



School Garden Success Story

North Peace Secondary School, Fort St John

We have a greenhouse upstairs over the biology lab, on the roof of the school. It's approximately 12' x 35'. It is a glass-enclosed space with access to large roof top areas.

In April of 2008, a group of students started the NPSS Enviro Club. Funding initially came from a grant from Conoco Phillips, which helped with equipment, seeds, etc. Students and teacher volunteers did the work. Conoco Phillips has been very generous in supplying us with a grant again for the 2009–10 school year. Two teachers and the Enviro Club look after plants during the school week and we have enlisted the help of the custodian to water over the spring break.

In 2008–09 the salad bar program used all we could grow. Salad bar was offered twice a week at \$3 per person (all you can eat) and the cooks tried to offer as much locally grown product as they could.

In 2009–10, the Enviro Club grew vegetables (zucchini, tomato, peppers, lettuce, cabbage), herbs and strawberry hanging baskets to sell as starters. We partnered with Robert Ogilvie Elementary to supply them with starter plants for their schoolyard garden.



In addition to the starter plants, the Enviro Club grows salad greens (spinach, lettuce, rocket) and herbs to supply the school cafeteria salad bar program during May and June. We are working with Bert Ambrose Elementary and Robert Ogilvie Elementary to keep their lunch and salad bar programming going as well. We offer Food Safe Level One to grade 6 and 7 students who work in their concession kitchens and will be teaching Food Safe to Parent Advisory Committee members who will help with these programs in the schools.

The Club consists of about 10 core students who are involved in the greenhouse. In addition to the Club, the Baby Bear Day Care 'students' have been active in the greenhouse over the past two years. The caregivers bring the 3- and 4-year-olds over to see what is growing. These kids have donated three apple trees that they started to the greenhouse! The greenhouse is

available for biology students' projects; we also share the space with the Life Skills class.

We are challenged to grow enough to fully supply our kitchen. We also don't get too much to grow well until April, as the cost to operate the heater in the greenhouse is prohibitive. We have a full grow light system that was donated to the school, but the cost of installation has stopped us from setting it up. We are working the School District on this issue and hope to use some of our grant money to hire an electrician.

The greenhouse has given students who may not have any connection to gardening the ability to propagate and care for plants. Students have also become involved in charitable activities through the club by donating their time and energy to 'guerilla gardening' campaigns and to preparing planting beds and containers for the schoolyard.