



## **6 Season Garden Maintenance Guide**

### **SUMMER: Mid June - Mid August**

#### **Main Objective - Prepare the garden for the school year to begin:**

1. Keep summer crops healthy and productive into the beginning of the school year so there is food to harvest and eat when school is back in session.
  - Weekly or bi-weekly watering, weeding, harvesting, pruning and pest control needed
2. Plant the next succession of crops so students have food when summer crops come to an end.
  - Direct seed second planting of cucumbers, squash, corn in early July
  - Start brassicas (kale, collards, broccoli, etc.) inside under grow lights in early August
3. Familiarize yourself with the garden as a teaching space and inventory supplies.
  - Plan how you will utilize the garden space with the students, from seating to stations for smaller or self-guided group work
  - Gain access to the shed or find out where tools and supplies are stored

### **BEGINNING of SCHOOL YEAR: Late August - September**

#### **Main Objective - Jump right in and engage students in the summer garden:**

1. Harvest productive summer crops.
  - Harvest tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, basil, etc. for tasting, snacks, and meals
2. Maintain and refresh summer garden.
  - Keep summer crops going as long as possible with plenty of water, weeding, pest control, and harvesting
  - Perennials, such as fruit trees, herbs, and pollinator garden need watering, weeding, and mulching at this time
  - Label plants with appropriate signage
3. Remove summer crops that are done and plant fall seeds and seedlings.
  - Pull out finished summer crops, add compost or fertilizer, and direct seed carrots, radishes, lettuce mix, peas and mustard greens.
  - Transplant brassica seedlings started in August into prepared garden beds

## **FALL: October - November**

### **Main Objective - Keep garden growing:**

1. Harvest and remove remaining summer crops.
  - By this time all summer crops will be done. Harvest for food and prepare beds for fall seedlings by removing crops, adding compost and loosening the soil.
  - Exception- For seed saving, leave plants in ground to dry (i.e. beans, okra, or kale)
  - Check fruit trees for pears, apples, persimmons or figs
  
2. Plant seedlings, cover crop, and overwintering crops.
  - Transplant remaining brassica seedlings started in August into the garden bed early in October
  - Plant cover crop seeds (i.e. rye, winter wheat, crimson clovers, daikon radishes) to hold soil and nutrients in place over the winter and early spring
  - Plant garlic and onion bulbs, strawberry plants, and woody perennials (fruit trees, blackberries, blueberries) for overwintering and mulch heavily with straw
  
3. Water, weed, thin, harvest and explore perennial plants.
  - Continue to engage students in garden maintenance to keep plants healthy and productive
  - Thin directly planted seeds so there is enough space between each plant
  
4. Begin winterization projects.
  - Mulch crops heavily
  - Install row cover and hoops to prevent frost damage

## **EARLY WINTER: December - January**

### **Main Objective - Put the garden to sleep:**

1. Final Harvest.
  - Harvest remaining fall crops, except for those that are overwintering (i.e. carrots, hardy greens, covercrop, garlic)
  - Harvest dried seeds and save for spring planting (i.e. bean pods, okra pods, perennial flowers)
2. Complete winterization projects.
  - Make sure row cover is intact
3. Clean up.
  - Put signage and other weather sensitive equipment back in storage for the winter

## **LATE WINTER: February - Mid March**

### **Main Objective - Plan for spring:**

1. Use or create a map template of your garden for students to design.
  - Use or create a blank map (bird eye view) of the garden. Have students label existing garden infrastructure, perennial plants, garden sections. Be creative and envision your garden for the spring and summer. What plants do you want to grow? What infrastructure improvements could be made? What fun/celebratory garden elements can you incorporate?
2. Start seeds indoors with grow lights.
  - Gather supplies for starting seedlings indoors. You will need grow lights, seed trays and cells, soil mix, and seeds
  - Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards, celery are all ideal crops to start indoors under the grow light and transplant as mature seedlings later in the spring
3. Create garden signs.
  - Inventory your garden signs. Replace damaged signs, or create new signs based off what you will be planting this year.

## **EARLY SPRING: Late March - April**

### **Main Objective - Wake up your garden and plant:**

1. Prepare your annual beds and clean up your perennial beds.
  - Turn in covercrop, remove mulch, and add compost and fertilizer to your annual beds
  - Prune back your dead woody perennials, remove dead herbs or pollinator plants, clear brush to slightly expose new growth, and add mulch around new growth
  
2. Plant spring crops and refresh perennials.
  - Direct seed peas, corn, lettuce, spinach, radishes, turnips (hakeri), mustard mix, potato tubers
  - Transplant more frost tolerant kale, collards, and broccoli seedlings
  - Plant any new woody herbs, berries, or perennial pollinator plants
  
3. Refresh your garden teaching space.
  - Begin to put signage back out in garden as you plant
  - reorganize shed
  - Define garden stations and sections

## **SPRING: May - Mid June**

### **Main Objective - Keep up with the spring garden:**

1. Harvest early and late spring crops.
  - Early: lettuce, radishes, peas, turnips, mustard greens
  - Late: strawberries, kale, collards, celery, potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, garlic (the last three may not be ready before school is out )
2. Plant summer crops and pollinator plants.
  - Transplant tomatoes, eggplant, peppers after threat of frost
  - Sprout sweet potatoes and transplant slips
  - direct seed pollinator mix, sunflowers, etc.
3. Weed, water, fertilize, mulch, thin!
  - There are a lot of weeds to keep up with in the spring. Weed, and mulch around crops with straw as soon as possible
  - Thin seedlings when they come up so they have enough room to grow
  - Top dress with compost or fertilizer if needed
  - Heavily mulch perennials with wood/leaf mulch and annuals with straw to prevent soil from drying out as fast
4. Clean up garden for summer break and establish summer maintenance plan.
  - Remove all spring crops that are done or infested with pests or disease
  - Put valuables in storage
  - What is the plan for summer maintenance?