

# Theme Gardens

When planning your school garden, theme gardens are a great way to generate ideas, engage students, and connect the garden to your curriculum. Check out this book for more details about the theme gardens listed below and more: *Schoolyard Mosaics: Designing Gardens and Habitats* by Eve Pranis and Amy Gifford (National Gardening Association, 2009).

Theme	Plant / Hardscape / Design Ideas	Curriculum Connections / Activities
Art	seating, tables, reflective space	looms and weaving, plantable paper, wreaths and decor, natural dyes and paints, cordage, printmaking (leaf rubbings, veggie stamps, flower pounding), gourd and seed instruments, seed mosaics, nature mandalas, signs & murals
Bird	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diversity of plants for food and shelter</li> <li>for seeds: sunflowers, coneflowers</li> <li>for nectar: bee balm, cardinal flower</li> <li>trees and shrubs with fruits, nuts, sap</li> <li>water source</li> </ul>	STEM (habitats, ecosystems); bird feeders/houses
Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>grow plants that appear in books like <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i>, <i>Tops and Bottoms</i>, <i>Peter Rabbit</i>, or <i>Seedfolks</i></li> <li>seating, shade, free little library</li> </ul>	ELA
Cloths and Dyes	cotton, flax, coreopsis, marigold, magenta yarrow, mums, false indigo, calendula	Art, History
Companion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The Three Sisters": corn, beans, squash</li> <li>link: <a href="#">Companion Planting Chart</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History - indigenous agriculture</li> <li>Nutrition - balanced meals/meal preparation</li> <li>SEL - diversity and interdependence</li> <li>STEM - plant families (taxonomy), ecosystems</li> </ul>
Global	plant origins by continent, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Africa - sesame, coffee, okra, parsley</li> <li>Asia - soybeans, eggplants, garlic</li> <li>Europe - beets, broccoli, cabbage</li> <li>N. America - corn, squash, beans</li> <li>S. America - potatoes, peppers, peanuts</li> </ul>	Geography, History, Social Studies
Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>medicinal herbs/teas - chamomile, calendula, peppermint, lemon balm</li> <li>companion plants</li> <li>peace pole, murals, sanctuary space</li> <li>link: <a href="#">Design a Healing Garden</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History, Social Studies</li> <li>SEL - caretaking, service, stewardship</li> </ul>

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History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plants associated with important people, e.g. George Washington Carver (peanuts and sweet potatoes)</li> <li>plants associated with important events or periods, e.g. cash crops (cotton, corn)</li> <li>culturally significant crops, e.g. crops brought from Africa or native crops cultivated by African Americans</li> </ul>	Geography, History, Social Studies
Music	gourds, plants with seed pods, lesser quaking grass, money plant, plants and infrastructure that attract birds	Music - shakers, chimes, bird houses and feeders
Plant Parts	roots (carrots), stems (celery), leaves (lettuce), flowers (broccoli), fruit (tomatoes), seeds (sunflowers)	STEM
Pollinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>native plants - cardinal flower, bee balm</li> <li>variety of shapes, sizes, colors, bloom times</li> <li>wild spaces for overwintering insects - grasses, weeds, wildflowers</li> <li>nectar and pollen-rich flowers</li> <li>for butterfly larvae: carrot, dill, fennel, parsley, milkweed</li> <li>for bees and wasps: zinnia, mint, phlox</li> <li>for hummingbirds: nasturtium, sage</li> <li>water source</li> </ul>	STEM - interdependence, observation skills, environmental stewardship, life cycles
Rain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cardinal flower, orange coneflower, sensitive fern, southern blue flag iris</li> <li>link: <a href="#">Grow Native!</a></li> </ul>	STEM - adaptations, ecosystems
Recipe	salad (lettuce, radish, peas, carrots), salsa (peppers, tomatillos, garlic, onion), pickle (any veggie), pizza (herbs, tomatoes)	Nutrition
Seed Saver	wild indigo, allium, marigolds, sunflowers, milkweed, scarlet runner beans, dandelion	STEM - adaptations, life cycles
Sensory	link: <a href="#">Sensory Garden Growing Guide</a>	SEL - mindfulness, accessibility, inclusivity