

The Ecology Center

TIP:

A well-done garden plan is an excellent resource. If you decide to hire a professional, you have a few options: You can survey your parents for landscape designers and architects or hire someone with knowledge of sustainable design. A professional design that includes a recommended plant list will cost somewhere between \$1,000 and \$2,500.

PROJECT DESIGN PROJECT

Ready to start the design process? You can take a first step toward designing your ecological garden in about an hour. You can also try this exercise with your students- you may never see your garden the same way again.

TOOLS/MATERIALS:

Pencil
Paper or design notebook
Tracing paper and tape (optional)
Sticky notes (optional)

TIME:

30 MINUTES

DIRECTIONS:

1. Needs Assessment (5 min)
 - » Identify your school's priorities for the garden, such as: food production, science lessons, gathering space, etc. These should correspond to your vision and goals.
2. Site Visit (15 min)
 - » Perform a brief analysis of your garden site, noting things like major features, weather patterns, and the sun's orientation. See the Knowing Your Site checklist.
3. Design Exercise (30 minutes)
 - » List the features that already exist and those that you want.
 - » Sketch a base map of the current garden.
 - » Place things well: Begin sketching ideas on layers of tracing paper over the base map.
4. Design Exchange: (10 min)
 - » Have participants share their designs with the group.

TIP: When laying out your initial design, you can use sticky notes to represent elements and test different arrangements on an enlarged copy of your base map.

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GARDEN FEATURES WISH LIST

Here are some features common to learning gardens that we hope will inspire your designs.

Structures and Main Elements

- Map of Garden
- Raised Beds
- Ground-Level Beds
- Accessible Pathways
- Seating/Benches
- Fencing/Trellising/ Perennial Edible Barriers for Area Enclosure
- Dedicated Kindergarten Area
- Green House
- Shade/ Nursery House
- Bean Tunnel
- Gourd Trellis
- Fruit Trees/ Orchard
- Shade
- Handmade Signs

Infrastructure Elements

- Tool Shed
- Hose Bibs
- Lighting
- Drainage Elements (Inlets or Watercourse)
- Bamboo or Willow Stands for Fencing, Vertical Gardening
- Rainwater Catchment
- Hand-powered Water Pump
- Pedal-Powered Treadle Pump
- Trough for Dipping Buckets

Teaching and Activity Structures

- Shade
- Chalkboard
- Seating Area
- Demonstration Table
- Weather Station
- Transparent Root box
- Storage Cabinets
- Media Potential/ Flat Screen or Projection

Theme Gardens

- Container Garden
- Chicken Tractor
- Three Sisters Garden
- Salsa Garden
- Pizza Garden
- Wheat & Grain Area
- Corn Area
- Herb Garden
- Dye Garden
- Butterfly Garden
- Heirloom Garden
- Medicinal Garden
- History Garden
- ABC Garden
- Asparagus Beds
- Endive Shade Box

Food Preparation

- Sink/ Wash Stand
- Permanent Cooking Appliances
- Portable Cooking Appliances
- Refrigerator
- Root Cellar
- Sand/Salt Box
- Food Prep and Eating Tables
- Rentable Event Area
- Pizza Oven
- Solar Oven
- Apple Press Area
- Drop Bin/ Sale Area
- Bicycle Driven Smoothie Blender
- Canning Area
- Storage for Supplies and Dishes

Composting

- Worm Bins
- Compost Bins and Soil Storage Bins
- Compost Tea Brewing Area

Habitat Structures

- Bee Hive
- Chicken Coop
- Bird House
- Bat Houses
- Owl Boxes
- Insect Hotel

Source: Jim Dockstader, 2013