



# Starting a School Garden: The Checklist

Please go in order and check off each item as you plan your school garden

Updated: 11/17/2016

## Questions You Must Ask Before Beginning Your Garden

- Do I have Administrative support? Getting your principal on board is a pivotal step to ensure your garden continues.
- What other teachers and community members can collaborate and commit to this garden project? The biggest challenge to school gardens is **sustainability**. Without support and dedication a garden cannot survive through summer break and long weekends in the hot sun.
- How am I funding this garden? There are costs associated with starting a garden. APS supports gardens with soil and seeds but items like tools and garden beds need to be considered. Please be aware timed irrigation can only be provided by an outside contractor and can be very expensive.
- Is this sustainable? We're adding this again because it's just that important! What steps are in place to make sure this space will be maintained and cared for? One person cannot handle the responsibility alone. Have a garden team in place before moving onto the next checklist.

## The Garden Space

- Do I have enough sunlight? You will need at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight for your garden

- ☑ Where is my water source? You will need to figure out the watering situation. This may be as easy as turning on a hose nearby or it could take some work to figure out your school's process. This is a critical step so really think about the manner you wish to water your garden very carefully!
- ☑ What do we want to grow? Is this a salsa or pizza garden? Are you focused on herbs? Looking into sensory gardens or pollinator spaces? Think about what you kind of garden you would like and the amount of room it will take to accomplish your goals. Be sure to include your students in this process. This space is for them!
- ☑ How will I use this garden? Is this garden for a club? Culinary resource? A schoolwide outdoor classroom? Who will use the garden and what kind of access and space will that require?



## Contacting the APS School Garden Team

- Now that you have a plan in place, contact us! We can help you navigate the channels you need to get your garden growing!
  - [Mallory Garcia](#) (APS School Garden Coordinator)  
505-855-5275  
[mallory.garcia@foodcorps.org](mailto:mallory.garcia@foodcorps.org)
  - [Cynthia Grajeda](#) (Student Wellness Coordinator)  
505-855-9812  
[grajeda@aps.edu](mailto:grajeda@aps.edu)

Once you have contacted APS School Gardens we will help you get in touch with the following people:

☑ **Facility, Design and Construction** (505)848-8810. Contact them to check on the future construction your school may have coming up. Make sure the space you have for your garden is not interfering with any upcoming renovations.

☑ **Maintenance and Operations** (505-830-8080)

First, check to make sure the ground you are using has not been treated with any kind of pesticides or weed killers before planting an edible garden. Also ask to make sure there are no underground water or electrical lines that you may hit during the construction of your garden.

**Irrigation-** M&O also handles irrigation. Call and ask about any existing irrigation that may exist at your school. There may be capped bubblers or irrigation systems in place you didn't know about. Be sure to utilize them if possible!

If you like, you can request a Water Audit from Bernallio County. Water audits are intended to find areas in an irrigation system that can potentially conserve some water by either fixing things that are wasting water or alter some habits such as over watering. If you have any questions once you have your irrigation set up, call Marc Jacobson at (505)224-1676 or email him at [mjacobson@bernco.gov](mailto:mjacobson@bernco.gov)

## Helpful Resources

When you have completed all of the necessary steps mentioned above, you can place a work order for free soil that can be delivered to your school. The Soil and Mulch Guide is attached in the folder below and will help guide you through the process.

If you are curious about the best kind of fruits and vegetables to plant in our dry New Mexico climate you can refer to NMSU Bernallio County Extension's guide: Growing Zones and Crop Varieties in NM in the folder below.