

How and why should you get your community involved?

Grow Your Own Picnic offers a great opportunity to invite in local parents, families, carers and businesses to celebrate your food growing year, gain interest and support for your school garden and even perhaps raise some money by asking for donations in return for your picnic goodies! Below are some ideas for how to work with your local community, businesses and volunteers to support your school garden through Grow Your Own Picnic activities.

Fun community growing and picnic themed events

- **Show off your veg!** - enter a local produce show or hold your own during your own summer fair, picnic or garden party. Ask a key figure to judge your school grown fruit and veg, or hold a 'Bake Off' competition using your picnic recipes.
- **Give parents a student- led tour of the garden** - at home time or before a parents evening. Create a bold enticing stand promoting your plans for a community picnic in the summer term and take turns signing up parents and families to get involved.
- **Run picnic activities for the community** – teach visitors to take a cutting from a herb, or sow a mini salad garden in a tub. Invite the community to bring in any food they have grown themselves for the school picnic menu.
- **Be novel** - hold a teddy bears picnic for younger members of the community.
- **Encourage families to compost at home** - Teach students about composting and encourage them to teach their parents and community too. Hold workshops, design flyers, write letters home and produce articles on composting for local newsletters.

For further information and more community engagement ideas visit:
www.foodgrowingschools.org/support/

Grow Your Own Picnic together

- **Getting started** - think about what you are going to be growing for your picnic and invite parents and the local community to donate plants (e.g. extra strawberry plant runners or dividing a clump of chives or some mint). Hold a plant sale, or seed, vegetable or fruit swap for the community where gluts can be exchanged for different produce.
- **Finding inspiration from other spaces** - visit another local community growing space or inspiring school garden, or even share a community space. Try Capital Growth's Space Finder map to locate spaces near you: www.capitalgrowth.org/spaces. Read inspiring schools case studies on our website:
www.foodgrowingschools.org/why_grow/case_studies/
- **Grow Your Own Picnic at home too** - become 'Seed Guardians'. Give students a seed or plant to take home and look after as homework, related to curriculum learning.
www.foodgrowingschools.org/get_involved/seedguardians/
- **Run or enter a school gardening competition.** See our Competitions section on page 21 or visit: www.foodgrowingschools.org/get_involved/competitions/
- **School holiday care** - ask families to 'adopt' school garden pots or grow bags to look after during the school holidays. For plants in the ground set-up a community watering or weeding rota. Do this for May half term as well as the summer as you will be well on the way to growing your picnic by then. The weather can be unpredictable, so if temperatures rise significantly watering will be necessary.

