

YOUTH GARDEN GRANT WINNERS Evaluation Summary – 2008



The National Gardening Association surveys Youth Garden Grant recipients to capture quantitative and qualitative data on the grants' impact. The following is a summary of results from winners of the 2008 grant cycle.

Grant package: 100 \$250 and 50 \$500 gift cards to The Home Depot
Curricula and books from NGA

Number of applicants: 714

Number of recipients: 150

Number of evaluation respondents: 123*

Following is a summary of the highlights from those responses.

Number of participants in Youth Garden Grant-winning programs:

Age 2-5 (preschool-K).....	7,252
Ages 6-8 (grades 1-3).....	10,010
Ages 9-11 (grades 4-6).....	9,107
Ages 12-13 (grades 7-8).....	3,432
Ages 14-18 (grades 9-12).....	2,171
Ages 18+ (adults).....	1,501
Total participants	33,473

Demographic information:

Anglo American	47%
Latino	22%
African American	17%
Asian.....	9%
Other	4%
Native American	1%
Male.....	53%
Female.....	47%

Eligible for free or reduced lunch program36%

Months of the year respondents conducted gardening programs:

Average8 months/year
Range.....1 to 12 months/year

Hours per week a participating child/youth was involved in gardening activities:

Average3 hours/week
Range1 to 30 hours/week

Program continuation:

Respondents indicating they plan to continue their program next year99%

Type of audiences participating in these programs:

In-school	67%
After-school.....	61%
Special Needs	53%
Summer program/camp	33%
Community gardeners	32%
Gifted & Talented.....	24%
Preschool/Head Start.....	19%
Intergenerational	16%
Youth Club	11%
Church/Youth Group	7%
Home school.....	5%

Program leaders noted student improvements in these characteristics:

Environmental attitude.....	94%
Social skills	91%
Self-confidence	87%
Attitude towards school	87%
Community spirit.....	86%
Leadership skills.....	80%
Volunteerism	79%
Nutritional attitude.....	67%
Scholastic achievement	64%
Motor skills	55%

“Students with varied backgrounds worked together to create our garden. Most chose garden work over recess, and they learned better when we taught in the context of the garden. Students read and wrote about plants, worms, and pollinators; observed and hypothesized about plant growth; and solved garden-related math problems. Teachers are excited to find more ways to incorporate the garden into our academic curricula.”

— Connie White,
Enos Garcia Elementary, NM



*Eight programs requested a deadline extension for this report. Winners failing to submit an evaluation are ineligible to apply for future grants.

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Location of winners responding:

Urban	49%
Suburban	28%
Rural	23%

Reported evidence documenting the effectiveness of these programs:

Positive feedback from participants	97%
Positive feedback from family members	88%
Positive community feedback	80%
Positive feedback from administrators.....	80%
Funding and donations	62%
Decreased disciplinary actions.....	29%
Positive survey results	29%
Awards and recognition	28%
Improved attendance rates	15%
Improved test scores.....	9%

Subjects taught through these programs:

Science	92%
Health and nutrition	67%
Community service.....	63%
Math	55%
Intra/interpersonal relationships	44%
Arts	43%
English	39%
Interdisciplinary	35%
Cultural studies/issues	33%
Social studies.....	27%
Physical education.....	27%
History.....	17%
Other	11%

Compliance with State and National Education Standards:

Programs connected to State and National Education Standards.....	63%
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Importance of linking program to the standards:

Mandatory	12%
Very important.....	26%
Important.....	16%
Somewhat important.....	15%
Not important.....	18%
N/A	13%

Percentage of time spent on instructional techniques (note: this is the average of all the responses for each technique):

Adult-led investigation/hands-on activities	28%
Collaborative project work	25%
Student-led investigation/hands-on activities.....	21%
Independent Learning.....	13%
Lecture	11%

Source of curriculum used by gardening programs:

Combined materials from numerous sources	63%
Original material.....	59%
Nonprofit organization (such as NGA or Life Lab)	33%
State education department.....	22%
Cooperative Extension (such as 4-H or JMG)	17%
School district	15%
Other	8%
For-profit corporation.....	2%

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“One parent reported, ‘My daughter just loves the garden. Sometimes, it’s the only reason she comes to school.’

— Gemma Sage, Roosevelt Senior High School, DC



“Our garden had a huge impact on known classroom ‘trouble makers.’ Over and over, when these children got their hands in the dirt, they relaxed, their focus was completely on task, and they became leaders. I look forward to working with my new leaders and giving them an opportunity to become known as the ‘good guys.’

— Cara Ball, Terrace Park K-8 School, WA

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Approximate amount of money spent on these programs:

Less than \$250	7%
\$250 to \$500	22%
\$500 to \$1,000	22%
\$1,000 to \$1,500	12%
\$1,500 to \$2,000	10%
\$2,000 to \$2,500	3%
More than \$2,500	24%

Approximate value of in-kind donations to gardening programs:

Less than \$250	13%
\$250 to \$500	25%
\$500 to \$1,000	16%
\$1,000 to \$1,500	10%
\$1,500 to \$2,000	10%
\$2,000 to \$2,500	2%
More than \$2,500	24%

Percentage of funding programs received from other sources (note: this is the average of all the responses for each source):

Grants	50%
Donations	18%
Parent or Volunteer	
Organizations	9%
Fundraising	7%
School or School	
District Funds	6%
Instructor's pocket	6%

Publicity received by programs:

Newsletter articles	239
Web site features	112
Newspaper articles	111
TV features	18
Radio features	12

Type of organizations responding:

Public school	52%
Nonprofit agency	25%
Private school	12%
Community garden	3%
Charter school	3%
Other	3%

Alternative school	1%
Civic or garden club	1%

Community interaction and additional impacts noted by respondents:

Every student has tasted at least one fruit or vegetable that he or she had never seen before, and many have tried numerous foods for the first time. I hear regularly from parents that their children now request fresh vegetables and fruits at home.

— Roxanne Crittenden,
Bidwell Elementary School, CA



This program helps youth acquire job and life skills and provides an alternative to activities that can get them in trouble. They learn cooperation and leadership and gain self-esteem. They sample new vegetables, learn to prepare them, and bring produce home to their families. They proudly provide produce to those in need. In 'before' and 'after' surveys, most changed from having little interest in growing some of their own food to having high interest in doing so. Many have gone on to health internships and well-paid city jobs. Thank you for supporting our program!

— Kim Allen, Berkeley Youth
Alternatives, CA



Our young gardeners exhibit such interest and joy in the garden! They explore it constantly, looking for insects, flowers and vegetables; pulling weeds; yelling for someone to look at how long the bean vines are; and hopping from one stepping stone to the next. They take turns unwinding the hose, guiding it

We created our gardens to give inner-city children hands-on experience with nature. Many had never worked in a garden and they loved it!

All the students are proud when passers-by comment on the garden and the students' hard work. Both the tangible and intangible rewards will stay with these children, who have learned to love and appreciate plants and nature. The grant funds, literature, and newsletters from the NGA made an enormous impact on our students and our school community. Thank you.

— Vicki Boase,
Palmer School, MI



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between fence posts and plants, reeling it back in, finding the faucet key, filling watering cans. You can only imagine their excitement the day we pulled up the carrots and turnips and had a garden party. They are proud, enthusiastic, cooperative, and full of joy in this garden.

— Theresa Neustrom,
Daspit Elementary, LA



Many students entered our summer program with no concrete understanding of where their food comes from. When asked, one student explained that ‘food comes from the supermarket.’ Working in the garden has helped students make the connection between natural processes in the outside world and food on their plates.

— Heidi Erbe, Day School
Summerbridge, CA



Students were amazed to learn that bulbs are planted differently than seeds, that potatoes develop underground, and that roses can be grafted together to develop an entirely new color. We heard, ‘I did it myself!’ over and over again.

— Mariel York,
Queen Anne School, MD



This project’s academic and social impact are clearly documented by the student assessment results and the pride they’ve taken in this project. Students learned how important environmental conservation and restoration are.

— Christine Voigt, J.D.
Environmental Center K-8, FL



Our gardening program had a huge impact on student motivation. They were willing to learn just about anything outdoors! They took extreme pride in the fact that they accomplished all that was done in the garden: planting, weeding, mulching, making sculptures.

— Lynn Thornton,
Pigeon River Elementary, WI



They “get it!” Each participant’s personal growth during our Bee Garden program has been astounding. Watching children becoming stewards of their environment has been one of the greatest outcomes. They’ve learned the connections between maintaining a healthy environment, caring for pollinators, successful yield in crops, reproduction of important flora, and the health and wellbeing of humans and wildlife. The journey each child has traveled while putting these connections together has taught him or her to recognize their own capability to be creative and imaginative.

— Mona Urbina, Pacifica 4-H, CA

In the garden students made real-life connections between classroom lessons and hands-on experience. Designing a vegetable garden, building beds, shoveling soil, planting seeds, weeding, watering, managing pests, and harvesting crops were new experiences for most of them. These activities helped students to learn cooperatively and develop skills like estimation, measurement, design, scale drawing, and problem solving. Many students had never grown anything before this gardening program. Thank you!

— Donna Wasserbach,
RICA–Baltimore/Catonsville
Education Center, MD

