

Cultivating the Future: The promise of a children's food garden

Green, M.

Keywords: food garden, outdoor classroom, food producer, pedagogy, place-based education

Abstract

The sunflowers stand tall and majestic reaching toward the sky; children run beneath their maze of color, weaving in and out chasing each other. Carrot and beetroot seeds are carefully sprinkled into long, thin rows; freshly made compost is piled high into a wheelbarrow and distributed around the newly planted broccoli and cauliflower seedlings; a small group of children are harvesting the climbing peas that are making their journey upwards, clinging to the trellised legs of a scarecrow. Excitedly they munch on their pickings and admire their handiwork. Welcome to the outdoor classroom. In this garden place children embody their affinity with the natural world, experiencing the miracles of nature and discovering the living systems within the soil that support their endeavors to grow food.

This is a discussion paper that draws on literature from the field of garden-based learning and is part of a PhD study into how pedagogies of place are cultivated within garden-based experiences. The paper sets out to define and discuss the educational role of food gardens within primary schools and considers emerging pedagogical approaches and constructs such as "place-based education" and "garden as place."