



# Children's Gardens

Some background about educational programs. How do we do it?

# First, who decides the educational focus of a garden?

- Administrators (such as a school principal or director of a botanical garden)
- Educators (such as a teacher or garden-based learning educator)
- Parents, volunteers and other community members(?)
- Children(?)

# Educational programs are often based on how we view the benefits.

- What is important to us usually drives the educational program.
- There are lots of things young people can get from a gardening experience – what do we view as *really* critical?



# Integrating Gardening with the Curriculum

- “Real life learning.”
- “Inter-disciplinary learning.”
- Gardens can be used to teach relationships between plants and other creatures, math, science, language, history, geography, music, health and nutrition, and art.
- Academic improvement.
- Bring a curriculum to life!













# The Humble Potato

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## Underground Gold

Marcia Eames-Sheavly  
and Tracy Farrell



A Cornell Cooperative  
4-H Leader's

# The Three Sisters

## Exploring an Iroquois Garden

Marcia Eames-Sheavly



A Cornell Cooperative Extension Publication  
4-H Leader's/Member's Guide 142M15



# Benefits, continued....

- “The Basics:” activities and learning in a garden encourages fine and gross motor skills, open ended questioning, hands-on skills, and science through horticulture.







# Other benefits

- People-plant connections.
- Earth is a plant-oriented planet. The green plant is fundamental to all other life. Gardening can help us understand the interconnectedness of the living world and to improve the beauty and the quality of life here on earth.













# Focus on play and exploration

- Wonder and enchantment
- Free-flowing, open-ended play
- Developing an imagination through gardening.



# Child and Youth Development

- Gardening can be a critical component in human physical, emotional, intellectual, and even moral development.
- Gardening for children can: create a long-lasting deeply held environmental ethic, help students to connect with nature in very profound ways, give an immediate and direct connection to our food source, give students a feeling of accomplishment, and nurture a sense of community.
- Gardening can promote social skills.





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# Children and Youth Participation in Planning and Decision-making

- Young people should be viewed as resources.
- Children and youth have creative ideas and unique ways of viewing their environment that may be different from adults, but every bit as important.
- Being involved in planning, design and implementation of garden programs can be a way to become more engaged in the community.





# Of course, we mix it all up

- Gardens rarely have one, tightly focused mission.
- Educators mix and match according to theirs and others' interests, a new curriculum, new program focus, etc.

- Sometimes, programs suffer from “scope drift,” trying to do too much, for too many, with too few resources.
- Taking time like this for reflection helps us keep our focus, and determine what is most important!



# Any questions or comments?

- Do the benefits make sense?
- Which seem most important to *you*?