New “School Garden Guide” Released to Support Garden-based Learning for DC Students

The United States Botanic Garden (USBG), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and City Blossoms are celebrating Earth Day with the release of the newly developed guidance document; “Growing Strong: A Comprehensive Guide to Support all School Garden Programs in the District.”

Across the District, new school gardens are being established and existing school gardens are being enhanced to provide students with high-quality garden-based instruction. The USBG, OSSE, and City Blossoms recognize the value of garden-based learning and the need for clear and accessible guidance to support school garden learning opportunities. This guide is for teachers, school administrators, community-based organization staff, community members, and parents who are looking for strategies to bring learning across subject areas outdoors.

“We know that healthy bodies and healthy minds are the foundation of academic success,” said Dr. Heidi Schumacher, OSSE assistant superintendent, health and wellness. “As students are spending more time learning in front of screens, OSSE recognizes the opportunity for students to go outside and learn in nature. As schools safely reopen for in-person learning, school gardens can be great places for students to have these types of meaningful engagements.”

“School gardens are vital community resources for connecting young people to the importance of plants. They are places for joyful learning and memorable, hands-on experiences with plants, food and the natural world,” said Dr. Saharah Moon Chapotin, USBG executive director. “We are excited to offer this guide via this great collaboration.”

“This guide is an important document that lays a path for establishing a sustainable and impactful school garden program. Any group getting ready to launch or refine their school garden program would benefit from it! We were thrilled to be a part of its creation and to collaborate with our partners at the U.S. Botanic Garden and the Office of the Superintendent of Education,” said Tara McNerney, Executive Director, City Blossoms.
The collaborators hope this resource can serve as an example for school garden support organizations throughout the United States. This guidance document follows the Greenhouse Manual that was developed and released by the USBG, City Blossoms, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology to help educators build and use greenhouses for educational purposes.

"Growing Strong: A Comprehensive Guide to Support all School Garden Programs in the District" is available here.

###

Photos available at: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/by5zewsw017t25u/AABhTSZFDedTSDKfQYb5VRa?dl=0

Contacts:

- Devin Dotson, U.S. Botanic Garden devin.dotson@aoc.gov 202-306-6743
- Fred Lewis, Office of the State Superintendent of Education Fred.Lewis@dc.gov 202-412-2167
- Willa Pohlman, City Blossoms willa@cityblossoms.org 202.882.2628

About the U.S. Botanic Garden

The United States Botanic Garden (USBG) is the oldest continuously operating public garden in the United States. The Garden informs visitors about the importance and fundamental value and diversity of plants, as well as their aesthetic, cultural, economic, therapeutic, and ecological significance. With over a million visitors annually, the USBG strives to demonstrate and promote sustainable practices. The U.S. Botanic Garden is a living plant museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and Conservation International. www.USBG.gov

About the Office of the State Superintendent of Education

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the state education agency for the District of Columbia charged with raising the quality of education for all DC residents. OSSE serves as the District's liaison to the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Agriculture and works closely with the District's traditional and public charter schools to achieve its key functions.

About City Blossoms

City Blossoms is a nonprofit that cultivates the well-being of their communities through creative programming in kid-driven gardens. Applying their unique brand of gardens, science, art, healthy living, and community building, they "blossom" in neighborhoods where kids, their families, and neighbors may not otherwise have access to green spaces. For more information on City Blossoms, their programming, resources and trainings, visit www.cityblossoms.org and email info@cityblossoms.org

Source URL: https://www.usbg.gov/new-%E2%80%98school-garden-guide%E2%80%99-released-support-garden-based-learning-dc-students