

Growing Together: Using Gardening as Fundraisers

CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

KIM OUDEMOOL, FEBRUARY 26, 2026



AGENDA

- Benefits
- Types of Gardens
- Fundraiser Ideas
- Rules and Regulations

Why Focus on Healthy Schools and Communities?

OVERALL INCREASE IN HEALTH AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Research shows that creating engaging, real-life, hands-on experiences enhances student learning and well-being. Schools foster environments that strengthen academic outcomes while addressing pressing challenges in health and nutrition.



Benefits of Gardening Fundraisers

HEALTHY EATING

Gardening initiatives promote **healthy eating habits** by providing fresh produce and teaching students about nutrition, fostering lifelong wellness practices.



HANDS-ON LEARNING

This involves students in the process more directly than traditional fundraisers along with teaching life and career skills.

Gardening offers **hands-on learning opportunities** for students, enhancing their understanding of science, responsibility, and teamwork through practical experiences in nature.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community support assists in raising money for a new garden and creates **sustainability** for your program.

These fundraisers encourage **community engagement**, bringing together families, schools, and local organizations to collaborate and create a supportive network.



Types of Gardens



RAISED BEDS



GREENHOUSE



TOWER GARDEN

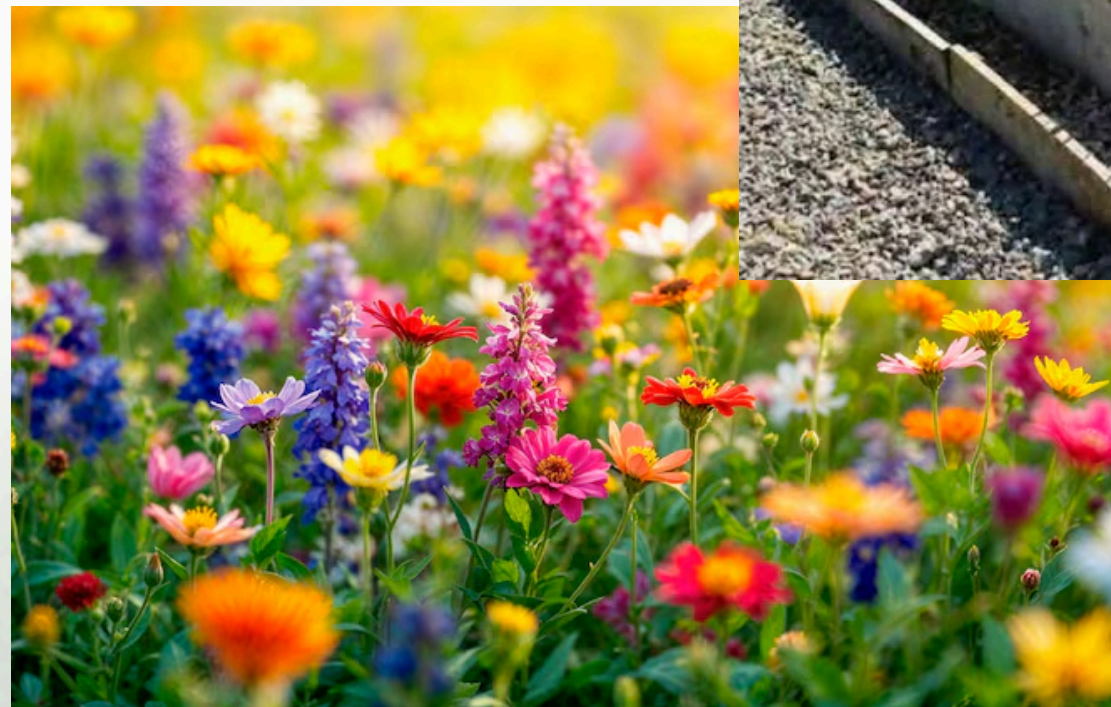


CONTAINER GARDENS

Types of Gardens



TRADITIONAL GARDENS



FRUIT TREES AND BUSHES



Types of Gardens



**COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL GARDENS-
SO MANY BENEFITS!**

Popular Gardening Fundraiser Ideas



PLANT SALES

Organizing seedling and plant sales allows schools to sell flowers, herbs, and vegetables, generating funds while promoting environmental awareness and community involvement.

Growing flowers to cut and sell as bouquets.



SEED PACKET SALES

Purchase in bulk. Create your own seed packets to sell. Selling custom-branded seed packets is an excellent way to engage the community, promoting gardening while raising funds for health and wellness programs.



GARDEN-THEMED WORKSHOPS

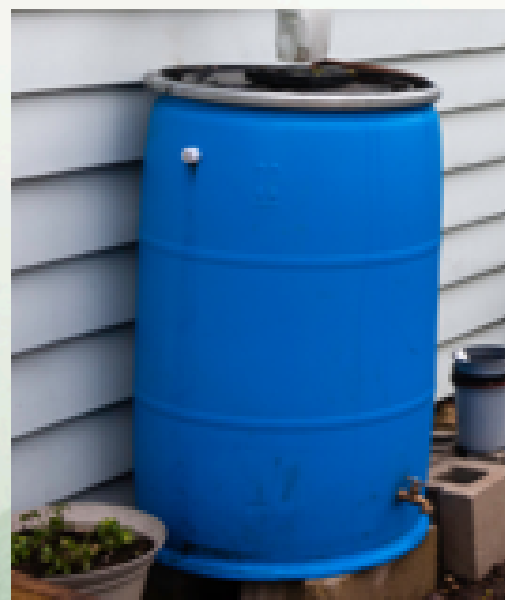
Hosting workshops on gardening techniques or sustainable practices provides educational opportunities and fosters community connections, all while supporting fundraising efforts for schools.

Salsa, Italian, Herbs
Composting workshop

Popular Gardening Fundraiser Ideas

FUNDRAISING USING GARDENING RELATED PRODUCTS

Organizing sales related to gardening.
Consider purchasing in bulk and reselling.



RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP

Build and take home your own rain barrel

Hosts from Cattaraugus County Soil & Water and Cornell Climate Stewards will guide you through the process of creating and using your own rain barrel. Materials included!

You will learn:

- The benefits of rain barrels
- Step-by-step building process
- Installation instructions
- Maintenance and safety tips

For more information, contact
sbrucato@cattcoswcd.org



Price:
\$65

Date & Time:
15 May, 2026
04:30 PM to
6:30 PM

Location:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of
Cattaraugus County
28 Parkside Dr, Ellicottville NY

Register Here or Visit

https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/RainBarrel_May26_258

Cornell
Climate
Stewards



SEED SWAPS NATIONAL SEED SWAP DAY HELD THE LAST SATURDAY IN JANUARY

Hosting seed swaps provides educational opportunities and fosters community connections, all while supporting fundraising efforts for schools.



ONLINE PLANT SALE

We partnered with My Home Park- an online nursery that offers a curated selection of native plants.

<https://www.myhomepark.com/>

Host Community Events

ART IN THE GARDEN / ART IN THE PARK

Inviting local artists and students to paint or draw in the garden. Garden inspired pieces to be auctioned off.

THEMED DINNERS

Host a Farm-to-Table themed event -Charge attendees for a locally sourced and chef prepared Farm-to-Table dinner.

PLANTING PARTIES

Purchasing in bulk is beneficial and cost saving.
Sell garden kits - prepared container kits, herbs, flowers, vegetables
Make and Take - provide variety of plants or garden themed
Gifts for gardener's or Mother's Day - Garden Bucket with tools, gloves.

MAKE AND SELL GARDEN THEMED CRAFTS OR HOST CRAFT PARTIES!





Fundraising also supports learning

STUDIES SHOW INCREASES IN PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE AND MATH, PROMOTES SOCIAL LEARNING, AND INCREASES IN HEALTHIER WELL BEING.

ENGAGING IN FUNDRAISERS WILL SUPPORT THIS LEARNING!

National Institute of Health studies states: Implementation of gardening opportunities provide essential hands-on learning that boosts student engagement in science and health by promoting active, experiential education. These initiatives significantly improve student knowledge of plant life, enhance nutritional awareness, increase willingness to eat vegetables, and promote healthier, active lifestyles. This makes gardening an invaluable learning tool.

National Institutes of Health- February 27, 2023

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10005652/#:~:text=Community%20gardens%20are%20used%20in,15,17,18%5D>

Successful School Garden that gives back

SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND NON PROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

Together with its partners and grants, this school created a school garden using it not only as a teaching space but it also provided students with hands on experiences as interns working in the garden that provided the cafeteria with fresh vegetables. They added a compost area and using scraps from the kitchen, are creating organic matter (FREE!) to amend the soil next growing season. Plans to expand this space demonstrates the success of this project. These efforts have fostered community spirit, and educated students about gardening, resulting in increased participation and enthusiasm.





Getting Started with Planning

ASSESSING YOUR RESOURCES IS IMPORTANT!

Before you start-
Evaluate your school or community space, tools, and soil quality to determine the best setup for a successful gardening fundraiser. Soil testing is important to optimize plant growth.

PARTNER WITH NURSERIES OR LOCAL GROWERS

Collaborate with your local Extension Offices, nurseries or gardening clubs for expert advice, resources, and potential donations to enhance your fundraising efforts.

PLAN YOUR CALENDAR AND TIMELINE!

Develop a seasonal fundraising calendar that aligns with planting and harvesting cycles to maximize engagement and participation from the community.

GRANTS! TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY OPPORTUNITIES!

Timeline for Fundraiser

MONTH 1

Plan activities and gather resources for success.

MONTH 2-3

Start seeds indoors and prepare for planting.

MONTH 4

Market the event and engage community support.



Overcoming Challenges in Gardening Fundraisers

LIMITED EXPERIENCE

Schools and communities often face limited gardening experience; partnering with your local experts will provide knowledge and guidance to ensure successful fundraising efforts.

Trend planting native species requires some specialized knowledge.

WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS

Weather unpredictability can affect outdoor events; incorporating indoor options for alternative planning allows flexibility.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

“A license is not required to sell fruits or vegetables that have been grown and harvested.” (NY.gov)

There are some other considerations selling plants. (invasives, disease)

Engaging Your Community

GARDEN TOURS

Hosting garden tours allows community members to explore the beauty and benefits of school and community gardens; this will foster greater appreciation and potential support for future initiatives.

RECIPE BOOKS

Offering garden-themed recipe books showcases the benefits of fresh produce, encouraging healthy eating habits while generating additional funds for school programs.

START SMALL

Begin with a pilot gardening fundraiser to test ideas, gauge interest, and build community engagement.
Seedling Sales are good start.

SHARE AND CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES!

Document your experiences and outcomes to inspire others; sharing stories at conferences can motivate more schools and communities to start gardening fundraisers.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Building community connections will often result in generous donations, materials or contributions. Reach out to local gardening clubs and organizations for support, resources, and partnerships to enhance your initiative's success and reach.
Example: A local tree service is donating chips to add to compost.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Using social media platforms will boost your program or event. Creating social media campaigns highlights your progress and achievements, while building community connections that often results in more families getting involved with gardening efforts.

Questions?



GROWING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Thank You!

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