

**RESOURCES**
**TITLE | BACK POCKET ACTIVITIES, ART PROJECTS & CELEBRATIONS, AND ICEBREAKERS**
**CATEGORY | Program**

**OVERVIEW |** Garden educators should have activities, art projects, or icebreakers ready to occupy students at any time, but particularly when students finish early, during a transition phase between units in the curriculum, when getting to know a new group of students, or during special garden celebrations. Reference this guide during lesson or garden party planning. These fun activities and projects can be done with students or the larger school community.

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**Back Pocket Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Description</b>
Done Jar	K-5	Any	<p>Make a jar full of popsicle sticks with garden tasks or challenges on each one. Students can pick sticks out of the jar if they finish an activity early. Be sure all students know how to safely and respectfully do each activity with minimal supervision.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find 5 different leaves smaller than your thumb</li> <li>- Use a magnifying glass to look closely at 5 things and draw them in your notebook</li> <li>- Pick up 10 pieces of trash in the garden</li> </ul>
<b>Rainbow Chips<sup>1</sup></b>	K-5	5-20 min.	Challenge students to match colored paint chips to plants in the garden. Optional extension: Have students make a science drawing of a plant they find.
Shape Hunt	K-3	5-20 min.	Hand out cards with pictures of shapes and have students find objects in the garden that are that shape. See an example from <b>Cleveland Elementary School<sup>2</sup></b> .
Vegetable Yoga	K-5	5-10 min.	Warm-up with some classic yoga stretches, giving them vegetable names.

Activity	Grade	Time	Description
Student-Led Garden Tour	3-5	45 min.	Give groups of students cards that describe the different areas of the garden (planting beds, compost bin, etc.). Students familiarize themselves with facts about the area of the garden (and they can add their own observations). The class then goes on a tour of the garden where each group presents about their area.
Garden Comic Strips	2-5	45 min.	Students make observations in the garden and draw a comic strip about their observations.
Nature Fiction	3-5	45 min.	Garden educator reads or tells a fictional story about how something in nature came to be. Students then create and illustrate their own story. To assist students, garden educator can provide the following steps to create a nature story: 1) Think of something they like in nature (ex: rain, thunder, the ocean). 2) Think of what that thing reminds them of (ex: rain may remind students of tears or sweat). 3) Brainstorm how the thing in nature and what they are reminded of could be related. 4) Write their fictional story. <i>Note: Students may need assistance getting started. It is helpful to have a few prompts to get students thinking.</i>
Read and discuss <i>The Lorax</i> by Dr. Seuss	K-5	30-45 min.	For any grade around Earth Day.
Worm Bin	K-5	10-15 min.	Explore the worm bin or play <b>worm bin bingo</b> <sup>3</sup> .
Waste Relay	1-5	10-20 min.	Divide students into teams racing against each other to correctly sort waste into green (compost), black (landfill) and blue (recycling) bins. (Garden educator can use pictures of waste or actual waste.) Review how the waste was sorted as a group.
Scavenger Hunt	K-5	10-25 min.	Identify garden items to locate as part of a scavenger hunt. Provide students with clues, either verbally or on a piece of paper. Can be drawn or written clues.
Bug Hunt	K-5	5-15 min	Students search for bugs in the garden and collect them in bug boxes. Students draw them in their notebooks.
Garden Jobs	K-5	5-30 min.	Sample jobs include weeding, watering, trash pick-up. Students are especially excited about this if you provide trash pickers for them to use.
Fairy House Building	K-2	10-45 min.	Students use materials from the garden to construct houses for fairies (or insects or snails or whatever your students adore). Houses can range from the size of your hand to as large as is safe. Remind students of what materials can be used and any expectations around what plants can be picked. This works as an individual activity or in groups.
Container Planting	K-5	20-30 min.	Collect milk cartons from the cafeteria, rinse them out, and cut off the top. Students decorate the outside of the carton, fill it with soil, plant a seed, water it, and take them home.  OR  Do a Google search for “Newspaper Seed Pots” and plant in these easy to make and take home containers.

Activity	Grade	Time	Description
Seed Balls	K-5	15-30 min.	Give each student a small ball of clay and scoop of compost to mash together. Knead small scoop of seeds into the clay and let sit out to dry. Extension: Have students decorate a label for their seed ball bag with information about the seeds.
Lavender Sachets or Herb Bundles	K-5	20-30 min.	Use dried lavender (or another good-smelling flower/leaf) from the garden to make sachets or “dream pillows.” Put a small scoop of rice and the flowers/leaves in the center of piece of breathable fabric and tie shut with string.
Garden Memories	K-5	10-15 min.	Illustrate/write about a favorite garden memory and a wish for the next year.
Read and discuss <i>The Lorax</i> by Dr. Seuss	K-5	30-45 min.	Harvest herbs from the garden, tie with twine, and take home.

### Art Projects & Celebrations

Activity	Grade	Time	Description
Nature Art	K-5	5-15 min.	Students use natural materials in the garden to create a piece of art.
Watercolor Paintings	K-5	20-30 min.	Provide students with paper and watercolors to paint garden objects.
Garden Self Portraits	K-5	20-30 min.	Provide students with paper, glue, tape and nature materials to make self portraits. See examples from <a href="#">Alvarado Elementary School</a> <sup>4</sup>
Make Seed Packets	K-5	10-20 min.	Decorate a seed packet ( <a href="#">example templates</a> <sup>5</sup> ) and fill with saved seeds from the garden.
Leaf Rubbing Cards	K-5	10-20 min.	Make leaf rubbings on the outside of a card. Write a thank you note to Mother Nature (or anyone) on the inside.
Leaf crown	3-5	10-15 min.	Use string to connect leaves together in a crown.
<b>Vegetable Stamps</b> <sup>6</sup>	K-5	15-20 min.	Cut various vegetables (bell peppers, carrots, potatoes), dip them in paint, and use them as stamps.
Pet rocks/ paper weight	K-5	20 min.	Paint rocks and use as a paper weight for windy days.
<b>Mosaic stepping stones</b> <sup>7</sup>	5	60 min.	Use broken tiles to create mosaic stepping stones for the garden. <i>Note: This is a high material and prep activity. It benefits from parent/teacher assistance.</i>
Wind chimes	K-5	45 min.	Use sticks, shells, sea glass and string to create a wind chime.
Garden Wands	1-4	20-45 min.	Students find a stick in the garden. Students decorate the sticks with yarn, paint, or other materials to make wands.
<b>Nature paint brushes</b> <sup>8</sup>	K-5	45 min.	Use natural materials to create paint brushes.

Activity	Grade	Time	Description
Garden Flags	K-5	15-20 min.	Students write/draw on a square of fabric with garden-related appreciations. String fabric on twine/string/a ribbon and hang flags in the garden. <i>Note: This is a high material and prep activity. It benefits from parent/teacher assistance. See the example included in <a href="#">this<sup>9</sup> blog post</a>.</i>
Nature Weaving	K-5	30-45 min.	Use sticks, yarn, and natural materials found in the garden to make small woven pieces of art, like <a href="#">this<sup>10</sup></a> .
Seed Art	K-5	15-30 min.	Provide students with cardstock, old seeds, and glue to make a design or picture with seeds.
<b>Flower Bling (Life Lab)<sup>11</sup></b>	K-5	10-15 min.	Put a piece of masking or painter's tape, sticky side out, on each student's wrist. Students stick flower petals, leaves, and other garden treasures on the tape. Students can also make a garden "badge" by sticking a loop of tape on their shirt.
Painting with Natural Dyes	K-5	30-40 min.	Make natural dyes by boiling food in water (beets, turmeric, purple cabbage, coffee...). Students can use these dyes to paint, and can "draw" with colored flower petals, green leaves, and charcoal. <b>Optional extension<sup>12</sup></b> : garden educator can cut masks out of file folders for students to decorate.
Ladybug Release	K-5	20 min.	Give each student a ladybug to release into the garden. Depending on age/interest, students can build fairy homes for their ladybugs. You can also tell them that ladybugs are lucky and good at helping wishes come true, so they should whisper their garden wishes to the ladybug before letting it go! Ladybugs can be bought at garden stores or purchased on Amazon. Keep them in the fridge and they will be slightly sluggish which makes them easier to wrangle--putting them in bug boxes helps with distribution to kids
Necklaces	4-5	30 min.	Pumpkin seeds or other edible produce can be strung on dental floss to make healthy edible necklaces. Note: This activity requires needles and should be done with older grades or smaller groups.
Wood Round Necklaces	K-5	20 min.	Decorate with colored pencils or markers! 
Wishes on a Tree	All	45 min.	Write down garden wishes or appreciations on paper, decorate, hole punch and hang on a tree
Garden Tea Party	All	45 min.	Make tea with herbs in the garden, CHEERS together
Recipe books	All	30 min.	Make a book filled with the recipes that students experienced in the garden during the year

## Icebreakers

Activity	Grade	Time	Description
Monarch/ Viceroy butterfly game (a.k.a Who Started the Motion)	K-5	10-15 min.	<p>Begin by briefly explaining how Monarch butterflies are poisonous because they eat milkweed plants (have students observe milkweed if available). Viceroy's look like monarchs, but since they don't eat milkweed they are not poisonous. However, predators avoid eating them because they look like Monarchs.</p> <p>In the game, one student in the circle is the Monarch and everyone else is a Viceroy. The Monarch starts some repeating motion (clapping, dance moves) and everyone copies them. Whenever the Monarch changes their motion, everyone else copies their new motion. In the middle of the circle is a bird, acting as the predator, who gets three guesses to figure out who the Monarch is (who started the motion).</p>
Predator Spray	K-5	5-15 min.	<p>Students stand in a circle with one blindfolded student in the middle holding a spray bottle (predator). Next to the student in the middle is an object (stuffed animal, water bottle, etc.). The garden educator silently picks one student in the circle to be the prey. The prey's job is to sneak up to the predator, grab the item, and return to the circle. The predator gets three tries to spray the prey. If the prey gets sprayed, they go back to the circle and a new predator and prey is chosen. If they do not get sprayed, they accomplished the goal and a new round starts.</p>
Finger Grab Story	K-5	~2 min.	<p>Stand in circle. Have each student put their right hand out with palm up and left hand out with index finger pointing down. The index finger should hover over the palm of the person to each student's left. Tell the group that you are going to read a story and every time that you say the magic word (ex: tree), each person must try to grab the finger of the person on their right while they simultaneously pull their left finger away.</p>
Hula Hoop About Me	K-5	5-10 min.	<p>Everyone stands in a circle and holds hands. The garden educator has a hula hoop slung over their shoulder. The goal of the game is to pass the hula hoop around the circle without breaking hands, but with a twist: as long as the hula hoop is touching you, you need to be telling the group about yourself. The garden educator should begin so they can demonstrate.</p>
Llama, Coyote	3-5	5 min. per round	<p>To begin, everyone stands in a circle and each person SILENTLY chooses another in the circle who will be their "llama" and one who will be their "coyote." When the game begins, the goal of each person is to keep their chosen llama in between them and their coyote to protect them from the predatory coyote. There are no winners, but it's a fun game for letting kids run around. Generally is too confusing for younger kids -- if that is the case, you can simplify it by playing "Orbit" -- everyone chooses someone else to be the planet that they will orbit, and when the game begins it is their job to run around them in a circle as many times as they can in a couple of minutes. Since everyone chooses somebody different, it gets crazy!</p>

Activity	Grade	Time	Description
Life Cycle Rock/Paper/Scissors	2-5	5-10 min.	<p>Each student begins as a seed and travels through the plant life cycle by playing Rock/Paper/Scissors with others in the group -- if a student wins, they can advance to the next stage, if they lose, they stay the same stage and search for another player.</p> <p>Stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seed: Crouched down</li> <li>- Sprout: Crouched down, one finger held up above head.</li> <li>- Mature plant: Standing, two hands out to side as leaves</li> <li>- Bud: Standing, holding hands closed together on top of head</li> <li>- Flower: Standing, open hands on top of head</li> <li>- Fruit: Standing, cheeks puffed up and belly stuck out</li> </ul> <p>Back to seed!</p>
Group Bingo	3-5	10 min.	<p>Create a worksheet with different facts on it that apply to someone in the group (i.e. has a dog, loves to bike, was born somewhere other than California). It's the job of each person in the group to find others who fit the description and write their name in the appropriate box. This can go quickly, so encourage students to fill in the entire bingo sheet. Have a prize from the garden for those who finish the entire sheet before the time expires.</p>

## References:

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