



## Seed to Salad: After school or weekend program

### Background

Seed to Salad began as an after-school program at the Ithaca Children's Garden. Each spring two youth groups grow salad gardens at the Garden over an eight-week period. Most of the time is spent designing, planting, and caring for gardens. For those who do not have a February through June time frame available for the program, this approach allows you to implement Seed to Salad over a two-month period.

Salad gardens are the focus because they fit nicely within the spring growing season. Salad greens and quickly maturing vegetables can be planted in late April or early May. One of the biggest challenges with school gardens is summer maintenance. Salad gardens solve this issue by reaching harvest before the school year ends. In addition, salad gardens change quickly and are easy to grow, keeping things interesting and relatively successful for first time gardeners.

### Decision-making is important!

Although Seed to Salad is a gardening program, the underlying theme is youth decision-making. From project planning to harvesting and celebration, youth should be included in as much of the process as possible.

### Planning

Because an after-school program that meets for an hour, once each week for eight weeks, allows less time than a more lengthy school program, you need to plan a little more ahead of time. Additional planning tasks may include:

- Deciding which plants to grow and buying/ordering seeds in advance.
- Identifying the location and size of garden plots.
- Depending on your location, you may have to do some bed preparation ahead of time.
- Remember to save tasks for youth participants and engage them in key elements of decision-making. Starting with a pristine, ready-to-go bed skips out on important learning experiences.

### Schedule

See reverse for a sample schedule of weekly activities.





## Seed to Salad: Sample schedule of after school activities

### Week 1:

- Pre-assessment garden drawings
- Designing quilt block salad gardens



### Week 2:

- Complete garden bed preparation
- Planting

### Week 3:

- Finish any planting needed
- Watering techniques
- Making signs for gardens (paint on wood, laminated paper, painted rocks)



### Week 4:

- Tending the garden: watering, weeding, thinning, etc.
- Weed identification and weeding

### Week 5:

- Tending the garden: watering, weeding, thinning, etc.
- Mid-season taste test (depending on weather/growth)
- Nutrition super heroes game

### Week 6:

- Continue tending the garden: watering, weeding, thinning, etc.
- Mid-season taste test (depending on weather/growth)
- Nutrition super heroes game



### Week 7:

- Tending the garden: watering, weeding, thinning, etc.
- Plan salad party

### Week 8:

- Harvest gardens
- Salad party

