



Seed Sharing

Keeping your students engaged with Farm to School Activities during COVID-19



Growing Your Own Food is Powerful!

Consider the power of one green bean seed: in about 55 days, one bean plant from that one little seed will begin producing green bean pods. That plant won't stop until it gives you about 20 pods, or about a half pint of green beans! Seeds are packed full of potential to not only nourish, but provide mental and physical benefits as we spend time nurturing them to harvest.

A garden lures us outdoors into the fresh air. Weeding forces us to bend, and squat, and stretch as much as any boot-camp exercise class. The psychological benefits abound, from connecting with the world, to moving beyond perfection, accepting loss, and of course, practicing a growth mindset. And at the end of the day, when you harvest the fruits of your labor, you are eating healthfully. That's a pretty powerful seed.

Consider the potential of sharing seeds with your school community. Seed sharing is a strategy to empower communities to:

- Continue nutrition and agricultural learning outside of school
- Increase access to fresh food
- Engage in fun, physically active, hands-on food activities
- Encourage consumption of more fruits and veggies
- Strengthen food systems to increase community resilience

How to Share Seeds with Your Community

Even during this time of remote learning and social distancing, it is possible for students to participate in meaningful and engaging Farm to School activities. Many communities are using seed sharing programs to provide students with an opportunity to continue farm to school learning while schools are closed.

Here are some tips for sharing seeds with your community.

Decide Which Seeds Will Work Best

What fruits and vegetables do your students like to eat? What fruits and vegetables grow well in your area at this time of year?

Your county UGA extension agents and Master Gardeners can help you with questions about what seasonal produce will grow best where you live. Find yours [here](#). They may be able to help you find seeds and other gardening resources.

"As a general rule of thumb, roots and greens thrive in cooler temperatures, and "fruiting" plants (e.g., tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, etc.) thrive in warmer temperatures."



Seek Seed Donations or Discounts

Write a letter or email to explain the project's importance for your community, the desired seeds and their amounts, and the goals or intended outcomes. That way you can efficiently send it to potential donors and it can easily be shared through networks.

This [template](#) can be a helpful resource when drafting your letter for donations. Simply fill in the blanks or use the idea to inspire your own letter. It's always good to include a picture of student gardening activities from your community if you have one. If your district is a Golden Radish Awardee, you may find a photo [here](#).



Identify Potential Donors

There are many [potential sources of seeds](#), from both local and national businesses and organizations.

- Start with local garden stores and nurseries in your community. Small, local business owners often have kids in the school district you're working in and are happy to support.
- Local Lowes and Home Depot stores are often willing to support community gardening projects.
 - Hardware stores have been designated as essential businesses, with purchases and pickups still allowed.
 - Some stores provide call in orders and outside pick up. Check with your local partners to discuss the best options for social distancing in your community.
- Reach out to larger businesses and seed companies: Places such as High Mowing Seeds, Burpee or Seedway may have the capacity to provide seed donations in bulk. Occasionally they'll have expired seed from the year before that they are willing to donate.



Create or Find Growing Advice and Complementary Educational Activities

Resources to guide growing as well as educational activities abound! Source from:

- Local [UGA Extension Agents](#) and the [UGA Extension website](#)
- [American Farm Bureau](#)
- [KidsGardening.org](#)
- [National Ag in the Classroom](#)
- [Captain Planet Foundation](#)
- Georgia Organics -
 - [Educational Resources](#)
 - [Harvest Calendar](#)
 - How to Grow Guides and Activity Sheets:
 - [Green Beans](#)
 - [Squash](#)
 - [Cucumbers](#)
 - [Watermelon](#)
 - Plant Labels - [Here are some ideas to label your plants](#). You can use different recycled materials for labeling.
 - Paint rocks with the plant name on it
 - Write on paint sticks, popsicle sticks, corks, tin lids, or wooden pegs
 - [DIY Planters Guide](#) - It is fun and simple to make planters for your seeds using items you can find around the house! Here are some suggestions for making your own:
 - [Water/Soda Bottles](#)
 - [Mason Jars](#)
 - [Egg Cartons](#)
 - [Tin Cans](#)
 - [Eggshell](#)

Consider printing educational resources to share with the seeds, when possible. Online learning is not appropriate for all age groups. Many students lack devices and/or internet access. Printed materials facilitate access to learning.





Coordinate Seed Distribution

- Contact your school district School Nutrition Director or Nutrition Coordinator to see if seeds and activity sheets can be included in meal pick-ups or deliveries.
 - *Please consider that our school nutrition professionals are under intense pressure right now. They may not respond, or may not have the capacity to allow for seed distribution given safety concerns. If they are willing and able, please make the request simple and the delivery of materials easy.*
 - Contact your local teachers, CTAE, and other education partners to see if there is a possibility of distribution through distance education efforts.
 - Contact your local food pantries to see if seeds can be distributed with their meal distribution.
 - Partner with your county Extension Agent to offer free, no-contact pickup at closed or open Extension offices on the honor system.
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Share with Others!

- Post your seed sharing program on social media. Use your school and/or school district's hashtag, and tag any community partners and the business or donor who provided the seeds. Tag Georgia Organics too!
 - Send a press release to your local newspaper along with photos of the heroes who helped distribute and children who received the seeds. [Here is a template](#) to help get you started.
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Victory Gardens

Victory gardens were popularized during World War I and World War II, based on concepts put forth by the prominent 20th century African American agricultural scientist and inventor, George Washington Carver. During war times, individuals were encouraged to plant vegetables, fruits, and herbs at their private residences as a means of improving self-sufficiency and general morale during times of food rationing. Gardening is not only a fun way for your family to spend time with one another, it can be an empowering and rewarding experience to eat the produce you grow together. Whether you plant in containers or in the ground, there's no better time than now to start your own victory garden!

