



How to get started – Cultivation Street School Pack

Building a thriving school garden is incredibly rewarding. Here's how to get going!

1. Get people involved

Start by inviting people to join you! Chat to all your colleagues – you're bound to find willing helpers. Then ask for volunteers from among the pupils, and enlist their parents and carers too. It really is that simple!



Then think about how your local takeaway or window cleaner promotes new services and events – leaflets! How about producing postcards or flyers which you can easily stick up around the school and send home with the pupils? Use the schools social media site to advertise. It doesn't have to cost a lot.

This is also a great way to involve the children. They're brilliant with computers and could do the design for you.

2. Spread the word

Get your message out to a wider audience using the Internet too! Put a post on your school Facebook page – you're bound to have one. If not, you can also set up pages on Facebook and Twitter for your school garden – it's so easy. Many schools now use email and text messages to keep in touch with parents.

Speaking in the morning assembly or before a school performance is a great way to reach out to students.

Get in touch with your local radio station and newspaper and ask them for a shout out. Or offer to give them an interview. It might be a new experience for you, and you can raise the profile of your school garden. Don't forget to ask for plant and equipment donations from readers and listeners – you'd be amazed what people are willing to give!



[Find your closest Cultivation Street Garden Centre Ambassador here.](#)

Sponsored by



3. Choose what to grow

The most important thing to agree on when you start a school gardening adventure is what to grow! The best way to start is to ask the pupils! Sketch out some ideas to see what everyone comes up with. Veg crops are a popular choice because the children love to taste them – a brilliant way to teach pupils about food production and healthy eating! But consider wildflowers and plants for wildlife too - imagine the fun pupils will have [creating their own bug houses](#).



You can divide up the growing area so every class gets a plot, or create a community space that meets lots of needs. [Check out the specialist category winners from 2016](#) – see the different ways they have used space and community spirit.

Just remember to be realistic. The timeframe is short and some things take a lot longer to grow than others. Plan what you want it to look like, and work backwards from there to decide where to start. Finally remember to plan ahead to ensure the garden will continue to grow for seasons to come!

[Check out David's guide to the best plants for pollinators.](#)

4. Identify your resources

Get together and list the skills and resources available in the community – this could be someone lots of spare tools in their shed,

or someone who is good at budgeting. Resources come in many shapes and sizes from the colleague who can gain sponsorship and raise money, to donations of old garden furniture.

Gathering all you can at the beginning can assist in forward planning, and may save time and money along the way.

Don't forget to look at the space available to you, identify what would work best.

[Here are some helpful ideas for urban gardening.](#)

5. Get the kids involved

Kids love gardening projects and it's easy to get them to join in. After all, it's better than being stuck in the classroom!

Gardening has plenty of educational benefits too. Counting seeds for maths, composting as part of sustainable activities, growing food and learning how to cook it, plus studying plants as part of history and geography, and wildlife as part of biology.



St Johns College, Cardiff

We're sure you can think of more! And letting kids choose what to grow will get them enthusiastic about the garden –and give you little helpers!

[Here's a few ideas to keep them busy in the garden.](#)

Sponsored by



6. Get plants for free

Plants can be expensive, so ask local community members to donate plants and seeds. Local farmers, allotment holders and plant nurseries may be happy to help you too. Go and have a chat with them – you don't get if you don't ask!

Parents and carers can be a great help too. Try holding a 'seed donation' day where they can send in spare seeds to get you on your way.

7. Stock up on a shoestring

Car boot sales are fantastic for buying second-hand tools. Just clean them with some soapy water and wire wool. You can usually get plant pots and all sorts of containers too.



Go with your neighbours – it's a great way to get to know each other better. If you tell the seller what you're using it for, you might even get it cheaper or for free!

Plus, have a look at [Freecycle](#) to see if anyone is offering gardening goods. This is a brilliant site where people offer things for free to those in their local area – all you need to do is go and collect them. You can find anything, including gardening equipment, plants and supplies.

[Here's some more great money saving tips for you.](#)

8. Recycle containers

Tins, pans, buckets, barrels, car tyres, old wellies and milk cartons make great plant pots. Make seed trays from plastic containers that mushrooms and salads come in. You can also pick up materials from recycling centres – often for free. Remember to punch holes in the bottom of containers if you can to make sure water drains away.



Wooden pallets are also popular in the garden. Stand them on one end and plant flowers or salad leaves to make an eye-catching display.

Old clothes can be put to great use making a scarecrow to protect your precious produce!



If anyone in your community is handy with a hammer and nails, you can even make planters and raised beds from scrap wood.

[Get some saving and recycling advice here.](#)

Sponsored by



9. Start fundraising

The best thing you can do is ask, ask, ask! Start with parents and carers. What about hosting a bake sale? It's an easy way to raise money and awareness for your project. You could even try swapping grub for greens! Get people to bring a plant, gardening tool or some seeds and swap it for a slice of cake. That way, those who can't contribute plants can offer cake or brownies instead!

Approach local shops and businesses to see if they would like to donate something to help you. Many of them will jump at the chance to get involved with local community projects – most large companies have Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, so this could tick their boxes too.

So, what's stopping you? Join our Cultivation Street campaign and get your school gardening. You won't regret it!



Christ Church Primary School in London were the inspiring winners of the school category in 2017.

Enter today for the chance to win incredible prizes for your school garden project!

[Find us on Facebook and share your own story!](#)



Sponsored by

