

## Teaching Garden Lesson Descriptions

Each group that comes to the Teaching Garden will take part in three activities, a themed garden tour, a gardening activity, and an additional activity. Here you can read about the options for the themed tours and the additional activity. The gardening activity is dependent on the season and needs of the garden, it may be planting a seed, planting a transplant, pulling out a crop, watering, and/or sifting and spreading compost. Please reach out to the education coordinator with any questions regarding programming!

### Garden Tour: (Choose One\*)

#### **Five Senses:**

*Recommended for elementary*

Students will develop their observation skills by using their five senses to explore the garden. They will use each of their senses to explore a different part of the garden, students are encouraged to taste, smell, observe, and feel many different plants.

#### **Farm Friends & Foes:**

*Recommended for elementary and above*

Students will search for and observe insects and animals that either benefit or harm our plants. They will learn how farmers work with or against these creatures. Older students will discuss the difference between organic and inorganic farming and the advantages/ disadvantages of each type of farming.

#### **Seasonality**

*Recommended for 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above*

Students will learn about seasonality and the climate of New York City by observing plants in different stages of growth. They will learn about ways that farmers in New York can extend their growing season with tunnels and greenhouses. They will make connections and comparisons between what they see on supermarket shelves and what is ready for harvest.

#### **Sustainability**

*Recommended for 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above*

Students will learn about sustainable aspects of the farm including but not limited to rainwater harvesting, organic practices, and solar powered devices. They will understand the difference between organic and non-organic farming, they will discuss the difference between monoculture and polyculture and the advantages/ disadvantages of each of those types of farming.

#### **Ethnobotany**

*Recommended for middle and high school only*

Students will observe, taste, and smell various plants in the garden and learn about how humans, for generations, have used them for cooking, healing, building, wearing, or ceremonial purposes. They will begin to learn the importance of crop diversity and understand some of the ways in which humans are reliant on plants and the natural environment.

### Additional Activity: (Choose One\*)

#### **Health & Nutrition**

*Recommended for all ages*

Students will harvest vegetables from the garden while discussing the benefits of a (naturally) colorful diet. They will learn what kind of produce is available during different seasons. They will prepare and taste a garden snack.

#### **Earth as Art**

*Recommended for elementary*

Students will learn how humans have drawn creative inspiration from nature throughout history. Depending on plant availability, students may create a nature collage, make stamps with fruits and vegetables, or make impermanent art.

**Rainwater Harvesting***Recommended for elementary*

Students will learn about water conservation and rainwater harvesting systems on the farm. They will test how a rainwater harvesting system works, why it's important for our environment and water supply, and practice watering the garden with harvested rainwater.

**Flowers & Pollinators (June-October)***Recommended for all ages*

Students will observe pollinators at work in the garden. They will dissect a flower to learn the basics of plant reproduction. Students will understand that pollinators facilitate the creation of fruits. Students will pick their own flower to take home.

**Compost & Decomposers***Recommended for all ages*

Through observation and a hands-on activity, students will learn how to make compost and why farmers call it "black gold". They will learn about the bacteria, fungi, and invertebrates that help with this process. They will meet (and if willing touch) worms, pill bugs, and other critters.

**Soil not Dirt***Recommended for middle and high school only*

Students will learn how soil is made and about its different components, both organic and non-organic. They will learn about the difference between dirt and living soil, the nutrients in the soil that plants need to grow, and how the pH level affects nutrient intake. Activities may include soil pH testing, mixing potting soil, or amending beds.

**Food Systems***Recommended for middle and high school only*

Students will harvest a snack from the garden while learning about industrial and local food systems. They will learn how food gets from the field to their plate, and the advantages/ disadvantages of different food systems.

**History of Gardening in NYC***Recommended for middle and high school only*

Students will learn the history of gardening in NYC, the role that school and community gardens play in communities, and how to get involved themselves! Students will learn about Victory gardens, and the Green Guerillas and their role in the community gardening movement. Touches on the food justice movement and how community gardens align with that movement. Students will make their own seed balls to take home. Very hands on and students will be working directly with mud.

**Climate Change***Recommended for middle and high school only*

Students will understand how anthropogenic climate change is occurring. They will learn how the warming climate affects farmers and their crops. Students will understand how different actions in the transportation, agriculture, and energy sectors affect global climate change.

**\*Note: We will do our best to accommodate your choices, but final lesson decisions will be based on farm needs, seasonal availability, and staffing.**