



School Gardens

Seed Packets

Everything you need to know about growing plants!

The front of a seed packet will usually have a photo or drawing of the mature plant, the common name, the seed company's name, and the net weight. But take a good look at the back of many seed packets. You may see the Latin (binomial) name of the plant and some pretty specific instructions on how to start the seeds and what to expect after sowing the seeds.

There is lots of info here! On the packet at the top, we see the Spanish name for garden chives, a US map showing the best time of year to start the seeds, how deep and how far apart to sow the seeds, how much water and sunlight, when to thin them out, the final height and width of the mature plants, and how long until maturity (# of days until flowering or harvest). The packet below has suggestions for when to start seeds outdoors versus indoors and when to plant in the ground.

With children, have them copy the name from the packet onto the plant label. A spelling contest is also fun (e.g. for kinders, show them the word carrot on the packet and have them spell it). Have the students draw the flower, fruit, or veggie from the front of the packet. For larger seeds, they can count the seeds and decide how many to plant per space. Ask who likes the vegetable being planted or ask for memories of planting and eating it with parents or grandparents.

For older students, have them read the packet themselves and make the decisions on when, how, and where to sow the seeds. You can also keep a calendar of the actual sowing date and expected harvest date. Have the older students use the calendar for annual planning, selecting a harvest date (e.g. pumpkins ready for Halloween) and counting backwards to a sowing date based on the packet into. Have students decide what crops will grow best in your area, discuss what are the environmental factors that will affect crop success, schedule seed starting and planting on the calendar, and suggest solutions to any problems that arise (e.g. lack of summer watering, critters).



Photos by MGASDC

