



ARKANSAS
Farm to School

School Garden Tools and Materials

School gardens are a fantastic educational tool and provide students with the opportunity to eat healthy foods, connect to nature, and learn about nutrition. School gardens also provide an avenue for students to engage in hands-on learning through gardening and farming.

After completing the initial steps of gathering your [garden committee](#), [acquiring funding](#), and [planning the layout](#), it is time to start stocking your garden with tools and materials for the program to grow!

For additional help and support in school garden development, contact Erica Benoit, State School Garden Manager at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, erica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov, (501) 295-8856.

Suggested Tools and Materials

When shopping for your school garden be sure to choose quality, durable products. In addition, purchase a variety of child-sized tools to ensure students have suitable materials when participating in garden tasks. If you aren't sure what tools to purchase, the following will get you started:



Hand trowels: for weeding and digging small holes to transplant seedlings.

Hand cultivators: for weeding and loosening soil.

Hand pruners: for cutting back plants and harvesting crops.

Hoses, sprinklers, and watering cans: for watering your plants. Other types of irrigation, such as a drip irrigation system, could be worth investing in depending on the scale of your garden.



Gloves: for protecting hands from bugs and dirt, and helping students grip tools.

Buckets: for collecting weeds, moving soil, harvesting, and more.

Compost: for building beds and improving soil health.

Mulch: for covering beds and pathways for weed suppression, retaining moisture, and regulating soil temperature.

Cardboard and newspaper: for weed suppression.

Wheelbarrow: for moving compost, mulch, and other materials.

Rakes: for smoothing soil.

Shovels: for moving and turning soil, digging, and more.

String and tape measure: for measuring spacing of plants and rows.

Popsicle sticks and other markers: for labeling seedlings, plants, and rows.



Making and decorating plant labels is a great art project for students! Some inexpensive ways to make plant labels include: using paint or permanent markers on smooth, flat rocks, painting chalkboard paint on stir sticks or other pieces of wood, or drawing on wooden spoons with permanent markers.

Gain Support from the Community



Gathering all of the tools and materials needed for your school garden can be a daunting task, but it does not have to break the bank! Put out a call for donations to your school community. Families may have some of these items lying around, and be willing to donate materials. You can also reach out to local hardware or garden supply stores for donations, gift cards, or in-kind donations. With the help of your community, you can stock your tool shed with everything you need to start your garden off strong!

For more information, and to sign up for the bi-weekly newsletter visit arfarmtoschool.org.

