

“Ideas for Green House and Kids”

Kay Johnson,
Master Gardener
Hickory Hills School Garden Mentor

Activities for the kids

1. Break class into 4 groups and have them involved in 4 teaching stations around the green house.
2. Growing in containers, vegetables and flowers and things to eat. Have the parents donate the large pots- 16" and larger. Up to and including half barrel size. Old rusty wheelbarrow, 5 gallon buckets or anything that will hold soil.
3. Popcorn. Plant in large pot, the kids can see it grow, we will talk about pollinating, watch the ears form , then harvest and shell it and talk a teacher into popping it so students can eat it. Use the stalks for decoration downstairs.
4. Kids want to grow carrots, potatoes, tomatoes in the beds or pots along with early lettuce or radishes.
5. Teach the kids to grow produce to donate to Ozarks Food Harvest. Maybe you would like to have a field trip there first?
6. Kids transplant one native plant to take home at end of school year.
7. Competition within a classroom for the biggest, the first, the prettiest or the most of something with a rotating trophy as a prize like a plastic sweet potato or a plastic sunflower. Judged similar to the fair with a sample on a paper plate, just like the fair. Work in teams rather than individuals. Maybe enter the fair.
8. Collect seeds from the wildflowers around the school and identify them by looks and smell. Actually do some thrashing of the seeds.
9. Educate the kids about the gardens on the school campus. Include information about the identity of the plants, their purpose and the care of them.
10. Make check lists for the children to identify things they see in the greenhouse or gardens.
11. Sensory garden experiences to see, feel, smell, and maybe a taste of mints or something else but tell them not to taste anything without an adult saying it is ok.
12. Let kids grow a plant in clear container so they can see the root system, it could be a classroom project.
13. Growing herbs
14. Greenhouse field day: kids can explore and ask any questions they want about the greenhouse or the flower beds or insects or whatever.
15. Do some research in the gardens, i.e. how many insects go to native plants as compared to how many go to exotics.
16. Student of the day or week allowed to work in the greenhouse with the volunteers for one day or one hour period.

17. Give an information sheet to students about how to care for the native plant they are taking home, as it also educates the parents.
18. Purchase ladybugs. Have a class or a few classes help with the release of the ladybugs.

Ideas for Teachers

19. Check with the teachers about growing something that the kids can care for over the summer . Use the project to teach kids about thinning and weeding, etc.
20. Encourage all the teachers to use the gardens to teach counting, shapes , colors, art, history, etc.
21. Greenhouse volunteers go to classroom and talk about a topic from the greenhouse or the gardens or flowers or vegetables .
22. Classrooms or grades adopt a flower or vegetable as a mascot of sorts.

Study topics

23. Talk about the ecosystem. How the things are connected in the circle of life. The students will be responsible for the environment some day and they need to know as much as possible about it.
24. Purpose of native plants and how they assist the environment. Compare and contrast this to the exotic annuals.
25. Study topic: how do seeds get distributed? Fur baring animals, birds, rain, wind, and people.
26. Study topic : the importance of diversity in plants, the environment, and the insects.
27. Coordinating the greenhouse activities with the curriculum .
28. Use projection microscope or magnifying glasses to let the kids look at plants and or insects from the gardens.
29. Study topic: How hybrids compare to heirlooms
30. Study topic: Toads and frogs maybe have someone from Dept. of Conservation could present how important they are.
31. Study topic: What is a native plant and why should we plant them? Some of the points are:
 - Conserve water
 - No chemicals
 - No fertilizer
 - Less gasoline (no mowing)
 - Less pollution (no mowing)
 - Why it is important to conserve the environment
 - Less footprint, cleaner air and water
32. Study topic: Fish and Frogs
33. Study topic: responsibility of taking care of your own plants

Volunteer ideas

34. Green house tee shirts?
35. Cold frame for lettuce, radish, cabbages, etc. to see how it grows in cold frames for early gardens .
36. Volunteers have lunch with the students
37. Support our local growers at the Farmer's Market
38. Future Idea: Making a community garden on the school campus or a student garden with parent assistance.
39. Find ways to support the teachers in any way we can.
40. Volunteers bring an object from the greenhouse to the classroom and discuss it.
41. Volunteers present at PTA to get more parent awareness and involvement in the volunteer greenhouse project.
42. Have they ever been to a farmers market?
43. Grow your own Veggies and support local farmers .
44. Have you ever been responsible for growing your own plant at home?
45. Take and root cuttings of wandering Jew.
46. Cut and plant potatoes.
47. Root an african violet leaf.