# Sample Calendar of Garden Building & Maintenance

How do you plan for planting? This sample garden building and maintenance calendar is intended to give new gardeners a sense of the kinds of tasks and considerations to think ahead about in the first year of setting up a garden or green space at a school.

It was developed for use in northern Ohio. Please adapt this schedule to suit your region and time frame. It’s best to allow two school semesters to bring the project to life.

## Late Fall – March

Learn about the site prior to picking plants:

* Check gardening recommendations and information from your state’s extension service (see [garden fact sheets from the Ohio State University Extension](https://ohioline.osu.edu/topic/home-yard-and-garden)).
* Schedule a soil test (see info on [soil testing in Ohio](https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-1132)).

Plan out the garden:

* Lay out garden beds and paths. Garden beds should be no deeper than an arm can reach. Paths should be wide enough for two people to walk side by side.
* Decide what material to use for paths. Place cardboard or black plastic over turf to remove grass prior to installing path.
* To create new planting beds consider using [lasagna layering](https://hgic.clemson.edu/lasagna-gardening/). Lasagna layering doesn’t require any digging or tilling and turns kitchen scraps, yard waste, and newspapers into layers of rich, delicious, nutritious soil.
* Install any large garden ornaments.

Pick plants and gather supplies:

* Make a reference spreadsheet of each plant’s needs. Plant catalogues are good sources of information – better than seed packets.
* Decide which plants can be grown by seed vs living plants. Annual plants are easier to grow than perennials.
* Inventory tools and purchase what is needed (trowels, spades, garden rakes, hoses, watering cans, etc.).

## March

* Start annual seeds under grow lights.
* Identify outside area to “harden-off” seedlings so they will gradually acclimate to outdoor temperatures, sun and wind.

After year one:

* Cut back perennials and ornamental grasses. Help keep habitat alive by waiting to do cleanup until after temperatures rise into mid-50’s so critters have a safe place to overwinter.
* Weed beds and path. Cool season weeds should not be allowed to flower and go to seed.
* Prune shrubs as desired.

## April

* Plant, mulch, and water perennials.
* Add information (location, size, source) to plant spreadsheet.
* Weed.
* Schedule summer gardeners.

## May

* Plant annuals.
* Water plants and fertilize with organic fertilizer such as fish emulsion or liquid kelp. Mulch.
* Weed.

## June, July, August

* Weed and water!
* Consider using Smithsonian Gardens’ [Pollination Investigation Field Journal](https://gardens.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/PollinationInvestigationJournal.pdf) track garden pollinators.

## September

* Review garden. Notate what plants performed well in the summer in plant spreadsheet.
* Plant more of the successful perennials.
* Host a back-to-school event to promote garden.
* Weed and water if necessary.

## October

* Plant bulbs and mark where they are planted.
* Rake (if necessary) and compost leaves.
* Mulch bare areas.

## November, December

* Evaluate & make plans for next year!