



Green & Growing

Back to School – Kicking Up D.I.R.T.

School is in full swing, and so is school gardening with the Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition (SUAC) D.I.R.T. Program! Students in Springfield R-12 schools are tending to and planting their school gardens, while immersed in a fun and educational environment. The collaboration between SUAC staff, community volunteers, and SPS administrators and teachers, continues to cultivate an environment where we share our passion for healthy produce and digging in the dirt with lots of young, energetic hands and minds.

Here's a behind-the-scenes peak at each of the D.I.R.T. school gardens:



A Monarch butterfly rests to search for pollen on a giant, golden-yellow sunflower at Eugene Field Elementary School.

Delaware Elementary

- **Type of garden:** high tunnel and outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T.**
Program: approximately 300 students, grades K-5
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Stephanie Young
 - **Garden Teacher** – Cathy Gaw
- **Current crops:** mostly tomatoes and peppers now – students are planting for fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** early spring 2011
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 300 lbs.

Glendale High School

- **Type of garden:** high tunnel and outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T. Program:** approximately 100 students, grades 9-12
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Dr. Natalie Cauldwell
 - **SPS Science Teacher** – Justine Lines
- **Current crops:** tomatoes, beans, peppers, basil, chard, kale, sweet potatoes, radishes, and corn currently - students are planting fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** May 2011
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 3,000 lbs.

Eugene Field Elementary

- **Type of garden:** high tunnel and outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T.**
Program: approximately 450 students, grades K-5
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Janell Bagwell
 - **SPS Kindergarten Teacher** – Debbie Fisher
 - **Parent Volunteer** - Beth Lindstrom
- **Current crops:** tomatoes, beans, peppers, basil, chard, kale, sweet potatoes, pumpkins now – students are planting for fall/winter

David Harrison Elementary

- **Type of garden:** high tunnel and outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T.**
Program: approximately 300 students, grades K-4
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Ms. Chris Mendel
 - **DIRT Project Coordinator** – Ben Utne
 - **SPS 3rd Grade Teacher** - Kim Taylor
- **Current crops:** tomatoes now – students are planting for fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** 2011

- crops
- **Garden established since:** February 2012
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 700 lbs.

Jarrett Middle School

- **Type of garden:** outdoor raised beds with a greenhouse in progress
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T. Program:** approximately 120 students, grades 6-8
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Rob Kroll
 - **SPS 7th Grade Science Teacher** – Greg Gillham and Ann Jameson
- **Current crops:** tomatoes, beans, peppers now – students are planting for fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** March 2012
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** TBA

Midtown School Garden (Boyd Elementary School)

- **Type of garden:** high tunnel and outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T. Program:** approximately 120 students, grades K-2
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**

- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 300 lbs.

Pleasant View Middle School

- **Type of garden:** high tunnel and outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T. Program:** approximately 120 students, grades K-5
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Donna Aldrich
 - **Garden Teacher** – Curtis Millsap
- **Current crops:** tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini now – students are planting for fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** 2010
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 1,000 lbs.

Rountree Elementary

- **Type of garden:** outdoor raised beds
- **Students participating in D.I.R.T. Program:** approximately 250 students, grades K-5
- **Key SPS Garden Contributors:**
 - **School Principal** – Amy Patton
 - **Garden Teacher** – Terre Armstrong

- **School Principal** – James Grandon
- **Garden Teacher** – Rinda Dunn
- **SPS 1st Grade Teacher** - Lorie Sly
- **Current crops:** tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos, chard, kale now – students are planting for fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** March 2009
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 1,000 lbs.
- **Assistant Garden Teacher** - Amanda Staedler
- **SPS 3rd Grade Teacher** – John Walstrand
- **Current crops:** tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, pumpkins, melons, chard now – students are planting for fall/winter crops
- **Garden established since:** April 2012
- **Amount of produce SUAC & the students harvested last year:** approx. 300 lbs.



Teachers and volunteers care for the flourishing herbs and vegetables in the high tunnel at Eugene Field Elementary School.

Continuing to Dig Deeper

New experiences and diverse life lessons abound every year in the outdoor classroom – as each garden is unique to its school and big on its impact. The hands-on learning environment of D.I.R.T. provides students the joy of participating in all aspects of growing and harvesting sustainable food with weekly SUAC led lessons in the garden grounded in science, math, health, and nutrition. This joy brings eager smiles and inquisitiveness, which fosters an appreciation for and connection to urban agriculture, food and the environment – which translates to community health and wellness.

Join SUAC for Cider Days!

It's all downtown for the 17th annual Cider Days on Historic Walnut Street, September 20th - 21st, from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Come visit the SUAC booth to help support the organization's mission to promote the growth of community gardens and agricultural education in Springfield Public Schools. There will be a contest to vote for your favorite painted pumpkins created by Boyd, Field and Rountree Elementary students, and kids can get creative while painting their very own pumpkin! General admission is \$4 for adults and children under 10 get in for free.

How can you become involved?

The Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition is consistently looking for additional volunteers to donate their time, enthusiasm, and efforts to support our cause. It is a beautiful thing to watch the transformation of the gardens and the students throughout the year. SUAC would like to share that inspiration with you.

If you would like to kick up some dirt with us & share your passion and time in a school garden, please see the [Garden Guru Packet](#) for more information. You may also contact SUAC's Executive Director, Sheila Nichols, at: sheila@springfielduac.org or via phone at (417) 429-0999.

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