

Windowsill Gardening

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Overview: A Windowsill Garden is a small container garden inside the classroom. Students can grow a variety of plants in different containers throughout the school year. This can include houseplant cuttings, vegetables and flowers. Windowsill gardens are an excellent way to teach students about making mindful choices for themselves, the environment, and the world.

Targeted Grades: K-5

Materials needed: windowsill or area for garden, seeds or plant cuttings from parents or local nursery, containers, soil, fertilizer, grow light if needed

Standards: *There are many potential connections, based on your grade-level and curricular goals. Check your grade-specific standards for others. Navigate the Next Generation Science Standards (<http://www.nextgenscience.org/search-standards>) and Common Core State Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/>)*

Standards-Based Curricular Connections:

Science – Students could experiment with different growing conditions such as soil, sunlight, and water as part of the unit on planting. Students can predict, make observations, and chart the plant growth. They could also conduct germination experiments.

Math – Students could keep growth charts and measure plants using non-standard units. Germination experiments can be used to reinforce lessons about percentages.

ELA – Students could research different types of plants to grow. They could create an informational document on how to care for indoor plants and create informational signage for each plant. Students could write descriptions of their plants at different stages and address the plant's color, size, shape, texture, and smell.

Social studies- Students could learn about the history of gardens. Students could research the agricultural revolution and how it has impacted today's world. Students could also research how different forms of farming and gardening might affect our future.

Art – Students could sketch detailed plant leaves. Students could photo journal the growth of their plants.

Additional Resources

Caution: avoid “excessive, improperly located, or poorly maintained plants” as the “plants and potting soil can be a source of odors, mold, pollen, and other allergens, and improper care of plants can lead to water damage in building material” such as window sills.*

- National Gardening Association’s GrowLab - Activities for Growing Minds. National Gardening Association , 1990. Print.
- National Gardening Association’s GrowLab – A Complete Guide to Gardening in the Classroom. National Gardening Association, 2006. Print.
- Growing School Gardens guide- <http://www.annies.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Growing-School-Gardens-Annies-Homegrown.pdf>
- “Indoor Plants and Indoor Air Quality” guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health can be found at <http://www1.easternct.edu/sustainenergy/green-schools-studies-articles/>



Image from <http://pompanobeachgardening.blogspot.com/2013/02/window-sill-gardening.html>

These suggestions are examples only, and may require adaptation. Check your grade-specific standards to determine whether or not the suggestions provided meet your individual curricular needs.

For more information, contact ctgreenleaf@ctgreenschools.org

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