



School Garden Guide

A brief how-to on setting up your school's garden program with the Kauaʻi School Garden Network



About Kauaʻi School Garden Network

The Kauaʻi School Garden Network (KSGN) was established in 2010 and supports all schools, PreK-12, on the island of Kauaʻi.

We provide funding, technical and volunteer support for school gardens, school sustainability initiatives, local food in local schools and the development of wellness committees that are able to address school specific concerns around healthy food and nutrition choices. In addition, we offer schools curriculum, training, and networking opportunities.

In 2014, we began offering full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members to help with growing capacity for schools to manage their school garden and food projects. These positions will end in 2018.

Youth & Food Programs AmeriCorps VISTAs

Our AmeriCorps VISTAs support schools in their complex area on a full-time basis. VISTAs are here to help you with your garden, food, and sustainability projects by offering guidance and capacity-building, including planning, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and more. They also assist in running our Ag Internship Program during school breaks. Feel free to reach out to your VISTA and get connected:

Waimea Complex (Kekaha through Koloa)

Peter Chappell youthfoodwest@malamakauai.org (808) 828-0685 x16

Kapa`a Complex (Hanalei through Lihue)

Diane Sikkens youthfoodeast@malamakauai.org (808) 828-0685 x19

Step 1: Assemble Your Team & Support Resources

The more people that are involved with developing and supporting your school garden program, the higher its chances of success! One of the most common reasons for school garden failure is not having enough participants in both the planning and maintenance processes.

Begin by speaking with as many stakeholders as possible to get them on board. Ask them; what their level of interest in the project is, what they would be able to help with, and if they would be willing to meet on a regular basis to help drive the project forward. One crucial component to a successful garden project is to set regular meeting times for your Committee.

Try to complete a list of these contacts and create a committee that will ultimately be responsible for your school garden program:

Group	Name	Title	Phone	Email
Administration				
Administration				
Janitorial				
Cafeteria Mgr				
PTA/PTSA				
PTA/PTSA				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Malama Kauai KSGN Rep				
Master Gardener				
Community Volunteer				
Students				
Other				

If there is enough interest, you may want to delegate roles to different parties, such as fundraising, resource development, volunteer management, etc. Groups such as Master Gardener and Rotary may also want to participate and support your project!

Next, consider which supplies and resources your school garden project will need on an ongoing basis and determine community-based resources that would be willing to support your project through donations of time or materials:

Resources	Name	Company/Org	Phone	Email
Compost				
Mulch				
Plants				
Seeds				
Volunteer Groups				
Other: Irrigation				
Other:				

Step 2: Plan & Install Your Garden

Complete a Site Checklist

This will help your School Garden Committee determine what kind of school garden project you want to have. Remember to keep it small at first, as you can always expand later! Some questions and data points to consider:

Total # of students:

How many students will use the garden at one time? When? How?

Does a current garden program exist? If so, what is included?

Description of proposed garden area or expansion:

Garden types of interest:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Composting Site / Vermiculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Aquaponics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agroforestry | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Trees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Row Crops | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicinal Herbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raised Garden Beds | <input type="checkbox"/> Bee/Butterfly Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse / Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

School food interest areas - how will produce be used?

- Salad Bar
- Cooking Demos
- Schools Snacks

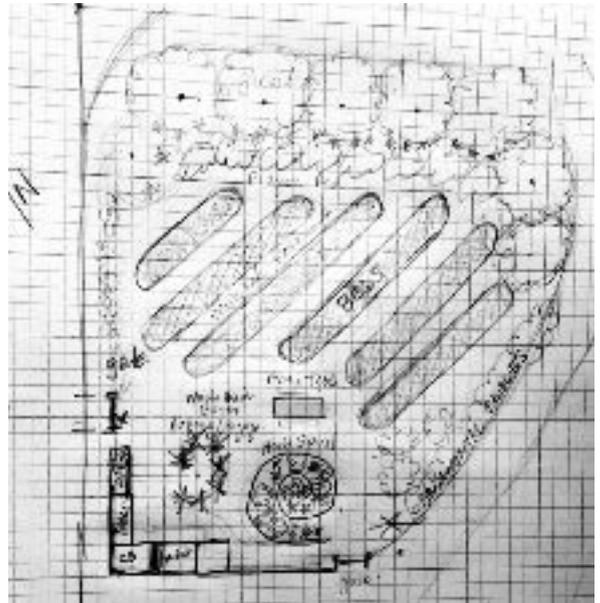
- Given to Students / Families to Take Home
- Donated to Charity / Food Pantries
- Other? _____

What are the biggest obstacles that could affect your garden's installation or management?

Create Your Garden Plan & Map

Creating a drawing and plan for your garden's design is an important step not to be overlooked. A couple of keys to planning your garden well:

- Obtain a map of the school property to use as a guide
- Get the utility lines across the campus marked on your map to avoid interference
- Complete a soil sample & testing to ensure the soil is clean from hazardous chemicals and to understand what types of fertilization you will need to add; you can do this through CTAHR's office in Lihue
- Develop a plan for irrigation; with no water, there is no garden!



Develop a Wish List of Supplies & Obtain Them

Create a wish list and budget for your school garden program, being sure to ask teachers for their individual project interests and supply needs. Use this information to create a budget for your school garden project so that you can plan fundraisers, apply to grants, and request in-kind donations effectively. Make sure to send your wish list home with students; many times parents have connections and resources to help support your project. You'll want to be sure that all of your materials on-site and ready for installation day!



Install Your Garden

We've seen garden installations happen successfully in a variety of ways, including:

- Students install a garden over time as a part of a class or after-school program
- Community volunteers install the garden over a day or weekend-long Garden Party
- Our Gardening Certificate Training engages and trains school garden volunteers to install the garden over 5 weeks and help care for it for 6 months (hopefully longer!)

Step 3: Care for & Integrate Your Garden

Gardens are incredibly fun to install, but not always as thrilling to manage and maintain. Things like watering, weeding, ensuring a consistent crop production schedule, and making sure that the garden project overall is sustainable can be time-consuming.

Create a Volunteer Team & Maintenance Schedule

Having a *large volunteer base* for your school's garden is an amazing blessing. Many times we see school gardens fail because there are not enough participants to keep it going, so this is one of the most important steps to consider. There are many groups that you can connect with to help with garden maintenance including Kaua'i RSVP, Traffic Court Community Service, PTA/PTSAs, and others. Malama Kaua'i also has launched an innovative Gardening Certificate Training program that brings in up to 40 volunteers to work in your garden by educating and engaging local community members to install and maintain your school's garden.

Plan for the Summer & Other School Breaks

Don't forget to care for your garden over the summer and other breaks to ensure that it doesn't become overgrown and unmanageable! *Summer is a great time to put your garden to bed* using cover crops and mulching, which will also help to increase soil fertility for the next school year. Something as simple as an automated timing system can help to ensure that crops get watered consistently. Alternatively, you could see that your school garden is used and managed by a community group, volunteers, or a youth summer program.

Integrate the Garden into the Curriculum

A garden becomes sustainable when teachers and students feel connected and have ownership of its success. *Heavily involve teachers* in the project planning process and regularly check in with them to see what they need to connect in-class learning to your outdoor classroom. Some schools give each teacher their own garden bed to help promote individualized lessons and autonomy.

It's also critical to see the value in incorporating the garden into a variety of subjects - *it's not just for science class!* There are some great school garden, composting, nutrition, and sustainability curriculum that can be incorporated into your program, such as:

- **Kokua Hawai'i Foundation** - `Aina in Schools, K-6 curriculum on composting, nutrition, and gardens. www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org
- **Project Learning Tree** - Offers GreenSchools Certification, GreenWorks! Grants, and a variety of curriculum covering environment, energy, waste, and more. www.plt.org
- **Bishop Museum Online Learning Center** - digital educational resources in STEM, art, literacy, & culture for K-12, higher ed & informal education. bishopmuseumeducation.org
- **Green Living Project** - "Students Connecting to Global Sustainability" curriculum uses multimedia and technology to bring sustainability-centered education to K-12 classrooms. <http://glpfilms.com/education/curriculum>
- **Kohala Center** - Extensive listing of various curriculum resources. <http://kohalacenter.org/hisgn/hisgn-resources/school-garden-curriculum>

Keep Fundraising!

By keeping funds flowing into your garden program, you'll always be able to purchase what your garden needs to thrive and survive! *Successful garden projects create sustainable revenue streams*, such as an annual school garden fundraiser each October for National Farm-to-School Month, a bi-annual plant or compost sales, or an ongoing fundraiser such as HI-5 recycling on their campus.

Consider Bringing on a School Garden or Sustainability Coordinator

Nothing helps your program gain significant traction, expansion, and sustainability more than bringing on part-time or full-time paid staff to dedicate to it. Ideas for funding this position include:

- PTT (Part-time Teacher Funding from DOE)
- Grants (HEEA has a great list of grants on their site at <http://heea.org>, or ask your Y&F Programs VISTA for help applying to grants!)
- Parent-Teacher Association Fundraising
- Project-based Funding (selling vermicompost/compost, local food baskets, plants, etc.)
- AmeriCorps / National Corporation for Community Service (FoodCorps, VISTA, RSVP, etc.; Malama Kaua`i can help you with this!)

Ongoing Resources from Malama Kaua`i

All of the ideas and resources in this guide are general and basic examples that will need to be tailored to fit your school's needs. Don't hesitate to reach out to us if there is anything we can do to support you in creating and executing a plan that meets your needs and interests. Our typical offerings include:

- Capacity-Building Support & Assistance
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Fundraising & Grant Writing Support
- Curriculum Trainings
- Hosting Community Work Day Parties
- Notification on Available Grants
- Field Trips to our Community Farm
- Special Project Partnerships