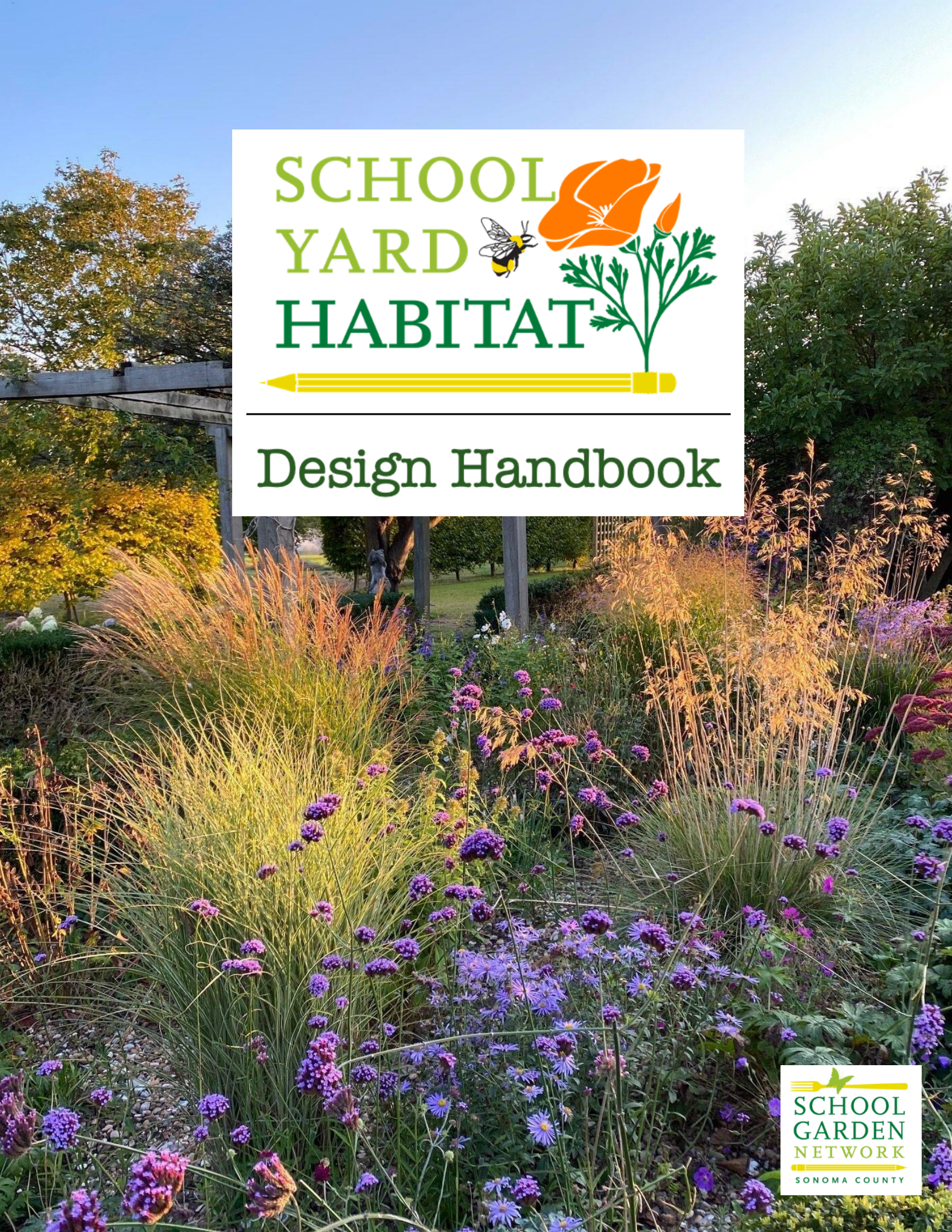
SCHOOL YARD HABITAT

Design Handbook



SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK
SONOMA COUNTY

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This handbook was created by Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager Michelle Krieg, building on over a decade of work and program development by Laurel Anderson.

Program Introduction

Welcome to the Schoolyard Habitat journey!

School Garden Network supports Sonoma County schools in creating and enlivening garden-based learning ecosystems. We provide technical consultation, plants and materials, curriculum, and training to help teachers and students create and engage with wildlife habitat on their school grounds.

This handbook is intended to support your school team as you design your habitat garden and complete your *Schoolyard Habitat Project Plan*.

During the design process, School Garden Network will support your school in site consultation, plant selection, habitat design, drip irrigation design, project budgeting, and creating a project timeline. Schools will also receive $1000 after submitting their Project Plan, which can be used to implement their project.

Additional project guides on *Native Plants*, *Site Preparation & Planting*, *Waterwise Gardening*, and *Seasonal Habitat Maintenance* can also be found on the School Garden Network website at Schoolyard Habitat > *Project Guides*. Curricular resources for engaging students during the design and establishment of your habitat garden can also be found at Schoolyard Habitat > *Habitat Curriculum*.

Benefits of Schoolyard Habitats

Schoolyard Habitats incorporate food, water, shelter, and space in order to attract and provide a home to local wildlife. Even a small plot can be landscaped to attract native pollinators, song birds, hummingbirds, butterflies, and beneficial insects! A thoughtful selection of plant diversity will bring a plethora of wildlife species to your school.

Benefits of Schoolyard Habitats:

- **Improve habitat for wildlife:** Native plant gardens provide habitat for local and migratory wildlife - including native pollinators, song birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and more. Native plants have also co-evolved with local ecosystems, making them adapted to existing soil and climatic conditions, and generally requiring minimal site preparation or maintenance after establishment.
- **Improve your school's learning environment:** Natural habitats create a beautiful, lush, immersive and sensory learning environment with greenery, texture, shade, edible fruit, fragrant flowers, buzzing insects, bird calls, and peaceful spots for sitting alone or meeting in groups.
- **Support classroom lessons:** Schoolyard habitats are naturalized areas that can be used for classroom field studies and observations. They offer hands-on learning opportunities where conceptual knowledge can be brought to life and made more accessible, tangible, exciting, and inspiring.
- **Teach ecological literacy & stewardship:** Natural habitats help educate students about our region's native ecology and the cultural practices of Indigenous Peoples. As learners engage with and care for natural habitats, they also develop their own identity and responsibility within ecological relations. These spaces empower young people with a sense of belonging and potential - deepening their understanding of the world around them, and their ability to participate in and influence it.
- **Foster curiosity, wonder, exploration, creativity, play, and gratitude for life.**

Schoolyard Habitat Design Process

School Garden Network's Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager will guide you through the design process to ensure a successful project.

1. Identify a Schoolyard Habitat Space

Identify 500 square feet of contiguous space for planting–this is a little bigger than a two car garage. This space can be hedgerow around your current food garden, or a planting space with paths.

We want to support all habitat efforts! If your space is smaller than 500 square feet then please reach out to the Schoolyard Habitat Program Manger to determine eligibility.

2. Create a School Team

Build a Schoolyard Habitat Project Team that includes a project coordinator, the school principal, a classroom teacher, and a designated maintenance personnel. Ideally these are all different people so there is ample support for the project.

3. Envision Your Space

Think about your goals. With your team, envision what you want your garden space to provide, and how you want it to be used. A Schoolyard Habitat can provide habitat and food for humans and wildlife, catch rainwater, and much more. Consider how your priorities for the garden will inform your design with the following questions:

1. Why are you interested in creating a Schoolyard Habitat project at your school?

2. What are your habitat goals? (Check all that apply)

☐ Hedgerow around our current garden

☐ A large planting area with a path for students

☐ Pollinator meadow

☐ Water pond/wetland area

☐ Rain garden that utilizes stormwater runoff

☐ Host plants for monarch butterflies

☐ Bird houses/nesting boxes

☐ Lizard rock castles

☐ Shade from trees

☐ Other: _____

4. Do you have any specific desires for plants? Plants will primarily be native to Northern California, drought resilient, and chosen specifically to thrive in your garden conditions.

5. How would you like students to engage with this habitat space? What activities would you like it to support?

☐ Sensory immersion (smell, taste, touch, hear, see)

☐ Observing insects and/or birds

☐ Craft & cut flowers

☐ Edible fruit

☐ Ethnobotanical garden for learning traditional crafts and human-plant relationships

☐ Stewardship projects

☐ Fiber & dye plants

☐ Meeting Circle/Space to hold classroom lessons

☐ Play

☐ Quiet/Reflective/Reading Space

3. Would you like to include any supportive garden infrastructure (eg. benches, trellis/archway, stump circle, weaved willow wall, picnic tables, mosaic/artwork, shaded pavilion)?

6. Would you like to include any educational signage or information? (eg. signage about habitat gardens, native plant signage, laminated cards with information about native pollinators, birds, insects, etc.)? **What other things do you think could support this immersive learning space?** (eg. children's binoculars can be used to look at birds and also turned backwards to magnify insects)

4. Host a Site Visit & Assessment

Get to know your garden site. What type of soil are you working with? How much water and light does each planting area receive? Where are your water sources? What would you like to change, or create? During their initial site visit, the Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager will use the *Site Assessment Questionnaire* (found online under Schoolyard Habitat > *Project Guides*) as a guide to observe your garden site and assess your project goals.

An important part of this assessment will also be identifying the available skills, knowledge, capabilities and capacity of your project team, and any desires for or restraints to your project timeline.

(Photo courtesy of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation)


Design
your
Schoolyard
Habitat

Design Your Schoolyard Habitat

Once your initial site visit is completed, your school will be invited to submit a Schoolyard Habitat Project Plan.

This plan will include information from your site assessment, a garden map and design, plant list, project budget, proposed project timeline, and how you intend to engage students with the habitat space and involve them in its installation and maintenance.

As part of the design process, the Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager will support your team in creating a planting plan and habitat design map, drip irrigation design, itemized budget, and project timeline.

Compiling Your Project Plan

Compile your project plan in the form *Submit your Schoolyard Habitat Project Plan*, found on the School Garden Network website under Schoolyard Habitat > *Program Overview*. This form outlines all required aspects of your Project Plan, and will save your progress automatically from the same computer throughout your design process.

1. Complete Your Site Assessment Questionnaire

After your initial site visit, complete the "Getting to Know Your Goals" section of the *Site Assessment Questionnaire* and upload it to your online Project Plan form. The information from this assessment will help inform your planting plan and habitat design, student engagement goals, budgetary needs, and project timeline.

2. Consider Student & Community Engagement

Establish clear goals for engagement with your habitat garden – both in how students will engage with the space, and also how they can be involved in its installation and maintenance. Depending on age, students can be involved in plant selection, plant placement and habitat design, planting, and even drip irrigation installation. It is also advised that you think through how to engage parents and community members in ongoing maintenance needs that might not be practical for students.

Having clearly articulated goals for student engagement will help inform your garden design, plant selection, and supporting habitat and educational infrastructure. Your school garden should be both fun and functional. Make sure your design will result in a garden that will fulfil your needs and also help you accomplish your curricular goals.

Once student and community engagement is considered, complete the questions regarding engagement in your Project Plan.

3. Map Your Site

Map your space. Measure your garden space and draw its shape to approximate scale to help visualize your plan. If you don't feel artistically or spatially inclined, an easy way to create a map is by creating an aerial image of your school from Google Earth:

1. Download the free program Google Earth.
2. Find your schoolyard, orient the image with North facing upwards, and then zoom to a close enough resolution to see the garden space without a lot of extra image around it (this is usually around a 1080 resolution). Press Command+Shift+4 to take a screenshot of this image, including the scale.
3. Open your screenshot into Paint or PowerPoint, and then draw lines over all existing building infrastructures, and circles over existing trees and other large plants. Also remember to copy the scale.
4. Then delete the Google Earth image, leaving only the outlined shapes and scale, which you can group together and save as a picture. You now have an accurate and scaled map of your space!

If your space is an easy shape, you can also simply measure it with measuring tape and then draw it to scale.

Once you've created a base map, add the following features:

- Hose bib(s) (marked with a star)
- Desired pathways and planting areas (remember to keep these to scale)
- Desired educational infrastructure, benches, picnic tables, signs, bird boxes, etc.

If you'd like, you can also add information on this map from your site assessment regarding sun exposure, slopes, water movement/possible pooling, viewways, etc.

This base map will support your garden design (including the need for terracing, swales, or ponds to *Slow, Spread, and Sink* water), plant selection and placement, and drip irrigation design. Once completed, upload this base map to your Project Plan form.

4. Plant Selection & Habitat Design

Selecting your plants doesn't need to be difficult. Once you have articulated your goals and know your site conditions, you can begin to choose plants that meet them.

The Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager will support you in selecting plants to meet both your habitat and educational goals. Plants will be primarily California native, perennial, drought resilient, and chosen specifically to thrive in your soil and climatic conditions.

To learn more about different native plants, you can visit the School Garden Network website at Schoolyard Habitat > *Native Plants* for pictures and more information.

Student Engagement

Remember that part of the learning and engagement process is involving students in garden design. A simple way to involve students in plant selection is by teaching them about birds, butterflies, and bees that live or migrate in your area, and then introducing the native plants that they rely on for food and shelter. Students can then choose what animals they are most excited about supporting, and then select plants based on this criteria.

Native Plant Cards to use in your classroom can be found online at *CalScape.org* (at the bottom of each plant page, click "Print Plant Sign").

Tips on Plant Selection

Consider your site conditions - *"Don't Fight the Site!"*
As you consider each plant, think about its needs for light, water, and soil type. Choose plants that are adapted to (or at least can tolerate!) the conditions that you are able to provide.

Try not to use native cultivars: Many native plants have been bred for human aesthetics, overlooking the needs of the insects. The manipulations of the flowers can inadvertently affect the quantity and quality of the nectar and pollen. One common example is the double-petal California poppies. The native poppies have four petals arranged in an open bowl corolla and provide copious amounts of pollen. In the cultivars with double petals, the extra petals are actually modified stamens. That means there is less pollen produced, and the crowding of the petals impedes access for pollinators. The change in colours and markings also interfere with signalling between the flowers and the pollinators. Bees generally do not see red well and are not attracted to red flowers. When selecting natives, it is always best to get the species with which the pollinators are familiar instead of a cultivar. These plants better meet the needs of their pollinators.

Avoid planting invasive or highly opportunistic plants: Some plants can be highly opportunistic and may outcompete other plants for space and resources. Be sure to know the growing potential of everything you plant, and choose plants that will support a diversified garden.

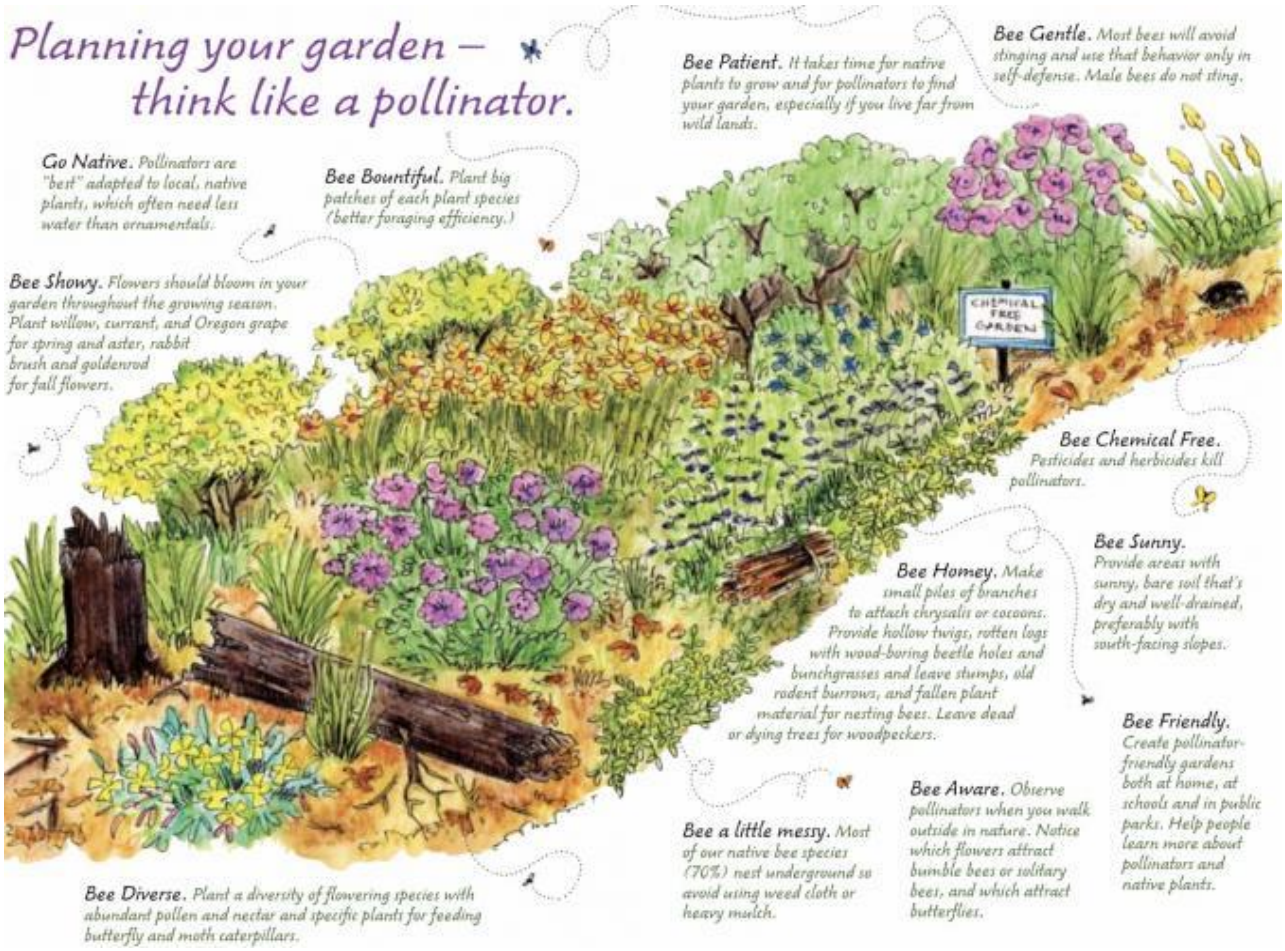
Consider planting native trees: Trees provide critical habitat for wildlife and are important components of most native California plant communities and ecosystems. Bringing native trees into urban landscapes can provide numerous benefits–including supporting insects and birds, providing shade, and reducing playground temperatures. When planting trees it's important to give them ample space to grow, and to not plant too close to building infrastructure.

Consider student safety: As you consider the educational aspect of your space, it can also be helpful not to plant non-edible berries, or any plants that could cause harm or discomfort to your students. The goal is to make a safe, immersive, enjoyable garden experience!

<u>Designing for Habitat</u>
As you are choosing your plants, also consider the following tips for *habitat design*:

- **Learn about which birds, butterflies, and bees live or migrate in your area.** Pollinators have preferences for habitat with the foods they need most in each season. You can plant specific plants to support them.
- Be generous with **group plantings** to attract pollinators.
- Provide **seasonal food** for wildlife with a variety of plants that flower and set fruit at different times of year.
- Diversify your **habitat structure** with layers of ground cover, herbaceous (non-woody) vegetation, grasses, shrubs of various heights, and trees for shade.
- **Don't plant too densely** - **consider mature plant sizes** when planting, and also remember to include **sitting and observation** spots that encourage garden immersion. Proper spacing will also ensure less pruning maintenance long-term.
- Create a space with **year-round protective cover** for birds and small wildlife using evergreen trees or shrubs, logs, rocks, or brush piles.
- **Create habitat for nesting pollinators.** Seventy percent (70%) of our native bees are ground nesters, and they need bare ground for nesting. Create a mulch-free space for them to excavate their nests to provide year-round habitat.
- If possible, consider creating a **water resource** with a small pond or rain garden.
- **Make room for your garden to go wild.** A little bit of untidiness at the edges of the garden creates abundant habitat for pollinators throughout the seasons. When pruning back dormant plants, especially those with hollow stems, leave at least six inches in place. Many of the small bees are cavity nesters that seek out this real estate. Leave leaf litter in place because many insects pupate and overwinter in it.

Designing for Pollinators *(by Bee City Canada)*



Check out Schoolyard Habitat > *Tips for Creating Habitat* on the School Garden Network website for more information and considerations for your garden habitat.

Plant Placement

School Garden Network can help determine your plant placement, but this can also be a good way to involve your students. Teach older students habitat design guidelines to help them come up with a design themselves. Younger students can also figure out basic plant placement by creating circles of different diameters and moving them around on a scaled map to determine spacing needs. Your plant placement can also be finalized after you have obtained your plants, as often it's easier to visualize spacing and design with a tangible reference. Remember that smiling students learning in the garden is what will make the space beautiful, not a fancy and complicated planting design.

Plant Availability & Purchasing

As you are making your plant selections, it can be helpful to check if your desired plants are (or will be) available. Put your plants on hold if needed, and purchase them as big as

possible (gallons are best) so they are hardy when planting at your school. A list of local native plant nurseries can be found under the “Create a Project Budget” section of this handbook.

5. Drip Irrigation Design

In Northern California’s drought conditions, using water mindfully is important. Drip irrigation is a highly efficient water application method which focuses water use and reduces runoff and evaporation. Using drip irrigation on a timer can also help automate your watering and free up your time. Ideally, this irrigation will be independent from other school landscaping to ensure your garden receives the proper amount of water and that the water isn’t accidentally turned off.

After your plants have been planted, the Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager will use your base map to design a drip irrigation layout for your garden. All drip supplies will be available for pickup at Harmony Farm Supply & Nursery in Sebastopol. If you’d like, School Garden Network can also support your school with installation.

More information about the importance of using drip and how to install drip irrigation can be found at Schoolyard Habitat > *Project Guides*.

6. Create a Project Budget

Now that you’ve designed your space, it’s time to figure out what you need to bring it into reality! Below is a list of possible tools and materials for reference. The Schoolyard Habitat Manager will also provide you with a budget template to fill out. As you compile your project budget, it will be important to look up exactly where you will purchase each item, and note its price (including delivery fees for bulk amendments).

Once your Project Plan has been submitted and approved, School Garden Network will provide your school with $1000, which can be used for tools and other materials, plants, soil amendments, irrigation supplies, gopher baskets, mulch, and garden and plant signage.

Tools & Materials

**Some tools can be borrowed from School Garden Network specifically for planting. Ask the Program Manager what is available!*

- Wheelbarrows
- Flags (100 packs)
- Shovels
- Hand trowels
- Gloves (variety of hand sizes)
- Rakes (soft and hard)
- Pruners for ongoing maintenance–*flower pruners are great for smaller hands*
- Weeding trugs/buckets

Bulk Amendments

- Compost - to improve soil aeration and water and nutrient holding capacity
    - Add *1-2" top dressing* on the surface of your planting beds
- Wood chips/mulch for planting beds - to suppress weeds, retain soil moisture and keep keep the soil cool in the Summer
    - Add 2" on top of compost top dressing
- Sheet cardboard for sheet mulching over planting beds
    - Can also install cardboard on pathway under wood chips if dealing with pernicious weeds
- Wood chips for pathways
    - Generally around 2-3" thick
- Topsoil (NOT potting mix - only use potting mix in pots!) - a substrate that has nutrients and a good growing texture. *This amendment is only recommended if your school has Adobe clay soil (common in Santa Rosa)*.
    - A loamy compost mix is ideal
    - Topsoil thickness should be around *2 feet* - try to make your topsoil thickness between one-quarter to one-third of your tallest plant's height

Keep in mind that California natives are adapted to native soil (including clay soil) and do not necessarily require any soil preparation. However, as many school sites have denuded soils with little soil life, it's recommended to aerate your planting area with digging forks after planting, and then *top dress* your soil with a 1-2" layer of compost.

Compost will inoculate your garden with beneficial microbes, and will create an environment where they can live and do their work in obtaining and sharing nutrients as they help build the top soil. Adding compost will increase soil aeration, organic matter, and the soil's water and nutrient holding capacity. (Although commonly misunderstood, the role of compost is not primarily to add nutrients.)

Adding a 2-4" thick layer of wood chip mulch over the compost is also recommended. Mulch can help suppress weeds, keep the soil moist, and keep plant roots and microbes cool during the hotter Summer months. Remember to keep wood chips 2-3" away from the base of each plant as the crown of the plant can rot if buried. Make sure to also include areas of bare soil in your garden to provide habitat for ground nesting native bees.

Plants & Gopher Baskets

A list of recommended plants for your habitat garden will be provided. Local nurseries in Sonoma County where you can purchase your plants include:

- California Flora Nursery (School Garden Network has a 20% discount)
- Harmony Farm Supply & Nursery (ask if a discount is available!)
- Home Grown Habitat Nursery
- Hallberg Nursery (by appointment only, great selection!)

- School Garden Network can also obtain native plants for your project through wholesale accounts at Emerisa Gardens Nursery, Laguna Foundation Native Plant Nursery, and Devil Mountain Nursery
- There are also often possibilities to obtain donated plants from School Garden Network–ask the Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager for more information!

If your site has a lot of gopher activity, it is recommended to plant your plants inside gopher baskets. You can purchase gopher wiring at any hardware store and make plant baskets together with your students.

Irrigation

A drip irrigation design and list of materials (including extra materials for ongoing maintenance) will be provided to you, and can be picked up at Harmony Farm Supply & Nursery in Sebastopol. School Garden Network receives a significant discount from Harmony on drip irrigation supplies to support school garden projects. *This budget item will be filled out by the Schoolyard Habitat Manager.*

If a hose bib is near your garden, it is also recommended to install a hose with a hose head to be able to hand water your garden as needed.

General Infrastructure

General infrastructure is ideally installed before site preparation and planting, and can include pathways, picnic tables, benches, a wooden stump circle, large accent stones for the garden, trellis/archways, willow walls, etc. Large garden signage can also be installed before planting. Affordable pre-designed signs can be ordered from the Life Lab website at: https://lifelab.org/garden-signs/

Habitat & Educational Materials

Supporting habitat and educational materials can include habitat logs, lizard rock castles, bird and mason bee boxes, artwork/mosaics, native plant signage or cards, binoculars, magnifying glasses, etc. These are added after your garden has been installed.

7. Project Timeline

The last step in creating your Project Plan is to define a timeline. Consider the following recommended steps and put them in a desired monthly timeline for your school. **Remember—Keep it Simple.** Dream big, but start with a plan that is manageable for your team. It's common to develop a two-year plan, accomplishing a few steps each year! As you consider your timeline, also keep in mind that it's best to plant in the rainy season (Fall or early Spring), to allow your plantings to establish before the Summer heat.

Step 1 - Design your Schoolyard Habitat with input from your students. Students will be more engaged with the project if they are involved in its design. Possible ways to engage your students - depending on their age - include:

- Teaching students about native pollinators, birds, and other wildlife, and discussing what animals they would like to support. Make sure to include plants and habitat infrastructure in your garden design that will support these animals. Resources for native wildlife curriculum can be found on the School Garden Network website at Schoolyard Habitat > *Habitat Curriculum*.
- Involving students in garden design and plant placement. You can teach them simple guidelines for creating habitat, and give them the desired spacing for each plant. Teaching your students the principles behind habitat design will also help them understand how ecosystems function.

Step 2 - Prepare for your project (refer to your itemized budget for materials needed)**:**

- Install drip irrigation headers for your habitat site if needed.
- Remove any difficult plants, tree stumps, etc. that can't be done with your students.
- Purchase and/or acquire tools and materials.
- Define and install any general garden infrastructure - this can include pathways, picnic tables, benches, a wooden stump circle, large accent stones for the garden, trellis/archways, willow walls, water catchment system, etc.
    - Tip: An easy way to define your pathway is with flags, and then students can put down weed fabric and cover it with wood chips or flagstone.
- If you are installing a habitat pond, please contact the Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager for more details on how this can be accomplished
- Have soil amendments (eg. compost, topsoil, mulch), and wood chips for pathways (if needed) delivered to your school.
- Purchase and/or acquire plants (refer to your planting plan)--you can order your plants well in advance, but it is recommended to pick them up only a few days before planting, unless you have sufficient ability to take care of the plants as they wait. The Schoolyard Habitat Program Manager can also help with plant acquisition.

Step 3 - Prepare your planting space with your students

- Weed planting space, and then sheet mulch if needed (if you are sheet mulching, then aerate your soil before planting)
- If you are planting a garden in Adobe clay, add topsoil to your planting space*
- Pre-water your space if it is very dry (ideally the water will penetrate at least a food down)

**Some school sites in Santa Rosa are situated on Adobe clay, which is a very difficult substrate for many plants to survive in. At these schools, it's recommended to aerate the soil as much as possible with digging forks, and then add a few feet of topsoil on top of this clay substrate to aid in your habitat establishment.*

Step 4 - Plant with your students

- Stage your plants around the garden where they will be planted, with a flag in each pot
- Dig your holes to the appropriate plant depth
    - For clay-heavy soils, scour the walls and base of your hole to ensure there isn't a hard pan (If you think about it, you're essentially planting into a clay pot! Make sure that water can drain from this "pot" or you will have issues later on with root rot.).
    - If your soil is rather denuded/infertile, you can also add a handful of nutritional amendments at the base of each hole (eg. Happy Frog). Tip: Do not completely fill the hole only with compost or other soil amendments, as this will create a water drainage imbalance between the two mediums.
- Plant!
    - If root bound, loosen the plant roots before planting
    - As you are planting, make sure not to bury the plant crown (where the root meets the shoot)
    - Install gopher baskets around plants as needed
    - For clay-heavy soils, as you place the soil back into the hole, break it up to create space for air and water movement
    - Avoid pushing on and compacting the soil too much as you bury the plants
    - When finished planting, place a flag next to each plant to avoid trampling and allow easier preliminary observation
    - Water each plant deeply after planting (this can also be done at the end)

Step 5 - Aerate the soil around your plantings with a garden fork.

- Tip: Try not to heavily walk on or compact the space after you have done this. It can be helpful to create stone pathways through the garden to minimize compaction.

Step 6 - Add 1-2" *top layer* of compost over your entire garden area.

This will inoculate your garden with beneficial microbes, and will create an environment where they can live and do their work in obtaining and sharing nutrients as they help build the top soil. Adding compost will also increase soil aeration, organic matter, and water and nutrient holding capacity. (Although commonly misunderstood, the role of compost is not primarily to add nutrients.)

- Tip: It's not recommended to fill your planting hole with compost as this will create a water drainage imbalance between the compost and your native soil. It's advised to simply add a layer of compost to the **top** of your soil.

Step 7 - Add a 2-4” layer of wood chips over the compost. This will define the garden space, suppress weed growth, help retain water in the soil, and keep plant roots and beneficial microbes cool in the hotter months.

- Tip: Make sure your wood chips are from a tree that doesn't have allelopathic effects (eg. oak, Monterey cypress, eucalyptus)
- Keep wood chips 2-3” away from the base of each plant as the crown of the plant can rot if buried
- You can also leave some areas free of mulch for ground nesting insects
- After adding wood chips, you can also direct seed annual wildflowers over the garden area. Once seeded, water them to help them nestle into the substrate. If you have a strong bird presence you can also lightly cover the seeds with additional chips or cover the space with a small-grade bird netting until the seeds germinate.

Step 8 - Install drip irrigation

Drip irrigation can then be installed over the woodchips after planting.

- If requested, a drip irrigation expert can visit your school and install irrigation with your students. If your students are too young or not up for the task, SGN can also guide your maintenance personnel with tips for drip installation.
  - Tip: With clay soils that drain slowly, be sure not to overwater. Observe your soil and plant needs over time.
- Make sure to set a drip timer if not in the rainy season, and let the maintenance personnel know that the water is turned on.
- It’s important for someone to continue to monitor your drip set-up to ensure there are no leaks and that the water is on. It’s also recommended to change your timer battery annually.

Step 9 - Build and/or install supporting habitat and educational infrastructure with your students.

Garden Maintenance Plan

We encourage you to engage students in ongoing stewardship and monitoring efforts of the habitat areas. If you have an existing garden program, then students can be a huge help. It is also advised that you think through how to engage parents and community members in ongoing maintenance needs that might not be practical for students.

Submitting Your Project Plan

Once completed, submit your plan through the link on the School Garden Network website at Schoolyard Habitat > *Program Overview*.

Funding & Ongoing Support

After your plan has been submitted and approved, your school will receive funding.

Funding Agreements

Schools participating in the Schoolyard Habitat Program agree to provide photos of the project's progression, a brief description and evaluation of their Schoolyard Habitat project within 12 months of installation, and to be featured on the School Garden Network *Map of Participating Schools.*

Practical Support for Garden Establishment & Maintenance

As your Schoolyard Habitat is established, your school will also have access to native plant information and guides on *Site Preparation & Planting, Waterwise Gardening*, and *Seasonal Habitat Maintenance*, all found on the School Garden Network website at Schoolyard Habitat > *Project Guides*.

Ongoing Support

After the installation of your Schoolyard Habitat, School Garden Network will also support the enlivenment of this participatory space through habitat-based curriculum, stewardship project ideas, and quarterly inspirational newsletters. You can find numerous resources at Schoolyard Habitat > *Habitat Curriculum.*

Your team will also have the opportunity to attend School Garden Network workshops on practical and conceptual ecological knowledge, and pedagogic approaches to school garden ecoliteracy. There will also be networking opportunities to share ideas, challenges, and inspiration with other teachers and schools in Sonoma County.

(Photo courtesy of Audubon Connecticut Schoolyard Habitat Program)