

Enrich Lessons with a Free Fieldtrip to the Raincatcher's Garden of Midway Hills

A teacher's day is filled with lesson plans, curriculum requirements, and not enough time for creative extras.

On a fieldtrip to the Raincatcher's Garden, students can spend a relaxed, hands-on morning petting a friendly chicken, pulling a carrot from the vegetable bed, or finding a yellow swallowtail butterfly.

Dallas County Master Gardeners, experts trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, teach the classes. The garden-based lessons were developed by the Junior Master Gardener Program®, affiliated with AgriLife. The JMG program has taken each curriculum and aligned all activities to Texas standardized testing.

Teachers are provided with lesson plans and ideas for classroom follow-up activities. A visit is free, but donations are always appreciated.

Curriculum Connections in the Garden

Language Arts:

Use creative thinking for journal writing. Identify plants and butterflies with field guides. Read children's literature with gardening themes.

Math:

Estimate and measure to record plant growth. Record garden notes with logging, graphing, and charting. Relate classroom concepts to a garden setting.

Science:

Explore a living laboratory of organisms, cycles, diversity, plant anatomy, food webs, decomposition, and pollination.

Social Studies:

Examine other cultures with concepts like a Native American "Three Sisters" garden. Study plant history, ethnic gardening, and folklore.

Art:

Draw a visiting butterfly or make a leaf rubbing.



Hands-on Learning

EXPLORE:

- *Vegetables & Herbs*
- *Orchard & Grape Trellises*
- *Pollinator Garden*
- *Compost & African Keyhole*
- *Visiting Pet Chickens*

Teachers work with the education team to tie their visit to classroom study. Students might discover:

COOKING WITH FRESH VEGGIES

Practice math skills by measuring ingredients, chopping vegetables, and doubling recipes. Recipes are in English and Spanish.

"KNOW & SHOW SOMBRERO"

Make a paper hat and decorate it with craft materials showing essential needs of plants. *Science 3.9 (A), 5th Grade STARR Supporting Standard*

GARDEN JOURNALS

Record garden findings. *Science 3.2(A) Scientific investigation and reasoning.*

PAPER TOWEL GARDENING

Divide a paper towel into 16 equal squares. Glue seeds of different vegetables in each square. Plant. *Science 3.2(A), 3.4 (A), Math 3.2 (B), STARR Readiness Standard, 3.11(C), 3.14 (A)*