

# Adding “G” for “garden” to the three “Rs”

Today, school gardens are once again part of the American educational landscape. Although there is no single formula for school garden success any more than there is a single type of successful school garden, effective programs suggest a few common sense guidelines:

- **BEGIN SMALL**, dig in, and have fun!
- **PROVIDE** garden technical training and support for teachers and garden volunteers, and mentoring in project management. Ask Cooperative Extension agents, 4-H staff and Master Gardeners for help.
- **FIND SOURCES OF MONEY** and supplies, acquired through a combination of the school budget, grants, donations, community partnerships, fund-raising and creative scrounging.
- **WORK WITH TEACHERS** to integrate the garden into the curriculum. Support creative teachers (who are often the first attracted to the garden) who understand the importance of student-led inquiry.
- **PLAN A STRATEGY** for maintaining the garden over the summer, and match garden projects to your growing season and school calendar.
- **HELP STUDENTS** develop a sense of ownership – don’t try to do everything by yourself.

- **INVOLVE COMMUNITY** members in all phases of the project (for instance, as summer volunteers).

- **CULTIVATE** the whole-hearted support of school administrators, teachers and parents.



Illustration • 1919 Victory Garden poster • Text, Pamela Kirschbaum, CGR 1999