

# INTRODUCTION TO GARDENING



FORTITUDE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

# Agenda

- Welcome and overview of gardening as more than “planting”
- Types of gardens (vegetable, flower, herb, community, raised beds)
- Basic garden setup and preparation concepts
- Life skills developed through gardening (responsibility, teamwork, problem-solving)
- **Career Spotlight:** How USDA NRCS supports gardens, schools, and communities
- **College Connection:** Introduction to agriculture, environmental science, and horticulture as college fields
- Reflection activity: “How could gardening help people, communities, and the land?”

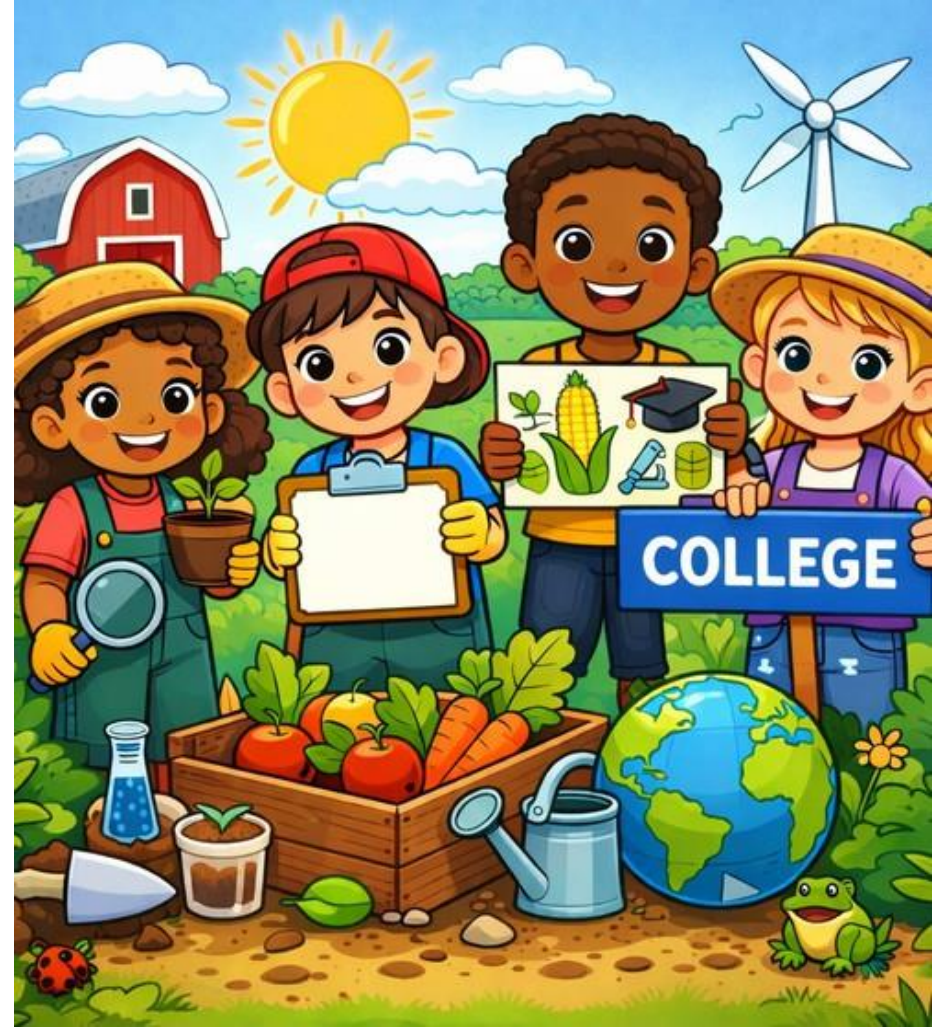




# Objectives

**At the end of this session, participants will:**

1. Understand the basic purpose and benefits of gardening as part of sustainable agriculture
2. Identify how gardening supports environmental stewardship and community well-being
3. Be introduced to USDA NRCS roles that support gardens, land stewardship, and community agriculture
4. Gain awareness that agriculture and environmental science are fields of study at the college level





# INTRODUCTION TO GARDENING



Every letter in *G.R.O.W.* stands for a skill that makes YOU a great gardener.

When I say a letter, you'll do a fun gesture that goes with it!

- **G – Grow** 🌱 (*care + responsibility*) – *Gesture: Water plants*
- **R – Reach** 🌞 (*patience*)- *Gesture: Stretch arms high*
- **O – Observe** 🔍 (*problem-solving*) – *Gesture: Binoculars*
- **W – Work Together** 🤝 (*community & teamwork*)- *Gesture: 1 Clap*

**Chant:** “We GROW together! We GROW with care! Our plants are happy, everywhere!”



# Growing Fun with Gardening

Today we're going to learn how YOU can be a gardener—yes, even in 4th grade!



# What is Gardening?

It is not just about making things look pretty!

It is about watching something you planted grow with your own hands!



# Why Do People Garden?

Reasons:

- 🍅 Grow yummy food
- 🌸 Make places look beautiful
- 🌍 Connect with nature
- 💪 Exercise and relax





# Question:

What would YOU grow if  
you had a garden?





# Skills You Learn in Gardening

## Skills:



Responsibility  
(watering plants)



Patience  
(waiting for plants to grow)



Problem-Solving  
(figuring out why a plant looks sad – limp leaves)



Responsibility



Patience



Problem-Solving

# Types of Gardens

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- 🥕 Vegetable Garden →  
*Grow your own food*
- 🌸 Flower Garden →  
*Pretty & attracts butterflies*
- 🌿 Herb Garden →  
*Spices for food & tea*
- Community Garden →  
*Work together & share harvest*





# Name the Garden Types





# Raised Beds





# Basic Planting Techniques

## Steps

- Start small 🌱
- Pick the right plants 🌻 💧
- Use simple tools 🧤
- Learn as you grow 📖



# Setting Up Your Garden Space



## Steps:

- Clear space & prepare soil
- Plant seeds or seedlings Water and care for them Watch them grow!



# What tool would YOU like to use most?

- Shovel
- Gloves
- Watering can
- Others



# Benefits of Gardening

## Benefits:



Connect with nature



Fresh food at home



Help the environment



Stay active and healthy







# Gardening & Life Skills

- Extra Skills:
- 🕒 Time management
- 🧐 Critical thinking
- 💪 Physical fitness

# Reflection & Goal Setting

“How do **YOU** think  
gardening could help you?”  
“What would you like to grow  
first?”





# Anyone Can Be a Gardener!

Gardening is for everyone—  
start small, care for your  
plants, and watch them  
grow, just like you grow  
every day!





# Careers in Gardening & Conservation



# There's More to Gardening!

Gardening is more than a hobby, many people build entire careers around understanding, nurturing, and protecting the natural world.



# Careers That Help Gardens Grow



## Conservation Technician

Works with experts and the USDA NRCS to build gardens and support outdoor projects in the community.



## Community Outreach Specialist

Engages local people, helps plan garden projects, and ensures everyone has access to green spaces.



## Soil Conservationist

Protects soil, shares best growing practices, and keeps gardens healthy for future generations.



USDA NRCS supports communities by building gardens, protecting vital land and soil, and helping farmers and schools thrive.

- Building school and community gardens
- Protecting healthy soil and farmland
- Supporting local farmers and schools



# College Pathways in Gardening

- People study these fields below.
- Colleges in Alabama offer these programs



## **Agriculture**

Learn how to grow, protect, and manage crops and gardens for communities.



## **Environmental Science**

Study environments and how to protect the soil, water, and plants.



## **Horticulture**

Focus on growing beautiful and healthy plants—Alabama colleges offer these strong programs.



# Activity Time: Gardening Worksheets

Complete Pages  
6- 9 of Workbook

