

Digging In



Students can spend up to 25% of their school day on barren expanses of asphalt and turf: dangerous, lifeless school grounds that offer no interest or shelter and encourage aggression. Restoring nature to a school ground offers beauty in a safer and less hostile outdoor environment, with the added benefits of shade, improved air quality, softer play surfaces, quieter places to relax, increased wildlife habitat and opportunities for contact with the natural world.

Greening a school ground creates a more colourful, interesting and creative place to play and learn, brings lessons to life, offers endless opportunities for hands-on learning across the entire curriculum and benefits the whole community.



Steps to a successful project

Step 1 - Get started

Form a Green Team. Hold a workshop or assembly. Visit a mentor school.

Step 2 - Get ideas

Discuss what you'd like to change and research the approvals you'll need.

Step 3 - Get help

Ask teachers, parents, school staff, neighbours, local businesses for help.

Step 4 - Think ahead

Discuss goals. Plan for things you want to have and do in your playground.

Step 5 - Start with what you've got

Make a site map. List what's there, how it's used, good and bad features.

Step 6 - Make a design

Put all your ideas together. Ask a landscape architect to help with plans.

Step 7 - Gather resources

Think of ways to raise money. Ask for donations of time, tools or plants.

Step 8 - Think big but start small

Dream up big ideas, but plan to do the work over time in small stages.

Step 9 - Dig in and get growing

Organize work parties. Plan a big celebration and invite the media!

Step 10 - Keep track and keep going

Take before-and-after pictures. Invite another school to visit your project!

For more information and related videos, visit
www.nfb.ca/schoolgardens

Directors
Jane Churchill
Gwynne Basen

Producer
Michael Fukushima

Cinematographer
Jim Aquila CSC

Location sound
Ross Redfern

Picture editor
Ewa Turska

Sound editor
Tony Reed

Graphics and
animation
Sophia Southam

Original music
Chris Crilly

Research and
video guide notes
Jane Churchill

Executive producer
David Verrall



18 minutes
32 seconds

Order number
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Suggested discussion topics and activities

Before viewing the video

Draw pictures of some of your favourite outdoor places.

List things that make an outdoor area interesting and special.

Go on a multi-sensory scavenger hunt. Find your favourite and least favourite smells, sights, sounds and textures.

Create Web diagrams of things you like and don't like about your playground and why. What things would you most like to change?

After viewing the video

Draw plans for your school grounds on tracing paper. Put existing features and patterns of use together with your new ideas.

Plan a field trip to the local woods or meadow. Note the plants, birds, butterflies and insects you find. Create presentation boards that show the relationship of these species to your local ecosystem.

Invite someone from an environmental group, a plant nursery or urban planning office to speak about greening projects.

Design a mural. **Plan** an outdoor classroom. **Prepare** for all seasons!

Suggested resources

Evergreen www.evergreen.ca

City Farmer www.cityfarmer.org

I Can Garden www.ICanGarden.com

Green Teacher www.greenteacher.com

Canadian Wildlife Federation www.cwf-fcf.org

Canadian Wildlife Federation Wild Education www.wildeducation.org

Tree Canada Foundation www.treecanada.ca

SEEDS - Environmental Green Schools Program www.greenschools.ca/seeds

National Gardening Assn. (USA) www.kidsgardening.com

Seeds of Change Garden (USA) www.mnh.si.edu/garden



To all those who participated

Congratulations to all the students, parents, teachers, staff, friends and neighbours at the many wonderful greening projects at the schools we visited across Canada. Thank you for your generous support and contribution to the **Crack in the Pavement** video project.

