

Bronze Award



Prepared as part of the
Food for Life Partnership



Welcome

This manual supports the food growing aspect of the Food for Life Partnership Mark. It seeks to inspire, educate and give you the confidence to achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold awards by demonstrating gardening skills and suggesting approaches for community inclusion.

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Food growing at Bronze Award



Here you will find a whole range of information and practical, exciting activities to support you in achieving the food growing and community criteria of the Food for Life Partnership Bronze Mark Award.

There is nothing quite like the sense of satisfaction and enjoyment you will get from harvesting your own fresh, organically grown food.

For those of you who have already achieved Bronze, reference is made on how to attain the growing and community aspect of the Silver and Gold Awards.

Remember gardening is not an exact science so don't be put off if sometimes plants don't grow successfully. There are many reasons for this, not least weather, soil type and plant varieties, so experiment to find the plants that do well in your garden.

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BI.I Criteria for Bronze Award



There are two important parts to the Bronze criteria; the Food for Life Partnership Award Criteria to achieve and the specific Award Guidance for growing. In the manual you will find a whole range of information and practical, exciting activities to support you in achieving the food growing elements of the Bronze Award and link it with other food education activity, food leadership, and food culture and community involvement.

Food for Life Partnership Award Criteria to achieve

Food leadership

- The School Nutrition Action Group has led a review of food culture in school, and actions have been agreed
- Action is being taken to maximise the uptake of free school meals
- Pupils and parents are consulted on school meal improvements
- Parents are kept informed of lunch menus and food education activity
- Parents are given the opportunity to attend school lunches if they wish

Food quality and provenance

- No undesirable additives and hydrogenated fats
- At least 75% of dishes on the menu are freshly prepared
- Meat is farm assured as a welfare minimum. Eggs are from cage-free hens
- Menus are seasonal and in-season produce is highlighted
- Menus cater well for all dietary needs in the school population
- Continuous professional development is available to catering staff, including training in fresh food preparation
- A member of catering staff is encouraged to get involved in food education activities, with the support of the school

(for delivery by the caterer in partnership with the school)

Food education

- Healthy and sustainable food is used as a theme for assemblies
- Opportunities are given for cooking activities, and this is linked to curriculum learning
- Opportunities are given for some pupils to grow and harvest food and make compost, and this is linked to curriculum learning
- The school organises an annual farm visit for one or more year groups, and this is linked to curriculum learning

Food culture and community involvement

- Pupils have been asked to suggest improvements to the dining experience and a plan is in place to implement the best ideas
- Free drinking water is provided for pupils throughout the school day
- Lunchtime supervisors promote a calm and positive dining experience and help pupils with food choices
- An annual event is held on a food theme for pupils and the wider community
- The school has made a commitment to phase out flight trays
- The school makes efforts to engage parents and/or the wider community in the school growing and cooking activities

Food for Life Partnership Award Criteria to achieve (page 2)

- Parents are kept informed of lunch menus and food education activity
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Award Guidance for growing

Stage 1: Getting started			
School staff/pupils	Community	Growing area/crops	Organic principles
<p>Establish a Garden Group (see GN8 and B2.3)</p> <p>Consider why you are growing and what you want to achieve ('whole garden' and organic mindset)</p> <p>Make decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to obtain resources to develop growing area • How to involve pupils, community and key staff in plans for the growing space and activities • How to increase/sustain involvement, eg encouraging ownership, gardening club, etc • How to inform the school, parents, and community about the garden, eg in newsletters/website <p>Begin linking the growing area with the curriculum for at least two subjects (GN6)</p> <p>Begin to plan rotas, funding, and where harvests are used, eg cooking/school meals</p>	<p>Begin/increase community involvement, eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to local organisations, such as allotment associations, voluntary groups, etc • Recruit/involve volunteers • Plan community group activity events, eg digging party <p>Plan an annual event on a food theme</p> <p>Hold talks and demonstrations to increase participation</p> <p>Try to get messages home to the community about organic/sustainable growing and its health benefits</p>	<p>Growing area</p> <p>Build suitable garden infrastructure, eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop growing area • Raised beds • Paths • Shed • Greenhouse/polytunnel • Compost bins • Water butts • Containers <p>Use local materials and sustainable sources where possible</p> <p>Obtain resources for growing, eg tools, pots, trays, composts, cloches, etc</p> <p>Plant and harvest a selection of crops, preferably grown to the 'Garden Organic Guidelines' (see DVD)</p> <p>Growing crops</p> <p>Decide what to grow and produce a planting plan, labelling plants for identification and considering crop rotation</p>	<p>Manage soil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify basic soil characteristics and improve as required, eg digging to reduce soil compaction • Source and employ simple methods for using organic matter (eg compost), top-soil, and other soil conditioners/fertilisers <p>Manage pests, diseases, and weeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify common pests and diseases and ways of managing, eg start using traps, barriers, beneficial insects, etc • Remove/control weeds <p>Manage resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start making compost from garden/kitchen waste • Identify materials that could be recycled in a garden, eg for plant containers • Be aware of water-saving techniques • Dispose of waste in a sustainable way
<p>Health and Safety – Provide local guidance for all activities related to the growing area and people involvement. See also B3.3</p>			



B2.1 Getting people involved



A major part of the Food for Life Partnership is to get as many people involved as possible. This raises awareness of food provenance and healthy eating, plus links between food and the wider environment.

Including the whole school and wider community brings many benefits. The range of knowledge and skills is far greater and ‘many hands make light work’! Involvement needn’t be difficult or time consuming. Instead it can be rewarding and take many forms, from advice and materials to practical gardening. The following looks at the essentials of making a start for the Bronze Award.

For B2.2 and B2.3 there is an Activity or Template suitable for pupils and the community. See the DVD.

B2.2	Planning early involvement	<i>A1 and 2, T1</i>	Page 5
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B2.4	Gardening in school		Page 8
Further	Material for Silver and Gold Awards <i>More ideas and activities for involvement</i>		Next booklet



B2.2 Planning early involvement



‘Involving people’ is a broad concept, but the message for the **Bronze Award** is simple: people bring life into a garden with energy and ideas, aspirations and needs. **Bronze** begins to include people through easy and manageable steps over time. Here, involvement is about building support.

Silver and **Gold Awards** require further involvement and broader links, but the success of **Silver** and **Gold** relies on the work done at **Bronze**.

Who should be involved?

Make a list of everyone who might have an interest in growing food in your school garden. Include people both inside and outside school (see table for an example).

Prioritise who should be contacted to get things moving. Discuss early ideas and identify the key players and possible project champions. Plan any political steps and how best to approach and inform people. Aim to develop a network of engaged and knowledgeable supporters as your research and contacts grow.

Formal decision making is best directed through the Garden Group (see B2.3), supported by the ‘School Nutrition Action Group’, or SNAG (see Guidance Notes booklet).

Inside school

Pupils Different ages and interests. How and when should you approach each group? How do they get involved and what are the benefits?

Teachers Headteacher; subject teachers; etc. Any support and ideas?

Support staff Governors; caterers; teaching assistants; event/media specialist; site services; existing club/event organisers; etc. What ideas and contacts?

And more...

Outside school

Parents, guardians Parents and other family members of pupils; previous and existing volunteers. Can school newsletters inform and recruit?

Local community groups, interested parties Allotment/garden societies; farmers; council park department; volunteer societies; neighbourhood groups; environmental/conservation groups; local media; local councillors; neighbours; land owners; etc. Any advice, funding, concerns, ideas?

Local businesses Existing school contacts/contractors; nearby firms; local companies in the news; garden retailers; etc. Any sponsorship, ideas, volunteers?

And more...



Digging day at Greenfields Community School. A26



Making an apple bird feeder. A30



Building a raised bed. A10

Some practical suggestions

Here are some tips for early involvement. See also A1 and 2 about organising garden events and the Silver and Gold booklet for further ideas once the early support is established.

- 1 Invite parents (with their children) to a meeting to share ideas for the garden. Provide refreshments, something that the pupils have made in school. Ask the parents what they can offer, whether ideas, practical help, advice or donation of tools. Invite them to sign up for specific tasks.
- 2 Encourage pupils to grow at home by giving them a seed or plant to take away and look after. This ideally suits curriculum work and pupils can report back on progress. It could also result in a competition.
- 3 Run garden activities at other school events, such as the summer fair. You could show people how to make a hibernation house or sow a mini salad garden in a container or pot.
- 4 Invite parents to a digging day where they get the opportunity to garden alongside their child at school. This could be followed by a school lunch.

Top tip



Selling and swapping

Hold a plant sale and invite parents and the local community to donate plants. The school could also host a 'swap day', where excess seeds or produce can be exchanged. See Silver and Gold booklet for ideas and tips for selling plants and saving seed. You could also publish a 'wanted items' list in the school newsletter.

Activities on DVD

- A1 Hosting an annual event
- A2 Organising a gardening day
- T1 Event checklist

Further information

- Guidance Notes booklet
- Silver and Gold booklet material about community involvement



B2.3 Starting a Garden Group



A Garden Group consists of staff, pupils and members of the wider community who work together to review and develop the school garden. The aim is to widen involvement in the garden and to build in processes and support to ensure the long term sustainability of the garden. This means that the garden will survive when staff, pupils and parents move away from the school.

Typical membership

Ideally the Garden Group should have a core of regular members, but others could be invited as required. It's also a good idea to allow for future community involvement following publicity of the garden plans.

The group should have at least one representative from the school staff, some children from the school council or existing gardening club and community members.

Catering staff should be invited to be involved and attend meetings.

School Nutrition Action Group

The Garden Group needs to work alongside the School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG). A SNAG is a school-based alliance that works together to review and improve the school food service and adopts a whole school approach to food education and culture.

It normally includes teaching staff, pupils and caterers, supported by health and education professionals and the local community. A member of the Garden Group should also attend SNAG meetings to feedback any decisions made.



Shipston High School, Warwickshire

Activities on DVD	T2 Garden Group membership
Further information	Silver and Gold booklet about community involvement Garden Organic www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools



B2.4 Gardening in school



Gardening is a great way of getting young people growing their own fruit and vegetables and, crucially, raising their awareness of where food comes from and healthy eating. It's equally good for involving the whole school in helping to transform food culture. No matter whether you only have space for a few containers or have a larger plot, you'll be able to create a wonderful garden. The following should help get you started.

How school gardens benefit pupils

Pupils are able to get outside, enjoy fresh air and take part in physical exercise to help them to keep fit. They learn life skills, such as patience, as they care for plants plus teamwork and social interaction as they work with others towards a common goal. Pupils learn to respect others and the environment as they take ownership and have pride in what they have created. In addition, those pupils who may not have a garden at home have the chance to come into contact with nature and take part in growing.

Getting people involved

Gardening in school benefits from having a group of people involved rather than relying on one or two to do all the work. Ask for volunteers from parents and other family members. Make links with local allotment and gardening societies, garden centres and nurseries that may offer practical help and advice.

Linking gardening to the National Curriculum

Gardening can be linked to most curriculum subjects (see Guidance Notes booklet). It creates the ideal opportunity to teach subjects in a practical way, applying theory to real tasks.



Making a ladybird house.
A29



Harvesting fresh produce.
A32



Building a raised bed.
A10



Proud pupils harvesting at St Peters, Shropshire

Obtaining tools, equipment, seeds and plants

Make links with local nurseries, garden centres, supermarkets and businesses. Get pupils involved in asking for donations and sponsorship. Ask for tools, pots and seeds etc from members of your school, families and the wider community. Consider holding a plant sale or other event at school to raise funds. You may be able to apply for grants through different projects or your local council. See section on obtaining funds from local and national sources (B7.7).

Holiday care of the school garden

Set up a rota with pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and the wider community. Organise help with weeding, watering, harvesting and other necessary tasks (see B4.11).

Health & Safety	<p>When working outside or inside with plants and soil, a commonsense approach needs to be taken with respect to health and safety. Always carry out a risk assessment before gardening activities take place.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See also Health and Safety Guidelines (Section B3.3)</i></p>
Activities on DVD	<p>A17 Holiday care of the garden</p> <p>A23 Setting up a watering rota</p> <p>T6 Checklist for holiday care of the garden</p>
Further information	<p>B4.11 Holiday care of the garden</p> <p>Garden Organic for Schools: a nationwide campaign which helps children grow vegetables at school and learn more about their food. Practical organic gardening advice and lots of ideas and activity sheets www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools</p> <p>RHS School Gardening Campaign: has advice, courses and resources to help you set up your own school garden www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening</p> <p>Learning Through Landscapes: a UK school grounds charity that helps schools make the most of their outdoor spaces for play and learning www.ltl.org.uk</p> <p>BBC Breathing Places Schools: provides support and resources to create wildlife-friendly green spaces www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/schools</p>