

Cohasset Elementary School

450 Columbus Ave.
Cohasset, MN 55721



JeffersFoundation.org

Summary

■ Serves as an outdoor classroom ■ Garden is cross-curricular ■ School partners with several other groups
■ Families and community groups cooperate for summer maintenance ■ Garden is a Family engagement opportunity ■ Goal: to help promote a 'legacy of learning and a love of nature'

Photos



Simple raised-bed gardens make working easier and cleaner for students.



Students take turns watering during the summer months.



(right) Staff involvement from the top down makes a big difference.



Details

General Information:

The goal of Cohasset Elementary School was to create a sustainable project, which provides opportunities for increased health (high quality food) and wellness (social and family engagement) within the school community. We believe that school gardens can serve as a great outdoor classroom! Gardens are an excellent way to connect students with the true source of their food while teaching valuable gardening concepts as well as skills, such as math, science, art and health.

Garden Site:

The size of the garden is approximately 6' x 60' and comprised of three raised beds. There are paths that serve as dividers among the raised beds. The garden is located adjacent to the school in a fenced-in area, which helps keep out animals and reduces the chance of vandalism. The water source is rain barrels and water spigots.

Garden Product:

The garden produces tomatoes, cucumbers, summer and winter squash, sunflowers, and

kohlrabi. Sunflowers proved to be a fun project for the students to view the plant cycle in action and observe how seeds can be utilized to feeds the birds, etc.

Education:

The school garden is cross-curricular. From planning to harvest, students improve competencies in language arts, math, science and technology to expand and communicate their experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. The school garden provides hands-on opportunities that can enrich the learning experience and allow for exploration of student interests. Parents and staff provide supervision for the students during the lessons as well as when weeding, watering and harvesting the produce.

Student Involvement:

From the beginning, the project was promoted as a family engagement opportunity. The students are involved in the summer months on a voluntary basis, through a sign-up program to be sure who and when someone will be there to maintain the garden.

The garden is accessible to all students. During the school year, special education and support staff work closely with general education teachers to ensure learning projects are accessible, both academically and physically.

Supervision and Maintenance:

School staff is involved in the planning, care and maintenance of the garden. During the school year staff and students take turns with the supervision and maintenance. During the summer they enlisted the help of a local Girl Scouts troop and volunteers from the Minnesota Reading Corps to help supervise and maintain the garden. In the fall they helped to put the garden to “sleep.” Itasca County Master Gardeners were also very helpful. The plan to prevent vandalism proved highly effective. Fences, custodial staff, neighbors and surveillance from the City of Cohasset all worked in harmony to see that the garden was well monitored.

Sources of Funds and Assistance:

Along with a grant from Jeffers Foundation, Cohasset received a donation of black dirt from Itasca Utilities and Cohasset Mill and Lumber gave a reduced price on supplies. Funds were used for purchasing seeds, rain barrels, hoses, lumber, nails and basic gardening equipment.

Sustainability:

The school staff has support and assistance from the Girl Scouts, Itasca County Master Gardeners, and the Cohasset Community. With this support and help from other different groups the plan is to make this an ongoing project that becomes a legacy of learning and love of nature.

For more information contact:

Sue Roy

Sroy@isd318.org