



Rapides Soil
& Water
Conservation
District



Establishing School Gardens

How SWCDs Can Help Minds Grow



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Helping Minds Grow



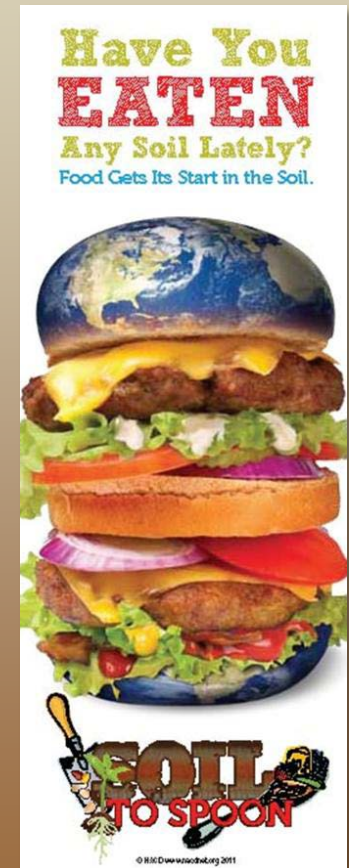
- Where does our food come from?
 - Many school children have no idea where our food comes from
 - Many have had no experience growing their own food
- How can we help?
 - By educating children about where their food comes from
 - By teaching them sustainable gardening methods, establishing garden rules, and using regular, appropriate garden tools
 - By sharing valuable information and resources about other practices pertaining to gardening like soil conservation and kindness to the planet
 - By helping install school gardens and then supporting those schools
 - By showing them how to maintain their gardens and reap a healthy harvest and then allowing them to taste their harvest with fun recipes



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Where Does Our Food Come From?

- The NACD “Soil Burger” poster is an excellent tool to teach children about how our food comes from the soil
- When the poster is broken down and explained, you can see a child’s face light up when they realize that our food really and truly does come from the soil
- Many get excited and want to learn more about how they can grow their own food
- When children are excited about something, they are more apt to take part in it





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How Can We Help?



- We can teach children about growing their own food and that it can be fun and rewarding
- We can help install school gardens
- We can teach them sustainable gardening methods that will become a lifelong skill
- We can share valuable information about how to prepare vegetables that will help them maintain a healthy lifestyle





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Is Gardening Fun?



- Do children like pizza?
 - Growing a “pizza” garden with tomatoes, basil, garlic, and peppers is a fun first time garden for children. If they grow it, they will eat it!
- Do children like to get dirty?
 - Playing in the dirt is a lot of fun and when you reap rewards from it, it’s even more fun!
- Do children like having fun with their friends?
 - Of course! And planting, weeding, and harvesting next to friends is awesome and builds socialization





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Installing School Gardens



- The Rapides SWCD partners with the central Louisiana Good Food Project to help install school gardens
 - The Good Food Project is a program of the Food Bank of Central Louisiana
 - GFP provides direct help and technical support to schools, organizations, churches, neighborhoods, non profits, and businesses to establish and maintain community gardens
 - Their staff, with an emphasis on sustainable agriculture, can help schools plan and plant a garden and provide continuing technical support
- The SWCD donates \$100 per raised bed (up to 2 beds) per school
- There are 13 schools in Rapides Parish participating in the partnership school garden program between Rapides SWCD and GFP
- Other districts, including the parishes of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, LaSalle, and Vernon have partnered with Good Food Project for another total of 10 school gardens – GFP would love to connect with the SWCD in those parishes



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How the Good Food Project Helps



- Plan a school garden start-up, including site selection, soil preparation, and plant selection
- Conduct on-site classes appropriate to that school's needs
- Provide educational resources to meet all aspects of the school garden
- Expand a school garden site to a "Living Classroom" as school commitment warrants





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How Rapides SWCD Helps

- Rapides SWCD donates \$100 per raised bed (up to 2 beds) for each school
- This money helps to purchase lumber to build the raised beds, soil to fill the beds, seeds, and tools needed to plant and maintain the beds
- Rapides SWCD also helps to educate teachers and volunteers about composting, rain water collection, and different types of soil





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What the Children Learn



- Responsibility
 - By teaching them about gardening, we are teaching them how to take care of something and how to be responsible citizens
- Trying new things
 - Many children are more willing to try new foods if they have grown it themselves
- They are our future
 - By getting them excited about gardening, they learn that they can provide for themselves and their families
 - And maybe some of them will become farmers for a new generation





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Gardening Is FUN!





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Resources

- www.goodfoodprojectcenla.org
- www.kidsgardening.org
- www.organicgardening.org
- www.plantingjustice.org
- www.garden.org





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Questions?

