



**MASSACHUSETTS
FARM TO SCHOOL**

SCHOOL GARDENS 101



MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mass. Farm to School strengthens local farms and fisheries and promotes healthy communities by increasing local food purchasing and education at schools.

Get involved through our:

- Professional learning opportunities
- Networking
- Policy/Advocacy
- Communications
- Subscribe to our newsletter and stay up to date on upcoming webinars and other professional learning opportunities
- www.massfarmtoschool.org



MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL CONFERENCE

During May 16-21st, Massachusetts Farm to School (MFTS) will host our 6th statewide gathering, the MA Farm & Sea to School Conference. MFTS and planning partners aim to center the conference on youth leadership and empowerment.

The conference will be a hybrid event with virtual workshops daily and weekend in-person field trips across the state. More information can be found [here](#).



May 16-May 21

MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL INSTITUTE OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Farm to School Institute is a year-long professional learning opportunity for school (or school district) teams from across Massachusetts. The Institute kicks-off with a Fall Retreat. Benefits of participation include: Farm to School Program Development; School-Year Coaching; and Teacher & Nutrition Staff Professional Development.

Stay tuned for more information on the 2022-2023 Institute and consider creating a team for your school to apply. Look at our [website](#) for more information.



SCHOOL GARDEN 101 WORKSHOP OVERVIEW



- Funding
- Garden location
- What to plant/seeds
- Collaboration
- Summer garden care
- Resources

Our speakers today are:

- Kelly Cronin, M.Ed.: Garden Specialist Teacher, Witchcraft Heights Elementary School
- Kendra Dawsey: (former) School Programs Manager, Healthy Chelsea

FUNDING A SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECT

- **There are many ways to fund school gardens!**
- **Grants:** Lots of organizations have grants you can apply to, including:
 - Whole Kids Foundation
 - Big Green
 - Lowe's Foundation
 - Annie's
 - An incomplete list can be found here - https://www.seedyourfuture.org/educator_grants
 - Also check for state and local grant opportunities!
- **Fundraising**
 - Having a garden themed fundraiser is a great way to call attention to the garden effort and spread the word! Instead of a bake sale, think of garden themed sales like seed packet sales!
- It *is* possible to eventually have a byline for gardens in the school's budget!
- Stay tuned for DESE grant funding for farm to school activities. A recent bill passed which put 1 million dollars into the budget for Farm to School programming in MA schools.

GARDEN LOCATION: THINGS TO CONSIDER

- How much sun/shade does the area get?
- Is there a water source?
- Is the area protected from general public/unwanted animal visitors?
- Do you need special building access to maintain the garden (ex: courtyard garden)?
- Is the space accessible to all students?



RAISED BEDS OR IN THE GROUND?

Should you build raised beds or plant directly in the ground?

- What are the benefits/challenges of raised beds?
- What are the benefits/challenges of in the ground beds?



OTHER HELPFUL ADDITIONS (BUT NOT ESSENTIAL)



Other things to consider when choosing school garden location:

- Place to store garden tools
- Seating area for students
- Washing station
- Shaded area for hot or rainy days

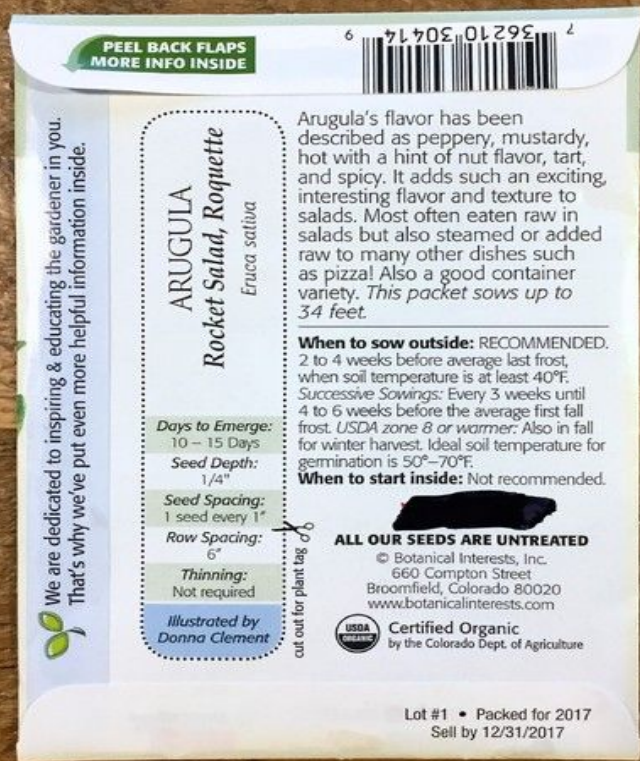
Photo courtesy of Mass Audubon

WHAT TO PLANT AND SEEDS



- Massachusetts has a limited growing season, but there are still plenty of opportunities to plant all sorts of things!
- Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant, and other summer crops fare better as seedlings (baby plants) instead of being directly planted as seeds. Many communities have farmer's markets & nurseries that sell seedlings. You can also ask organizations for donations such as The Trustees in Boston.
- Seeds are in seed packets, which have all the information you need to learn how to plant. Look on the back!

WHAT TO PLANT AND SEEDS, CONT.



- On the back of a seed packet, you can find information about:
 - Seed spacing
 - How long it takes for the plant to be ready to harvest
 - How much sun is needed
 - When to plant in the ground first
 - And more!
- If you call a seed company and say you work with a school garden, they *sometimes* will mail you free or reduced price seeds. Try it out to save money!

A seed library allows you to “borrow” seeds to plant. [This is a link](#) to MA seed libraries where you can get seeds for free.

COLLABORATION AND BUILDING A NETWORK

The 3 C's of Farm to School:

Classroom

- In-school team
- Administration
- Facilities and Maintenance support

Cafeteria

- Food and Nutrition Services Team

Community

- PTO
- Community garden organizations
- Finding other community support



Photo courtesy of Mass Audubon



Who will take care of the garden in the summer when school is not in session?

- Coordinating volunteers
- Community garden clubs
- Outside organizations
- Summer school program with curriculum connections

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Center for Ecoliteracy: Getting Started With School Gardens](#)

[Life Lab: School Garden Resources](#)

[Mass Farm to School: Webinar Series](#)

[Mass Farm to School Garden Lessons](#)

[Soil Testing at Umass Extension](#)

STAY IN TOUCH!



Visit us online: www.massfarmtoschool.org

Or reach out for any more support:

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Upcoming workshops in this series:
School Garden Food Safety: March 8
Best Practices in the School Garden: March 31
State-wide School Garden Tours in May TBD