

# Diggin' the Doo

## Week of \_\_\_\_\_



### Activity

Pull out old plants and weeds. Loosen and aerate the soil so that roots can grow. Add organic fertilizers to bring up the level of nutrients available to our plants.

### Goal

To get plots ready for planting our winter crops.

### Supplies

- Organic fertilizer (in the garden.)
- Shovels (in the shed.)
- Landscaping rake (in the shed)

### Things you need to know

1. Have the children clean up the autumn garden.
  2. Clear out old, spent plants, shaking dirt off roots and putting plants in the compost bin or pile. Note: Don't pull out perennials!
  3. Dig in bags of organic fertilizer, which have been placed in advance on each plot.
  4. Be sure students begin at one end of the plot and work backward, so they don't step on what they just worked and pack it down.
  5. Using shovels, turn soil as far down as the kids can go to ensure growth of the winter crop. ("Double digging" two spades deep is ideal, but not required.)
  6. Rake the area smooth when finished.
- Detailed instructions will be on the bulletin board in the shed for your gardening day.

# A Gardener's Notes

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### Garden Communication Coordinator:

This is a “must-do” activity, and because progress is somewhat unpredictable, scheduling needs to be a bit fluid.

The Communication Coordinator will either need to assign a specific plot to each class ahead of time, or else visit the garden each day to see how much progress was made. In the latter case, leave instructions on the bulletin or grease board for the next day's classes. If you get rained out or for some reason the job doesn't get done, this activity needs to be extended into the next week.

### Garden Supplies Coordinator:

Your plants will need food. Dig into your gardening texts. Use organic materials. Organic fertilizers that are available include cottonseed meal, blood meal, bone meal, hoof-and-horn meal, worm castings, bat guano or manures. As a rule, chicken manure will go farther than steer manure, depending on what else has been added to the brand you purchase. Check the instructions on the bag for information on how much to buy for your garden size. Another argument against steer manure is that it sometimes carries grass seed.

Most fertilizers come with a rating for their three key properties. (These are the three numbers you see on the package, i.e. 15-10-15.) The ingredients are Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium. Nitrogen is associated with plant and foliage growth. Phosphorous is essential to flowering and fruiting. Potassium is important to root development.

Talk to your nursery about how to see to it that your plants get the nutrition they need. Or, for organic amendments, check with your region's larger health-food stores and co-ops.

Put the soil amendments on the plots for your students to add in.

A boot scrubber installed at the garden gate or stored in the shed and brought out for the dirty jobs will be appreciated by teachers and custodians.

### Teachers:

Have students wear their grubbies to school for this activity.