

Enterprise Food Garden Award winners

Food Growing Schools: London project



Children digging raised beds.

The Project...

In just over a year, Nightingale school has developed an edible garden from scratch with help from charities and the Hackney Council initiative 'Health Heroes'. Since January 2014, a huge range of fruit and vegetables has been grown by school staff, parents and most importantly the enthused students.

Children and parents have participated in selecting vegetables and fruit to grow throughout the year, as well as choosing where to locate the raised beds and polytunnel and how to further develop other areas of the site.

Feedback so far has been that they are keen to increase the selection of fruit!

The project in three words...

INCLUSIVE
THERAPEUTIC
EXHILARATING

Schools Marketplace

In October 2014, a few students were able to attend the Schools Marketplace at City Hall where they sold green tomato chutney using vegetables harvested from the gardens. They sold out in two hours with the help of brightly decorated jars and an inviting sales display.

Alison and Moya who help run the school garden explained how this event was excellent for the children's self-esteem. They also explained how the project is beneficial all round.

"...the gardening project boosts physical health, social and emotional health and educational achievement."

Alison, gardener

The event was organised by Capital Growth, a partner of the Food Growing Schools: London project. This project aims to get more schools like Nightingale involved in growing.

The partnership runs events and training workshops which could kick-start growing in any London school. Visit the website for more information.

The school...

Nightingale Primary School is in Hackney, north-east London. A high proportion of families are on a very low income, three-quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language, and two-thirds are entitled to a Free School Meal*. The site has a grassy slope on the school grounds with several mature Silver Maple trees and some blackberry bushes.

*More information on Free School Meals can be found here:

www.schoolfoodplan.com



Prize Winner!

In December 2014, Nightingale Primary School won 1st prize in the Enterprise Food Garden category of the Edible Garden Awards 2014 run by project partner Capital Growth.



**FOOD GROWING
SCHOOLS
LONDON**

This case study has been developed as part of the Food Growing Schools: London project, a partnership initiative led by Garden Organic.

Garden Organic is the UK's leading organic growing charity, with over 20 years' experience bringing the benefits of growing food to schools.

Food Growing Schools: London is funded by the Big Lottery and Mayor of London to bring together the very best of London's food growing expertise, information and support, with the ambition to inspire and equip every school in London to grow their own food.



Who's involved?



All children from Years 1-6, some staff and a small group of parents are regularly involved in growing, planting, watering, maintenance and development of the site. Children take part in weekly gardening sessions, working in small groups on a rotational basis, so that everyone has at least two sessions each term.

Many parents (approximately 30-40) and staff have attended weekly garden picnics and gardening workshops, and this has been a good way to introduce parents to the garden, with gradually increasing numbers getting regularly involved. Some parents have previous experience while others are new to gardening, so expertise and ideas are shared.

In exchange for their hard work, children are able to take produce home for their parents to use to cook healthy meals.

All hands on deck!

Challenges...

The main concern for Nightingale Primary School is to maintain the sustainability of the garden project after initial funding from Hackney Council initiative 'Health Heroes' has finished. The school are engaging parents and the wider community as much as possible to help with the edible garden project, and give their long term support.

The school site itself was built on an old car battery manufacturing site and so had a very thin layer of topsoil. The school built raised beds to overcome this.

Nightingale Primary School is fortunate enough to have someone employed on-site to help build the relationships with and between parents within the community. The school is in the process of applying for more funding to continue to have additional help. For useful information on funding for projects, please visit the website: www.foodgrowingschools.org/resources/funding/

Curriculum links

Years 3 and 4 have used the garden as part of their science work on the life cycle of plants by growing mustard and cress and pea shoots in their classrooms.



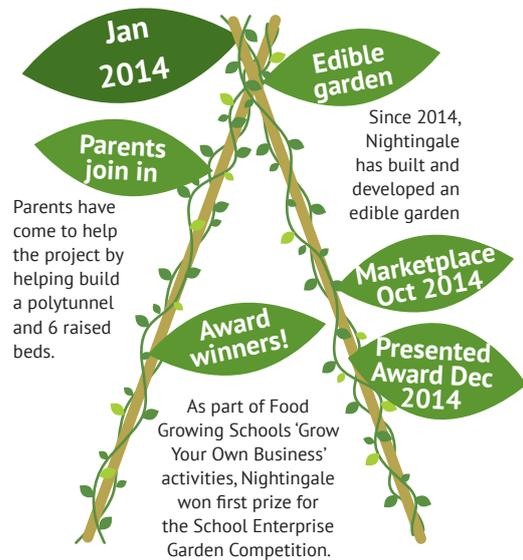
Parents helped build polytunnel.

Highlights

This project was set up with funding from a number of charities and in partnership with Hackney council's initiative, 'Health Heroes', enabling the project to employ two gardeners, Alison and Moya, trained in both horticulture and therapeutic communication skills, who help maintain the garden and run sessions for the children.

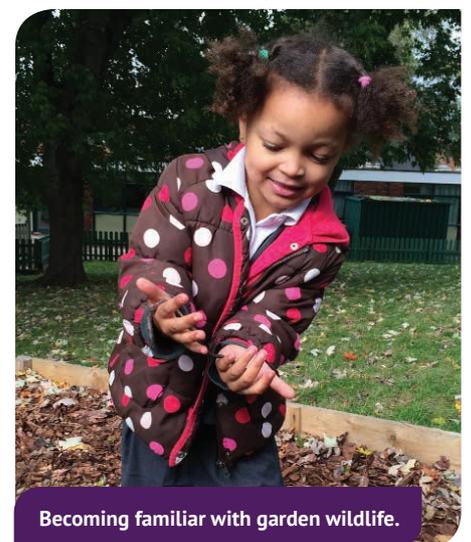
They love to be outdoors with the children and parents and say that the enthusiasm has been extremely encouraging.

Winning the Enterprise Food Garden Award was a great success and the school hope to continue to achieve food growing awards with the help of relevant projects and organisations.



Top Tips

Having a polytunnel is an excellent way to educate children outdoors, providing a sheltered space and great area to grow in.



Becoming familiar with garden wildlife.



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