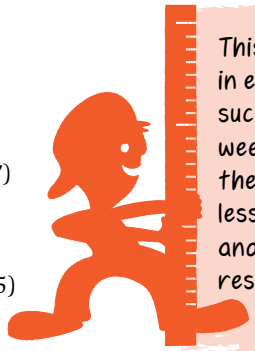
This week's lessons

a. Home Sweet Home *30 minutes*
b. Balloon Hot Potato *45 minutes*

Weekly features

Fresh Food Exposure (pages 132–137)
Garden Kitchen Recipe Demo (pages 141–158)
Quick Classroom Exercise (page 165)



Tip of the Week

This curriculum involves students in every step of making a garden successful at your school. This week you will lead them in selecting the garden site, and in next week's lesson they will create garden rules and develop teams with specific responsibilities to make sure that the garden is cared for well.

Creating a new garden can be simple and inexpensive. If the soil is rich and well drained, you might be able to just plant into the existing ground. If not, a solution could be to make a small, easy-to-make, easy-to-maintain, raised-bed garden that's filled with purchased soil.

See pages 118–121 for ways to make your garden a success with little effort and money.

a. Home Sweet Home 30 minutes

Objective

Determine, observe, evaluate, and describe the physical characteristics of a garden location.
Select a garden area that will provide for the needs of vegetable plants.

Supplies

A Place to Grow by Stephanie Bloom
Poster
Glue
For each student: *Home Sweet Home* site evaluation page (page 32); clipboard; pen or pencil

Literature Connection: *A Place to Grow* Synopsis

As it floats through the sky looking for a place to grow, a tiny seed lands in different places, looking for a home that provides for all its needs. Some places are too shady, too dangerous, or too crowded. Will the little seed ever find a place to grow?

As your students get ready to build a garden, it is vital that they select a site that provides for the plants' needs. Even though you may need to preselect the garden location based on those needs, allowing the students to consider different sites can be a valuable experience in objective evaluation and consensus building.

If there is no flexibility for garden sites, select two less-desirable locations to evaluate first; then allow the gardeners to rate the third, better-suited site. If a garden is already established, use this lesson to reconfirm that it can provide for the plants' needs.

Begin the session by reading aloud Stephanie Bloom's book *A Place to Grow.* Ask the students for their thoughts about the story.

Then pose the following questions:

- ★ What was the seed trying to find? *A place to live*
- ★ What were some of the problems with the places where it landed? *Too shady, crowded, dangerous, dry*
- ★ Why would a very shady area not be a good place to grow for some seeds? *The plant would not get enough sunlight to grow. An area already crowded with other plants? It would not have enough room for roots, stems, and leaves to grow. It may not get enough water or sunlight. A place where dangerous animals live? They might eat the seed.*

- ★ Describe the area where the seed was finally able to find place to grow. *In a warm, sunny, grassy meadow with soft, moist soil and light, sweet rain*
- ★ What happened in the story that finally allowed the seed to begin growing? *It waited while the rain fell, the sun shone, and a tiny but strong root grew to hold it in place.*
- ★ Who has ever grown plants in a garden? How did the plants do?
- ★ Describe the area where your garden was planted.

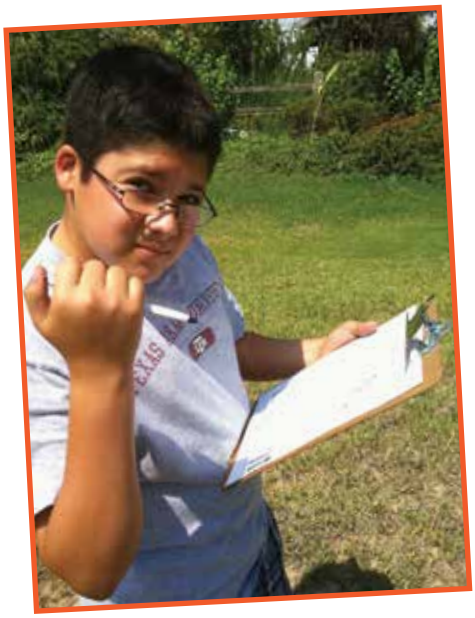
Review the six basic plant needs by writing *PLANTS* on the board. Challenge the students to use each letter to remind them of the different plant needs.

Ask them to explain how plants growing outdoors get all of these needs met. *The sun shines to give light; rain falls from clouds; the soil provides nutrients and a place for roots to grow; and the air provides oxygen, carbon dioxide, and room for the stems and leaves to grow.*

Also ask:

- **Where in nature do plants grow without help from people?** *Deserts, forests, jungles, islands, mountains, oceans, plains, roadsides, swamps, vacant lots, cracks in the sidewalk, etc.*
- **In what natural places on land do plants not grow well?** *In caves and deserts, at the North and South Poles, in polluted areas, on heavily traveled pathways, under rocks, around volcanoes, under waterfalls*
- **Would a rainforest plant grow well in a desert?** *No*
- **How long could a rose bush live in the Antarctic?** *Less than a day*

Have the students tell you what they like about their houses. What makes a home a comfortable place to live? *Beds, chairs, family, food, plenty of room, showers, toilets, running water, windows, and shelter from wind, rain, hot, cold, insects, intruders, dangerous animals*



Then ask: **If you could create a plant's perfect home, what would it be like?**

Take the students outside and stand under a shade tree. Ask if this would be the right spot for a vegetable garden. *No, most vegetables need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight.*

Remind the class that when selecting a garden site, we need to consider the plants' needs.

Distribute clipboards, pens or pencils, and copies of the *Home Sweet Home* site evaluation forms to the students, and tell them that they will score some garden sites to decide which one is best. They will give each site a score for each plant need on the list.

A vegetable garden should:

- Be easily accessible
- Receive at least 6 hours of sunlight each day
- Be close to a source of water
- Have loose, well-drained soil*
- Have access to space nearby for tool storage

The better a site meets these criteria, the more productive the garden will be.

* Soil quality does not need to be a consideration if you are using a raised bed and filling it with purchased garden soil.

Because of limitations at any given campus, it is likely that the location of a potential garden site is not very flexible or the garden site might already be established. Even so, it's a good idea to have students be a part of evaluating sites and they can come to the conclusion that the garden site available would be the best location from the options that they evaluate.

Begin by taking them to an area that has some sort of unsuitable quality (such as being near a ditch, having water standing, or being far from the classroom). Ask them to score that site. Then have them grade another unsuitable site.

Last, take the class to the spot where the garden needs to be (a location that meets all the criteria) and have them rate it.

Back inside, lead a discussion on the pros and cons of each location. Have the students write the total for each location's ratings on each star of the evaluation form.

Have the students call out their totals as you list them on the board. The class will add up each site's cumulative score to determine the best location for the garden.

As the students reach a consensus on the best garden site, close the lesson by asking a few students to explain how the selected location will provide each plant need listed in *PLANTS*.

Optional extension: Growing further...

Before taking the students outside, ask them to make notes on the form to provide evidence as to why a particular score is fair.

For example, a student might count 50 steps from the classroom door to one site and 150 steps to another site. If the student scores the first site higher, the evidence supports that score.

Have the students write the evidence on their *Home Sweet Home* site evaluation forms.

Home Sweet Home

Name_____ Date_____

You are trying to choose the best place for your group's garden. At each site, circle one number for each line. A rating of 1 means that the site does not provide that need very well, and 5 is the best.

A. Site location _____

Area has sunlight.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is near a water source.	1	2	3	4	5
Area has good, well-drained soil.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is near where tools are stored.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is close by and easy to get to.	1	2	3	4	5

Add up all of the numbers in the box above and write it in the star.

B. Site location _____

Area has sunlight.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is near a water source.	1	2	3	4	5
Area has good, well-drained soil.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is near where tools are stored.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is close by and easy to get to.	1	2	3	4	5

Add up all of the numbers in the box above and write it in the star.

C. Site location _____

Area has sunlight.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is near a water source.	1	2	3	4	5
Area has good, well-drained soil.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is near where tools are stored.	1	2	3	4	5
Area is close by and easy to get to.	1	2	3	4	5

Add up all of the numbers in the box above and write it in the star.

Which environment above provides the best support for a vegetable garden? What evidence can you show that proves this? How does it do this?

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