



## Bay-Friendly School Garden Practices



### Building Healthy Soil

*(minimum of 2 practices)*

- Soil has been tested to identify need for appropriate amendments.
- Soil has been tested to identify any contaminants.
- Garden beds are prepared by hand rather than with a tiller.
- After initial preparation, beds are maintained with little or no tilling.
- Sheet mulching is used to establish planting areas or pathways, and as a way to control weeds while improving the soil.
- Soil is protected from compaction with clearly defined paths and or raised beds.
- Soil is amended with compost.
- Cover crops are grown to enrich the soil.



### Reducing Waste

*(minimum of 3 practices)*

- Active compost bin or worm bin\*
- Food scraps from garden, cafeteria or cooking classes are composted.
- Garden trimmings are used onsite for composting or mulching and/or disposed of in green waste cart.\*
- Plant waste is minimized by not overplanting, overwatering, or overfertilizing.
- Pruning is minimized by choosing plants that are appropriate for the space.
- Sheared hedges are not included in the garden.
- Clippings are left on the lawn after mowing.
- Recycled, salvaged or renewable products are used for artistic or functional purposes.



### Conserving Water

*(minimum of 3 practices)*

- Mediterranean or native plants are featured (more than 50% of the garden area is occupied by plants adapted to a summer dry climate).
- Plants are grouped and planted by water needs.
- Native grasses and other lawn alternatives are used to reduce water consumption.
- Efficient irrigation (drip, timers, soaker hoses, etc.) is in place and functioning properly.
- Watering occurs according to need, not a pre-determined schedule.
- Mulch is used on bare soil in the garden and on top of garden beds.
- Rainwater collection or gray water systems collect and recycle water.



### **Creating Wildlife Habitat**

*(minimum of 2 practices)*

- Food for wildlife is available through plant selection.
- Water is provided with a small pond, bird bath, or water dish.
- Year-round protective cover is provided with a planting of evergreen trees/shrubs, logs, rocks, or brush pile.
- Wildlife is encouraged with a variety of plants that flower and set fruit at different times of year.
- Areas of the garden are left somewhat untidy – let flowers go to seed to provide food for birds and leave dead leaves to shelter over-wintering insects.
- Native plants are featured (more than 50% of garden plants are California natives).



### **Protecting Local Watersheds and the Bay**

*(minimum of 2 practices)*

- Non-permeable surfaces such as asphalt and concrete are removed and replaced by permeable surfaces, allowing water to soak in rather than run-off.
- Steep slopes are terraced to reduce rainwater run-off and prevent erosion.
- Nearly all soil is covered by mulch or plants.\*
- Synthetic fertilizers are not used in the garden.
- Synthetic pesticides and insecticides are not used in the garden.
- No invasive species have been planted, and any invasive weeds on school grounds are being managed to prevent their spread.\* (Plants considered most invasive to the Bay Area include: Iceplant or Hottentot fig, Periwinkle, English ivy, Algerian ivy, Licorice plant, Scarlet wisteria, Broom, Pampasgrass and Cotoneaster. For more information about these plants, including botanical names and suggested alternatives, check out the page "Don't Plant a Pest" at [www.StopWaste.Org](http://www.StopWaste.Org).)



### **Contributing to a Healthy Community**

*(minimum of 2 practices)*

- An integrated approach is used for controlling weeds, insect pests and diseases with least toxic controls used first for safety of students, pets and wildlife.\*
- Pests and their damage are tolerated to the degree possible. Perfection is not the goal.
- Beneficial insects are encouraged through plant choice.
- Organic vegetable garden provides food.
- Hand or electric tools are used instead of gas-powered tools.
- Potential neighborhood hazards are considered and controlled in the garden including fire awareness, weed seed disbursement and rodent habitat.
- The garden is accessible to the community, through work days, events and open garden hours.



## **Saving Energy**

*(no minimum)*

- Trees and shrubs are selected and placed to reduce energy requirements. For example, deciduous trees, or vines are planted on the west side of buildings to provide shade during the summer and allow sunlight to warm buildings in the winter.
- Plants are grouped adjacent to paved areas to reduce the heat island effect in hallways and courtyards.
- Local garden products and suppliers are utilized.
- Air conditioner is shaded.
- Outdoor lights are energy efficient or solar powered.
- Pumps for water features are solar powered or energy efficient.



## **Encouraging Play, Learning and Teaching**

*(minimum of 3 practices)*

- Students are engaged in garden design, installation and participate in ongoing maintenance of the school garden.
- Garden design and materials encourage informal interaction with garden features.
- Garden includes an outdoor classroom or seating area for students.
- Students participate in garden activities that provide time for unstructured exploration and guided inquiry.
- Plants and garden features are selected to provide connections to state academic content standards and classroom curriculum.
- Interpretive signage, graphics and murals convey information and provide teaching moments.
- Teachers are provided with professional development and resources on how to use the garden as an outdoor classroom.
- Classroom teachers include lessons or activities in the garden as part of their yearly curriculum plan.



## **Building and Sustaining a Network of Support**

*(minimum of 2 practices)*

- Community work days and events engage parents and community members in projects that sustain the garden.
- Successes and benefits of the school garden program are measured and promoted within the school and community.
- Support is sought from the school district for funding, maintenance or supplies when possible.
- Communication systems such as regular meetings, website or monthly emails provide updates to school garden stakeholders.
- Garden Committee is an established school committee with regular meetings, communication and ongoing cultivation of new members.

# Bay-Friendly Schoolyard

