

Nelson School Garden

Purpose

The purpose of the school garden is to provide an opportunity for the students to learn about where the food they eat comes from. Everything else that comes with building and caring for a garden is an added bonus. *And there are a lot of bonuses!* such as building community, creating a beautiful green space for everyone to enjoy, creating pollinator-friendly habitat and creating a source of food.

Nelson Garden Club

Every garden needs caretakers. There are many keen gardeners in the Nelson school community and lots of jobs to do in order to bring the garden to life and then keep it happy and healthy. This document is intended to communicate the intention of those interested in supporting the Nelson School Garden and to start and maintain respectful interaction with the school administration. We are so lucky to have this gardening opportunity.

There are so many ideas and a lot of excitement about the school garden. We want to make sure we communicate what we are thinking and work together to make sure we are aligned with the overall purpose.

Purpose of Nelson Garden Club

- Support the garden goals of the school as set out by the administration
- Provide an opportunity to share garden knowledge, learning and teaching
- Operate and maintain a healthy and productive garden
- Build a garden community that will last in the long-term
- Build traditions that may change with time but in essence will be continued by generations to come

Tasks & Roles

- Communications
 - With the school administration
 - With the classroom teachers
 - With the students
 - With the parent community
- Operations and Maintenance
 - Garden planning
 - Procurement
 - Daily, weekly, seasonal duties
- Financial
 - Donations
 - Sourcing & Grant Applications
 - Budget Development & Cost Tracking
 - Procurement

Communications

With the school administration and teachers

To keep communication manageable, only one or two Garden Club representatives will be the point of contact for the school administration.

With the classroom teachers

The Garden Club will set up a regular time each month where garden maintenance or planting events will take place. Classroom teachers can then easily schedule in garden time, when a Garden Club member will be on-hand to support working in the garden. *Currently we are thinking Friday afternoons around 2pm.*

Eventually, the Garden Club will create a list of weekly duties that can be carried out, with a bit of training, by a class and teacher any time during the week. If there are maintenance or planting events that will be carried out at other times, these will be communicated to the classroom teachers as required.

With the students

As mentioned above, students can attend the regular weekly garden hours with their teacher. There may be other events planned with specific classes.

With the parent community

The easiest way to let the parent community know what's happening at the garden is through social media, such as Instagram. If the school is open to the Garden Club having an Instagram account on behalf of the Nelson School Garden, we will find someone to manage it. We already have many great photos to share what has happened so far. We will also make sure to give the PAC updates to share at monthly meetings.

Operations and Maintenance

Garden Planning and Design

This is done through group effort from all the Garden Club members, over WhatsApp, text message, phone calls and meeting up over mounds of soil and cups of coffee.

We are starting with some fall planning and looking at least two seasons ahead. That means we are thinking now (in October) about what to plant for next spring and summer, as we need to make sure what we do in the fall with work with what we want to do in the following seasons.

Procurement

There will be two types of purchasing required. Ongoing purchases that will happen every year or every season, like new soil, stakes, twine, fertilizer, seeds and seedlings. Other purchases will be needed as more of a capital investment, like new water hoses, tools, a composter. Decisions around what to buy and when will be discussed within the Garden Club and with the school administration prior to purchasing. Decisions around where to place or store equipment will also be discussed with the school before purchasing.

Schedule and Daily, Weekly, Seasonal Duties

Once the garden has started and plants are growing, we will come up with a list of duties to be completed during the weekly gardening time. A schedule for watering, weeding, fertilizing,

succession planting etc will be worked out. Summer time coverage will be worked out. One or two people should take ownership of the schedule and make sure all duties are covered at the appropriate time. These duties will be eventually be covered by classes and teachers too.

Financial

Gardens, especially new ones, require some investment. The school administration will fund most of the purchases, and the PAC will fund some through fundraising as well. We will also look for donations and where appropriate apply for grants. At this time, the Garden Club will not be fundraising for the garden outside of what's planned by the PAC.

Budget Development & Cost Tracking

The Nelson PAC and school administration are a main source of funding for the school garden. As such, the budget is set by the school and any cost tracking required will be done by the school administration. The Garden Club is committed to assisting with procurement as a way of supporting the garden and doing so as efficiently as possible using the experience and knowledge we collectively have.

Procurement

Large purchases

Before purchasing any , the school administration will be consulted and the best strategy and pricing will be discussed within the club. Once we have some consensus on the way forward, one person will take on that particular purchase or book the service or collect and deliver the donation. Reimbursement for out of pocket purchases, if required, will come from the school or the PAC. For reimbursement, the cost must be agreed upon with the school or PAC prior to the purchase.

Small purchases

The garden club will either secure funding from fundraising or the PAC for the activities during the year to purchase supplies for the garden sessions. The expenses will be submitted to the PAC or school admin as planned.

Donations

The best way to acquire supplies needed for the garden may sometimes be by asking the community to donate items they have in surplus or no longer need. Finding donated items could happen most easily on social media. There are also some local organizations that donate seedlings, plants and seeds.

Grant Applications

There are grants available from various organizations to support school and community gardening. The Garden Club has been awarded several grants which have been used to complete larger projects, such as the addition of three more garden boxes.

Composting

As the garden starts to grow, there will be a need for a place to put green waste. We can either purchase a closed tumbling composter or look into having a green bin located at the garden. Until we make a decision, green waste will be transported home with Garden Club members

for disposal. Currently, garden club members bring green waste home to their own personal compost bins or a neighbour across the street has agreed to take the green waste in their bins.

Food

The garden generates food. Where possible, the food will be harvested and eaten by the students. However, the timing of harvesting may not always work out with student and teacher availability to process and eat, particularly during the summer months. Planting planning will take into consideration when students will be around to enjoy the food produced. Most of the garden food tends to get opportunistically harvested by community members and the Garden Club supports this.

