

# **TEICH GARDEN SYSTEMS SCHOOL GARDEN GUIDE**

## ***Welcome!***

We are so excited that you have taken steps toward bringing a Teich School Garden System to your school! This will be a wonderful experience for educators and students and we look forward to helping you get started. If you already have a working garden, we can assist you in many different ways through one of our affiliated companies. Please contact us for more information about our Learning Group or Nursery and Greenhouse divisions.

School garden projects are uplifting, unifying events and sources of great satisfaction for the entire school community. Our goal is to support you throughout the process and to eliminate risk and uncertainty when it comes to building the garden. The focus is the educational benefits and fun that will flow from a school garden.

This **SCHOOL GARDEN GUIDE** provides information on two subjects:

- **What we do** -- How we work with a school community to bring a Teich School Garden System project to fruition.
- **What you do** -- How you, as an advocate, can organize your school community behind a school garden project.

## **WHAT WE DO**

Here is a step-by-step description of the School Garden process:

- **Support for Community-Organizing Effort**

We support advocates, like you, in the early stages of implementing a strategy to help the school community acquiring a Teich School Garden System. Our support of early organizing efforts includes the following:

- Publication of our SCHOOL GARDEN GUIDE. The “What You Do” section of this document, below, contains detailed advice on the first steps you can take within your school community to get things moving forward.
- Our Website. Our website contains a wealth of information about our company, our products and school garden resources. We update the website continuously. Our website should be a starting point for other members of your school community who want to know more about the way school gardens can dramatically change young peoples’ learning experiences.
- Internet Resources. A substantial community of school garden advocates and activists exist nationally and a large body of material is available on the Internet providing information on the following topics: (i) the educational and health benefits of incorporating gardens into early childhood learning experiences, (ii) specific programs and ideas that other schools around the United States have used to work school gardens into the educational curriculum, (iii) fundraising and possible sources of grants and other financial support. We have collected links to some of these resources on our website and we continuously add new ones.
- Email and Telephone Support. We are available by telephone and email. We can be contacted as follows:
  - By telephone between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday to Saturday, at 888-622-5822 or 914-533-2484; and
  - By email anytime at [schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com](mailto:schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com).
- Informational Materials. Upon request, we will provide you with materials to support and assist in preparing a presentation to your PTO or PTA and school administrators on acquiring a Teich School Garden System. The materials include a presentation outline, PowerPoint slides and documentation of the many benefits of school gardens. Just contact us when you’re ready.

- **Preliminary Site Visit**

For most schools we will visit the site before we provide designs and proposals. When we are unable to make an on-site visit, we are able to utilize photographs of the proposed site to prepare both plans and a proposal.

- **Preliminary Design and Price Proposal**

We will prepare one or more preliminary designs and proposals for your school garden, at no charge, after we have evaluated your school's grounds. In the event we are not able to visit your location to have a preliminary meeting, we are able to design plans for your school garden based on photographs of the garden site that you furnish to us. Also, after we prepare a preliminary design, we are available to consult with your School Gardening Committee or similar group, via telephone and other electronic media, regarding the site location, garden design and any other information we can provide to help your Committee move forward.

If you are sending us photographs in order to prepare a preliminary design and price proposal, we would appreciate a minimum of 6 to 8 pictures of the garden site, taken from a variety of angles.

The photographs and all other pertinent information can be emailed to us at [schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com](mailto:schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com) or they can be mailed to:

School Gardens  
Teich Garden Systems LLC  
P.O. Box 706  
South Salem, NY 10590

Upon receipt of the photographs and information, we will assign a project manager who will contact you to obtain any additional information we require. The purpose of the preliminary plan and proposal is to provide the Garden Committee with sufficient information to obtain necessary approvals and to help support fundraising efforts. The final plans and pricing will be established when a contract is signed.

- **Final Plan and Proposal**

After the Committee has reviewed our designs and proposals and we have answered all of your questions, we will finalize the garden plan and prepare a proposal. The proposal is signed by us and will then need to be signed by an authorized representative of your school, and returned to us.

- **Support for Fundraising**

At most schools, fundraising patterns are already in place to support existing programs. The drive to raise money for a school garden system will need to be integrated with that effort or via other methods fundraising. We support School Garden Committee fundraising with ideas and opportunities that are specific to fund drives for Teich School Garden Systems. Please see our website for more information.

- **Construction**

Construction will be scheduled after a signed copy of our proposal has been returned to us and when the School Garden Committee has informed us they are ready to proceed. Our project manager will interact with the School Garden Committee to coordinate the various details of the construction process.

We use our own construction crews in the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and western Massachusetts territories. In other parts of the country, we work with a network of qualified, licensed landscape construction contractors for labor and equipment. In all cases, we at Teich Garden Systems LLC guaranty the satisfaction of every customer and stand behind every Teich School Garden System. A TGS representative will be on site during construction. Most school gardens can be installed in a week or less assuming there are no site access restrictions or other installation site issues. Once construction is completed, we encourage the school community to assist with staining and decorating to customize your garden.

## WHAT YOU DO

The following are recommended steps for rallying your school community behind building a Teich School Garden System:

- **Organize a School Garden Committee**

A school garden is a community project and support from many different individuals is usually necessary to bring it to fruition. This involves work, but the community effort is a large part of what makes the school garden project fun for those who participate in it. Whether you are a parent or a teacher, we recommend that you look to your school's parent-teacher organization (PTO) to take the lead. Your effort to engage the PTO in a school garden project also serves as an initial test of the project's viability. In our experience, parental support is a necessary ingredient for a successful school garden. If your school's parents are not ready to undertake a school garden project, you are likely to find that out through your approach to the PTO.

In most instances, a time comes when advocates are required to make a presentation to the PTO to describe and promote the school garden project. We can provide you, upon request, with a presentation outline, PowerPoint slides and informational materials to use. There is no charge for this assistance.

We recommend that PTO's designate a School Garden Committee to lead the effort to make the school garden a reality. Each of the following tasks will have to be performed as the project progresses:

- Obtaining teacher support and providing for ongoing parent-teacher communication.
- Fundraising.
- Garden design and construction, as well as site selection.
- Administrative and legal approvals; contract negotiation and approval.
- Garden maintenance and upkeep during the school year and summer.

- **Faculty Involvement**

Teachers need to be enthusiastic, too, for a school garden project to succeed. In many schools, teachers are close enough to the parent organizations that one or more teachers will be involved by the time the PTO forms a School Garden Committee. Where that has not occurred, the first mission of the School Garden Committee should be, we believe, to enlist the support of the teachers and ultimately the school principal, headmaster or administrative executive.

Each school is different and the “critical mass” of teacher support that is necessary to make the garden project a success varies from school to school. It is often best to start by enlisting the support of one teacher who can be the access point to others. Where there is no obvious teacher to play that role, we recommend that the School Garden Committee start by approaching the school principal. In the end, the teachers need to be enthusiastic about the garden, and the principal and administration needs to be supportive, too, for the garden project to be successful.

Our Resources page of our website contains links to a number of garden-related materials that are specifically intended for educators.

We recommend that one or more teacher representatives become a formal member of the PTO’s School Garden Committee and stay actively involved throughout construction.

- **Preliminary Organization**

After a School Garden Committee has been formed and teacher/principal support enlisted, a few more initial matters remain to be accomplished before we can provide you with a preliminary design and price estimate.

- Location. If a location for the garden has not already been established, this needs to be done. The ideal location is a graded site near an entrance to the classroom portion of the school building and preferably near a water source. An unpaved area is optimal but we can install the garden on virtually any surface, including pavement.

- Size and Shape. The School Garden Committee also should determine the size and shape of the garden, at least for purposes of obtaining a preliminary design and price estimate. Please peruse the gallery sections of our website for ideas on shape. As far as size is concerned, the standard size for an elementary school of 300-400 students is 30' x 40'. We are able to build any size garden, however, and encourage you to contact us with any questions at [schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com](mailto:schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com).
  - Identifying “Showstoppers.” One question for the School Garden Committee to ask before investing more time and effort is whether there is any economic, legal, regulatory, political or other factor that could render the project unfeasible. School Garden Committees working with public schools should consult with the appropriate administrative officials for the school system to make sure there are no impediments to proceeding. Private schools, too, should make sure there is no insurmountable impediment to proceeding.
- **Obtain Preliminary Design and Price Estimate**

After the steps described above have been completed, it is time to contact us to obtain a preliminary design and price estimate. We will prepare these at no charge upon receipt of a request from the PTO president (or chair) and the school principal, or, in the case of private schools, a request from the head of school.

The School Garden Committee should designate a representative or subcommittee to work with us on the details of the design. We will assign a project manager, who will work with your representatives throughout the remainder of the project until construction is complete.

The preliminary plan is a rendering of the garden in its specific site. It is intended to enable everyone in the school community to visualize what the garden will look like when it is complete. The price estimate will provide a basis for fundraising efforts. The garden plan and price will be finalized later when a contract is signed.

- **Approvals and Fund-Raising**

Ordinarily, fundraising for the garden will begin in earnest following the School Garden Committee's receipt of the preliminary design and price estimate. The project manager will be able to provide information regarding fundraising resources to supplement those available on our website.

All necessary school board, zoning and other approvals that apply to your project should be identified and obtained while the fundraising is underway in order to avoid delay later.

If it has not already done so, the School Garden Committee should create a project timetable at this point in order to orient the fundraising program.

- **Site Visit**

Before finalizing the design and price, a representative from our headquarters, as well as representatives of our construction team, will visit the site and meet with the School Garden Committee.

The site visit provides an opportunity for the School Garden Committee to ask about any details of the garden construction process that have not been addressed previously. The site visit can occur at any time during the fundraising process, but we recommend that it be deferred until the later stages of the process (although it should be scheduled promptly after fundraising begins).

- **Final Plans and Contract**

Following the site visit, we will finalize the plan and prepare a contract. It is important for the School Garden Committee to identify the official(s) who will be authorized to approve and execute the contract on behalf of the school.

Our typical school garden contract contains an estimated construction date, but the construction date remains flexible until the school's deposit has been received by us. At that time, we will schedule construction. We hold to our prices for one year from the time of contract. If construction does not occur within one year after a contract is executed, we reserve the right to adjust the price to reflect any increases in our material or labor costs.

- **Construction**

Building day is a big event! Our team is there to make sure it is a success.

If any portion of the garden materials are to be provided via in-kind donations, our project manager will coordinate with the School Garden Committee to make sure that **all** required materials are on-site prior to construction. This is critical and we are unable to permit any exceptions.

Our building crews are all properly licensed, insured and professional. We will work diligently to complete the garden in the contemplated time frame, subject to weather.

**LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP!!**

Email: **schoolgardens@teichgardensystems.com**

Mail: School Gardens  
Teich Garden Systems LLC  
P.O. Box 706  
South Salem, NY 10590

Phone: Toll Free - 888-622-5822  
Local - 914-533-2484

Fax: Toll Free - 866-732-1256  
Local – 914-533-5055