

# SCHOOLYARD GARDENS

## FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES

### How to safely maintain, harvest and prepare fresh garden produce

#### Working in the Garden

- Water your garden with potable water.
  - Never use herbicides or pesticides on or around garden - communicate with school grounds crew to ensure they're doing the same.
  - SYG safe compost suggestions include:
    - LawnCorps - for large projects\* Cotton
    - Burr Compost - small projects\* DIY
    - Compost – [SYG Compost Manual](#)
- \*contact your SYG coordinator for more info

#### Proper Storage

- Label and date all stored produce.
- Refrigerate all cut produce in an airtight container.
- For specific guidelines on storing fresh garden produce, please reference the [Storing Fresh Produce](#) handout, a joint effort from K-State and MU Extension.

#### Harvesting Produce

- Wash your hands.
- Site check garden for animal feces and rotting produce. Remove if necessary and wash hands again.
- Use clean food grade containers for harvesting.
- Remove as much soil from produce as possible before putting it in your container.
- Wash and sanitize all containers in between uses.

#### Sending Produce Home

- Provide foodsafe containers to send home (i.e. gallon Ziploc bags, produce bags or reusable containers).
- Shake off as much soil as possible from produce before putting into food safe containers.
- Leave produce unwashed to delay mold development.
- Label and date each students' contents and send a note/email to parents letting them know about the fresh produce coming home or use our "[Veggies on Board](#)" letter to parents

#### Preparing and Serving

- Plan ahead! Communicate with food service staff to harvest in a timeline that will allow for immediate use or make plans for proper and safe food storage.
- Wash your hands often. Wash and sanitize sinks, counters, cutting boards and utensils before preparing produce.
- Check with food service for their sanitation procedure.
- Rinse all produce you're planning to consume immediately with potable water. Any produce you've harvested for later use, store unwashed to delay mold development in storage.

#### Safety Reminders & Additional Resources

- Never let anyone who is sick work in the garden, harvest produce, prepare garden produce, or serve food.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often when harvesting and preparing produce.
- Always refer to food service team's sanitation procedures when preparing and serving food in the cafeteria.
- Please reference the [K-State Extension Food Safety Fact Sheet](#).