always demonstrate the correct way to hold, carry and use a tool (find out prior to the class if you aren't sure!)
- Never let the pupils run with the tools.
- Always advise pupils to seek adult permission before eating anything that grows in the garden.
- Pupils should wear appropriate clothing – wellies and warm clothes.
- Children should wear disposable gloves when handling composts.
- Teachers should recognise the potential physical, chemical and biological hazards such as 'Organic Compost' to humans, animals and the environment
- When around or near organic compost hi-light the dangers of biological hazards to children and staff. A hazardous substance is something that has the potential to harm. Such substances should be handled carefully.
- Recognise common hazard signs and labels on tools and products for the garden.
- Follow the correct procedure when using agrochemicals and disposing of their containers
- Outline the main provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act
- State appropriate first aid and emergency procedures in the event of accidents.
- Ensure that manual handling procedures are adhered to whilst in the garden.
- Ensure that all pupils wash their hands carefully with soap after gardening.

For further information on Health and Safety in schools please refer to the website www.hsa.ie/eng/Education/Managing_Safety_in_Schools



Health & Safety and Basic Materials required contd.



2

Resources needed for starting a garden (enough for 1 class):

- Organic seeds.
- 15 hand trowels and forks.
- 15 pairs of gloves.
- 12 short handled forks and spades (*plus optional 4 long handled shovels, 2 rakes, 2 hoes*).
- 6 secateurs (*plus optional 2 loppers*).
- 1 wheelbarrow (*or more*).
- 4 watering cans (*plus optional hose and hose-tap connections*).
- Selection of pots and trays (recycle/reuse when possible).
- Lollipop sticks or plant labels.
- Twine.
- Willow/bamboo for plant supports. (grow them if possible).
- Compost bin (see Composting support sheet).
- First aid kit.
- Raised bed materials (see Making Raised Beds support sheet).
- Organic slug pellets.
- *Optional seaweed dust, chicken manure.*
- *Optional Bio-net fleece for winter protection, netting for protection against pests and predators.*

NOTE Materials in italics are for the very committed – not essential!



3

Funding the garden

It is possible to start a garden without any extra funding but buying some tools will speed the process up. Approach the parents' committee for some start up money; source free materials through parents / donations / fundraising and the wider community. Most materials will be available from the local garden centre but here is a list of recycled materials available for free (also see community involvement support sheet):

- Car or tractor tyres for planting.
- Yogurt pots or milk cartons for seeds and trees.
- Toilet roll inserts for seeds/beans (can be planted directly in the ground).
- Old carpet to mulch beds (see planting outside support sheet).
- Old net curtains for plant protection.
- Cardboard to mulch beds.
- Plastic bottles for plant protection.

4

Top Tips for easy outdoor work

- Prepare the activity in advance – have the resources and equipment ready.
- Explain the activity in detail to the children in the classroom before going outside.
- Divide the children into group sizes appropriate to the activity before going outside
- Put responsible children with more active, challenging children.



Health & Safety and Basic Materials required contd.



5

Managing the Class Outside

One of the first steps to practical gardening is to create a set of garden rules with the children which can be hung in the classroom and out in the garden/shed if possible. Keep them short, five to six rules maximum. The children should be consulted in the drawing-up of the rules (they'll remember them better!) and the teachers and parents must have input too. Draw attention to the rules at the beginning of each session.

Sample Garden Rules:

- This is still a classroom!
- Listen to the teacher when he / she is talking.
- Care and respect for all living creatures, including your class mates!

Managing the class in the outdoor environment can be challenging as being outdoors is associated with a high burst of energy. This can be harnessed by having a grounding activity at the beginning and end of the session.

Here are some ideas:

- Bring the group on a short walk around the garden, notice any changes since the last time, what is growing at the moment.
- Request a minute's quietness - what can you hear?
- Set a practical task, e.g. to collect a natural object like a smooth stone, feather, flowers or leaves.

As children go out regularly they will become used to being in the outdoor classroom and they can start taking certain responsibilities (under supervision) for themselves such as getting keys for the shed, taking out tools and watering plants.

6

Research projects

Local Heritage – Investigate tool usage in history – which tools from long ago do we still use now?

Language – Research tool names; where they come from and what do they mean?

Art/Communications – make a display for the garden or Green Schools notice board of garden rules and of the tools in the tool shed.

Woodwork – replace handles for broken tools.

Where to find more information?

The Year Round Organic School Garden (Living Publications)
ISBN 978 0 9561301-0-5 gortbrackorg@gmail.com

