



## Planting the Garden Beds

### Goals

Students will learn proper plant spacing, how to use a garden map, how to plant the beds with seeds and transplants and the concept of companion planting.

### Objectives

Students will design and properly plant a garden bed that contains herbs, flowers, and vegetables.

### Materials

- Companion planting worksheet
- Paper
- Crayons
- Seeds (or previously prepared seed tapes)
- Transplants
- Row markers
- Hand trowels
- Compost
- Watering cans

**Time:** 45-55 minutes

### Advanced Preparation

This activity requires the garden beds to be tilled and prepared ahead of time. It can be done prior to the mulching and watering activities.

In subsequent years, consider what has already been planted in each bed, so that the same plants are not put in the same spot year after year. Failure to rotate plants can degrade the soil and encourage plant-specific pests and diseases. Refer to the book *Carrots Love Tomatoes* by Louise Riotte for secrets of companion planting for successful gardening

### Introduction (20 min)

Explain to the students that today they will be planting seeds and transplants in the garden. Divide the students into small groups according to the number of beds you have to plant. If you have limited space, you may find it best to divide the plots in half and assign groups only part of the bed to design and plant. Spend a few moments looking at the transplants and seeds you have available for planting and make sure that the students know the names of the plants.

Hand out the companion planting worksheet, paper, crayons, and seed packets to each group. Demonstrate for the students where they can find the planting information on the backside of the seed packets. Point out the space required between seeds and the depth for planting. You may also want to discuss the growing requirements for the seeds such as amount of sunlight, type of soil and month to plant.

Have each group design their own unique garden bed or section of the plot. They should take note of the planting specifications for the plants as well as the cardinal directions in the garden to assure that taller plants do not overshadow the sun-loving plants. Monitor students as they design and make suggestions when necessary. These garden maps will be used to guide the planting activity and can be laminated for display next to the garden beds.

## Activity Steps (20 – 30 min)

1. Move groups to the garden area and show each group the area they are responsible for planting.
2. Next collect all the seeds and transplants you plan to plant. To prevent wilting, transplants should be planted either late in the day when the sun is not at its strongest or on an overcast day. Demonstrate to the students how to carefully handle transplants and loosen the roots before planting. Show them the proper planting depth, amount of compost to be added, etc.
3. Let the students plant according to their garden maps and additional plants if they so desire. Monitor this work closely. Provide help and guidance where it is needed and give the students lots of praise and compliments on their hard work.
4. Give the groups row markers and have the students label each row of seeds and seedlings with the date planted and the name of the plant.
5. After the planting, water the beds thoroughly (see *Mulching* and *Thirst Quenchers* for additional activities).

## Conclusion (5 min)

Have students move throughout the garden to admire the planting and designs of the other groups. Encourage students to identify the plants and any companion planting methods that they see in the other beds.

## Notes

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