



Introduction to the Garden

KEY CONCEPTS: Earth; Garden; Environment; Stewardship; *Soft Skill: Respect*
AGE RANGE: PreK – 5th grade
TIME: 30–45 minutes

OVERVIEW: The Green Heart Project values *respect*, and it is at the heart of our mission to grow food, minds & community. Practicing respect is an essential part of being a good steward of the environment and of the Earth. Growing a garden is one way to give back to the Earth. In this lesson, you will review the Green Heart Project’s three rules of respect: 1) Respect Yourself, 2) Respect Your Green Heart Buddies, and 3) Respect the Earth and get curious about what lives in a garden by designing your own garden.

MATERIALS:

- Computer, iPad or phone to watch videos
- Outdoor (or indoor) area to explore
- Pencil and/or colored pencils
- A piece of paper or journal
- [Plants Needs Handout](#)
- [Low-country Seasonal Produce Chart](#)¹
- Taste-Test: seeds to “taste-test”
- *Optional Materials to Build a Garden: soil, seeds, makeshift garden bed container (planter pots, bricks, cinder blocks, milk crates, gallon buckets with drainage holes, check here: [example](#))*

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WARM-UP

WATCH: [Green Heart Rules of Respect video](#)

WRITE DOWN: The 3 Green Heart Rules in your journal:

1. Respect Yourself
2. Respect Your Green Heart Buddies
3. Respect the Earth

WATCH: as Ms. Allie takes you on a *virtual* [Garden Tour](#) of one of our school gardens. Watch carefully to see what makes up the **garden**!

ANSWER: in your journal, answer the following **questions**:

1. What is a garden?
2. What are some plants and vegetables that grow in the garden?
3. What materials do you see in the garden?

A **garden** is used to grow vegetables, fruits, herbs, or flowers. People have different types of gardens based on where they live, what they plan to grow, and the materials they have access to. At Green Heart, and in the low-country we use lumber (or wood) from pine trees to build raised garden boxes. We fill them with healthy soil and compost, and grow lots of the fruits and vegetables on this [chart](#).¹ We also grow flowers & herbs to attract bees & butterflies, fruit trees, a compost pile, and a garden kiosk (sign) where we display a garden map & garden artwork. Now it is your turn to design your dream garden!

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ACTIVITY

DESIGN: your dream garden. Apply the information you learned from the *virtual garden tour* to create a successful garden!

FIRST- READ: the [Plant Needs Handout](#) to learn about things a plant needs to grow big and strong.

NEXT- LIST: the plants, vegetables, and fruits your garden will grow. The [Low-country Seasonal Produce Chart](#)¹ will help you decide which seeds to plant in your Charleston-area garden.

LAST- ILLUSTRATE: a picture of your garden. Think about the shape, size, and **materials** used for the structure of your **garden beds**. Draw in the plants, vegetables, and fruits in the garden bed. Take your time to add lots of color, details and labels. Get creative! See some examples from Green Heart students:



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***BUILD (optional):** a garden bed if you have access to materials.

FIRST- SELECT: a container (wood, planter pots, bricks, cinder blocks, milk crates, gallon buckets with drainage holes; click [here](#) for more examples).

NEXT- FILL: the container with healthy soil, consider adding 1/3 finished compost.

LAST- PLANT: if planting with seeds - read the seed packet directions for proper spacing & depth | if **transplanting** - see Square Foot Gardening lesson for tips. Be sure to water your seeds & plants and say, “Good luck little buddy!”

TASTE TEST

In every Green Heart lesson, there is the option to do a “taste-test.” This is an opportunity to be brave and try a new, healthy food!

PREPARE: Now that you have practiced showing *respect* by designing your garden, it is time to taste! Get your taste-test ready. Ideas for today’s taste test include seeds (sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds) or a seasonal fruit or vegetable listed on the [Low-country Seasonal Produce Chart](#).¹

WATCH: [How to do a Green Heart Taste-Test: Rules & Ratings](#).

TRY: 3..2..1.. Taste-test!

RATE: After trying your taste-test, give it a Green Heart rating.

REFLECTION & CONCLUSION

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REFLECT: on your *virtual* garden tour. Discuss out loud, or write your answer to the following **questions** down in your journal:

1. How does building a garden show respect to 1) ourselves? 2) our buddies?, and 3) the Earth?
2. What does it mean to have a healthy garden?
3. Do you believe that building a garden shows you are a **steward of the environment**? Explain why.

CONCLUDE: Building a garden is one way to give back to the Earth and show respect. In order to plan a healthy garden, it is important to take into consideration the materials you use and the types of plants you choose.

DIGGING DEEPER

Modifications:

- Complete this activity with a partner.
- Have someone read the instructions out loud and take notes for you.
- If you are not able to get outside, try this activity indoors by using your imagination and technology to explore respecting the environment.

Extensions:

- Follow along with this free [engineer software](#) to build your own outdoor raised garden bed. Note, this is for older students.
- Illustrate the parts of a plant and write down the basic needs of a plant. Think about what happens when plants' needs are not met and how a garden can support their growth.
- Cross-curricular Lesson Connections:
 - Find a quiet place to write, or read a book outside in nature. Check out these [Farm to School books](#).
 - Count and sort different items found in nature by color, shape, size, function, etc.

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Educator Notes:

- If completing with a larger group, break into small groups of 3-5 students to design a garden. Assign each group member a 'job' to practice teamwork and leadership (job ideas: note taker, time manager, garden explorer).
 - Have students practice collaborative brainstorming, creating a draft, and assembling a garden bed in teams. Ask students to think about the variety of recyclable materials that could function as a home to plants.
- In small groups investigate seeds. Try to identify the different seeds by investigating their characteristics. Have students draw a detailed picture of their seed, and list the 5 basic needs.
- Have students engineer their own garden structure and monitor plant growth over time.
 - Ask students to bring in recyclable, or reusable materials from their homes to create a garden bed. Encourage students to get creative!
 - Use the different types of 'student chosen' containers to plant a selected seed.
 - Planting: Place soil into a container. Pass out a handful of pollinator seeds, or bean seeds. Model for students how to read the back of the seed packet to either plant, or broadcast seeds (sprinkle) into the container.
 - Have students explain their container choice and make a prediction of how it will help their plant grow in their journal.
 - Discuss what the seed will need (water, sunlight, love, etc.)
 - Monitor the growth, compare and contrast the containers, and come to a conclusion why some seeds were more successful in their container than others.
- Soft Skill: Respect. Reinforce by having students practicing respect throughout their daily routine.

References:

1. [Coastal Conservation League](#) GrowFood Carolina - 2020 Annual Crop Calendar

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SCIENCE STANDARDS: AL 1. Children engage in play as a means to develop their individual approaches to learning.; AL 5. Children extend their learning through the use of memory, reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

K.L.2A.2 Conduct structured investigations to determine what plants need to live and grow (including water and light).

HEALTH STANDARDS: SE2. Children demonstrate self-control, respect and responsibility.

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