

Sunrise River School K-4

37775 Grand Avenue
North Branch, MN 55056



JeffersFoundation.org

Summary

- Garden supplements Farm-to-School Program
- Twelve raised and ground level garden beds
- Holds Farm-to-School Celebration in September
- Partners with master gardeners and food services contractor
- Plants products that have a harvest window in fall
- Students prepared the area for planting

Photos



Pulling weeds - the start of many gardening experiences.

above-right, Students learn the components of high quality garden soil from local master gardeners.

right, students mix the soil.



The Sunrise River school garden is front and center in front of the school, for all to see.

right, students also fill and water the planting boxes.



Details

General Information:

A goal of North Branch Area Public Schools is to foster a greater sense of community and stewardship with students. With an already active farm-to-school effort supported by food service, it was decided that a school garden at Sunrise River School would help the school district accomplish those goals as well as provide an opportunity for students to become more engaged in outdoor learning. Research also suggests that school garden projects result in an increase in student self-esteem, helps develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, and helps foster relationships. It can also can increase parent involvement in school/student activities.

Garden Site:

The Sunrise River School vegetable garden is located on the median to the west of the main entrance, and near their existing butterfly garden. The plot is roughly 20 feet by 50 feet with room for expansion if necessary. This section of land is also irrigated. They constructed twelve 4'x4'x8" raised garden beds divided into 9 square sections and

installed them on their garden plot. They also have additional ground level space for planting.

Garden Product:

The actual gardening efforts were supported/coordinated by students, staff and community members. They worked with Master Gardeners in the area and food service staff to identify foods that not only will grow well in this area, but also support sustainability, and be easily integrated into fall meal preparations at school. Products were planted that had a harvest window of early September to mid October, such as grape tomatoes, carrots, leaf lettuce, squash, etc. The produce from the garden is used in classrooms, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable line in the lunchroom and is highlighted during Farm-to-School Day.

Education:

In the month of September, the Sunrise River School holds its Farm-to-School Celebration. Having a school garden helps promote this special day. The elementary children watch the garden grow and help in its maintenance. Produce from the garden

is served in their fruit and vegetable lunch lines with a special notation that the produce came from the Sunrise garden. Summer school teachers and students use the garden as an outdoor learning experience.

Student Involvement:

During the school year garden tours were given and students learned about the products that had been planted. Summer School classes helped in the maintenance of the garden and learned how to care of a garden.

Supervision and Maintenance:

Students from Sunrise school, the high school, staff, community members, the grounds crew and the contracted food service company (Taher) oversee the garden during the school year. Summer school teachers and students also participate in the maintenance of the garden during the summer months.

Sources of Grant Funds/Assistance:

Jeffers Foundation Grant, Taher, and North Branch Area Schools

Sustainability:

The Sunrise River School enjoys support for its garden from its contracted food service Company (Taher), school district administration and school board.

For more information contact:

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