

Into the Garden

WHY SCHOOL GARDENS?

The model garden growing here, at the heart of *Into the Open*, and at the heart of Parsons—a university in the center of New York City—demonstrates how gardens can bring to life, quite literally, teaching and learning in the school environment. The Edible Schoolyard, in Berkeley, California, and the Yale Sustainable Food Project, in New Haven, Connecticut, are leading a revolution in bringing gardens to schools across the country.

The Edible Schoolyard, in partnership with Martin Luther King Junior Middle School, has taught from their one-acre farm such lessons as how the social hierarchy of the middle ages might have felt, by growing and cooking the different vegetables and grains eaten by serfs and lords. Meanwhile, undergraduates at Yale come to the Yale Farm to study carbon sequestration in organic soils, to supplement a class on the History of Food, or simply to learn the basics of organic farming.

Today, gardens are springing up in schoolyards across the country. When students get their hands dirty planting and harvesting food, they form a connection to place and learn a sense of stewardship of the land. Working in a garden builds the skills of close observation, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Gardens engage students—everyone—through all five senses, connecting us to the food we eat and to the world around us.

About the Yale Sustainable Food Project

The Yale Sustainable Food Project leads an ambitious program to change the way our country engages with food and agriculture. The Project's primary focus is to connect Yale students with the food they eat and the land that produces it, making them aware of the consequences of individual food choices and giving them the knowledge and the power to provide vital leadership on food, agriculture, and the environment. To learn more, visit yale.edu/sustainablefood.

About The Edible Schoolyard

The Edible Schoolyard, in collaboration with Martin Luther King Junior Middle School, provides urban public school students with a one-acre organic garden and a kitchen classroom. Using food systems as a unifying concept, students learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare nutritious seasonal produce. Experiences in the kitchen and garden foster a better understanding of how the natural world sustains us, and promote the environmental and social well being of our school community. For more information, visit edibleschoolyard.org.

Take The Lesson Home

Bring these lessons home: start growing your own food. You can grow in a garden or on a patio, and many vegetables will thrive in containers on a sunny windowsill or fire escape. Learn more with our easy guide to home container gardening, available at yale.edu/sustainablefood.



YALE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROJECT

Model garden developed by Melina Shannon-DiPietro, Hannah Eisler Burnett, Anastatia Curley, Amy Jean Porter, and Yale student interns, all of the Yale Sustainable Food Project, with Joshua Viertel. Inspired by Alice Waters and with special thanks to Carolyn Federman and Marsha Guerrero of the Chez Panisse Foundation. Additional thanks to Marsh Botanic Gardens at Yale.

About the Exhibition



Bright Lights Chard

For *Into the Open's* model garden, the Yale Sustainable Food Project and the Edible Schoolyard have selected seasonal vegetables that you could find growing in plots in New York City's community gardens, on farms in the Hudson Valley or Long Island, or for sale in one of the city's farmers' markets. Learn more about how these plants grow—and just as important, how to eat them—below.



Imperial Star Artichokes

Bright Lights Chard

Bright Lights chard takes its name from its multicolored stems, which come in bright and pastel variations of gold, pink, orange, purple, red, and white. Each color tastes a bit different, but all are milder than ordinary chard, and children love the colors and flavor. Chard prefers cool and mild weather, but has some heat tolerance. You can harvest it at a baby size, or when the leaves are full-grown, about fourteen inches. Sauté it with garlic and olive oil, making sure not to overcook it.

Imperial Star Artichokes

Artichokes are a perennial and best suited to Mediterranean climates, but with a little sleight of hand can grow them in much colder zones like New York or New England. Where they're native, they take two growing seasons to produce a flower, the edible part of the artichoke. They are planted in the summer and spend that first growing season building up energy in the plant. After the mild Mediterranean winter, they will send up flowers the next summer. In a place with colder winters, which will kill the plant, farmers have to be a little more ingenious. Start them in a greenhouse in January to mimic the first summer, then transplant them out in late March or early April, when the ground is still cold enough that plants will "think" they are going through a winter. They will then flower in midsummer. They develop into a dramatic plant: out of large, sculptural leaves, growing up to a few feet high, there will appear the bud of the artichoke. The traditional and simple way to prepare artichokes is to steam the whole head and eat the leaves one by one with melted butter or mayonnaise.



Red Russian Kale

Striped German Tomatoes

These are a German heirloom variety; they mature into large, flat, yellow-and-red fruit. Like all tomatoes, Striped Germans like heat, sun, and not too much water. Start them inside, then transplant them outside after five to six weeks and once nighttime temperatures are over forty-five degrees Fahrenheit—frost will kill them. Eat the marbled slices raw, with salt, olive oil and basil.

Red Russian Kale

As its name indicates, Red Russian Kale originated in Russia. Used to a Russian winter, this kale is very hardy: plant it about three months before the expected fall frost, and harvest it through the fall and into the winter—it will be tastier as it gets colder. The deep gray-green, purple-veined leaves are more tender than other varieties of kale, and excellent in salad mix.

Osaka Purple Mustard Greens

Osaka purple mustard greens grow well from early spring through late summer, when their green leaves with purple-red veins will grow up to a foot tall. They are milder and more refined than other mustard greens. Use them in salads when they are small, and sauté or stir-fry them when they are mature. They are spicy when raw (and get more so as they get older) but cooking mellows their mustardy heat.

Collards

Members of the cabbage family, collards can be planted in the early spring for an early summer harvest. Our favorite time to grow them is the fall, because their flavor is best after the first fall frost. While often grown in the southern United States, collards are frost-tolerant and can be grown in the north as well. Cook them by boiling them in water with a ham bone or some other savory meat for extra flavor. Save the "pot liquor" you've cooked them in for a soup base, or just drink it as is—collards are packed with vitamins and minerals and are extremely nutritious.



Striped German Tomatoes



Osaka Purple Mustard Greens



Collards