

COOL SEASON SEEDS

Fall lesson

Activity: Plant seeds of cool-season edible crops, flowers, herbs

Goal: Get our fall/winter edibles started; students learn about winter vs. summer crops; students learn about seed packet information

Supplies: all tools and supplies in Science Garden Shed

- >seeds (shared among classes),**
- >scissors/paper clips (to open, secure seed packets)**
- >wooden sticks to label seeded areas**
- >permanent marker for labels**
- >blank seedpacket copies: internet search "seed packet template"**

Lesson plan

Prepare the soil in your garden boxes--dig, weed and amend with our school-made compost. In each box make a pattern of sticks laid out to divide the box into 8 squares. To get a diversity of crops in each box, you can plant a different kind of seed in each square ("square foot gardening"). As you plan the location of each crop, remember that taller plants should be planted on the north side of the box so they don't shade shorter plants. Make sure you label what you plant.

The actual seed planting will not take much time at all so it will be useful to have other activities available. Perhaps you can find some sweeping, raking or path weeding. You can also have students study the seed packets (see notes below) or perhaps make their own seed packets from the blank template in the shoebox. Make extra photocopies of the template as you need them.

One way to organize the planting (especially for younger students) is for students to line up around the box in a single file line. As they

come to the front of the line, they should receive a pinch of seeds from you. They plant the seeds then go to the end of the line. As they go through the line again, they plant a different crop.

Make sure to water gently when done.

Seed packet information

As you plant the seeds with each group, show them all the amazing information that you can find on the seed packet. There is a lot of information about the plant: the appearance of the new seedlings appear, the mature size of the plant, when it will be ready to pick, etc. There is a lot of math that you can point out. Note that some crops like to grow in the summer, while other crops prefer the cooler weather of fall to spring. Follow the seed packet directions. Feel free to plant our crops more densely than what the packet says. Note that the smaller the seed, the shallower it is typically planted.

Make your own seed packet: Search the internet for "seed packet template." There are many cute choices out there. Students can cut out, decorate, and glue to make their own seed packet for their own made-up plant or for some real plant seeds that you may have collected.