From Seed to Sales:
How to Create Successful, Student Powered Plant Sales and School Garden Stands

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Why organize student run sales?

● Engaging and involving all students in the class
● Thematic content connections
● Authentic assessment - a project with real, tangible goals
● End product they can see
● Develop and practice skills
● Raise money to purchase everyday supplies or a big purchase!
Using Authentic Assessment

- Students analyze what they’ve learned and apply it their own experience
- Don’t have to memorize facts for a test, so they can use their creativity to show what they’ve learned
- Great for groups, so students can get experience collaborating on projects with their peers
Seed Sales
HOLIDAY Seed Sale

when: Dec. 18th - Dec 22nd
where: front entrance to school
what time: 8:00 - 8:20 (same time as school store)
Why save seeds?

- Save seeds - save money!
- Preserve genetic diversity
- Adapt seeds for your region
  - climate, soil and culture
- Connect to natural rhythms and cycles
- Build community
  - Share with families, gardeners, and farmers
Research Seed Saving

Seed saving is a complex science with several influencing factors. You will need to have a little knowledge of:

- Plant families, genuses, and species
- Isolation distances to prevent cross pollination
- Sufficient population sizes
- Type of pollination (self, insect, wind)
- Annual, biennial, perennial

Reach out to your local extension office or a Seed Library in your community for more information.

Or…
Seed Savers Exchange also has a great online guide
Plan for Growing out Seed Crops

- Use open-pollinated seeds
  - Genetically “true to type”
- Start with easy crops
  - Peas
  - Beans
  - Lettuce
  - Tomatoes
- All are self pollinating
- Only need a small population of plants
- Will not cross with other varieties*

P. S. All heirlooms are open pollinated!
Plan for Growing out Seed Crops

- Ground cherries/Husk cherries
- Cilantro
- Cucamelons
  - AKA Mexican Sour Gherkins or Mouse Melons
  - Separate genus from other cucumbers
- Marigolds and Sunflowers
  - Will cross with other varieties
- Bell peppers, cucumbers, melons, and radishes
  - Can only grow 1 variety in garden
  - Need 20+ plants for genetic diversity to avoid inbreeding
Harvest and Process Seeds

**Wet Seed Processing**
- Set their seeds in fruits
- Tomato, ground cherries, cucumbers, peppers, melon, squashes
- For nightshade family, ready to harvest seeds when fruit is ready to eat
- For cucurbit family, ready to harvest seeds when fruit is overripe
- Best to ferment seeds - mimicking nature’s cycle

**Dry Seed Processing**
- Set their seeds in pods or nuts
- Beans, peas, cilantro, lettuce, radish, kale, marigolds, sunflowers
- Often need to be dried for a couple weeks in a dry, well-ventilated area
- Can easily shell or thresh
  - Lettuce requires removing chaff
Plan for Sale

Materials:
- Sticker labels - $21 for 100 sheets of
- Paper to make seed envelopes
- Mini wax bags (for small seeds) - $20 for 300
- Jars for seeds
- Seed scoopers

In Class:
- Write seed packet descriptions
- Design seed packet art
- Choose a packet design
- Make signs for upcoming seed sale
- Use seed catalogues to decide price and how many seeds per packet
- Figure out best method for getting necessary number of seeds per packet - then estimate how many packets you expect to make
Seed Assembly Line

1. Fold envelope
2. Info sticker on back
3. Fill with seeds
4. Art sticker to seal
Seed Sale

- Use simple spreadsheet to keep track of sales
  - Type of seed/price/how many sold
- We sell before school for 30 minutes for 1 week
- Have profited between $170 and $500
- All around an easy place to start with student-run sales
  - Inexpensive start-up materials
  - Not to mention incredible learning opportunities and curriculum for seed saving for all grade levels
Seed Saving - Science Standards

- Kindergarten - Recognize that all plants and animals have a life cycle
- 1st grade - use evidence to explain that plants have roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits that are used to take in nutrients, water, air, produce food, and make new plants
- 2nd grade - Describe and classify different kinds of materials by observable properties of color, strength, flexibility, hardness, texture, absorbancy
- 3rd grade - provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and that variation of these traits exist in a group of similar organisms
- 4th grade - construct an argument that animals and plants have internal and external structures that support their survival, growth, behavior and reproduction
- 7th grade - explain how specialized plant structures increase the probability of successful reproduction of plants
- 8th - Synthesize and communicate information about artificial selection, or the ways in which humans have changed the inheritance of desired traits in organisms
Plant Sales
Why do a plant sale?

- Authentic final project that can involve work from many grades and practices hands-on skills in biology, math, art, marketing, organization, teamwork, and more!
- **Benefits the school through raising money** for more garden/life science projects and **welcomes the community** into school, providing a desirable student powered product
- Inspires community to revive or start an edible garden, with the enthusiasm from students with developing plant knowledge
What do you need?

Materials

- Seed catalogs
- Seeds
- Potting soil
- Trays / Plugs
- Pots
- Labels
What do you need?

Materials

- Seed catalogs (free - request from seed company)
- Seeds (purchased from Sow True Seed $360, lots leftover to plant in the garden, recommend Johnny’s Seeds)
- Potting soil (1 - 2.8 cu ft bag is $20, need about 12 X $20 = $240) - I made an account with Griffins Greenhouse Supply to get bulk orders of potting soil, pots, trays)
- Trays / Plugs (100 trays for about $100, plugs are 100 for $80) (BLEACH AND REUSE)
- Pots (1,000 4 inch pots are about $200) (BLEACH AND REUSE LEFTOVERS)
- Labels (I bought 1,500 waterproof Avery labels: $33)
- The OB School sold about 700-800 plant pots for $4 (veggies) or $3 (herbs/edible flowers) a pot for the first 3 days, then everything at $2 for the last day *we also had a section of 6-pack plugs for $2, then down to $1 or free **remainder was given free to teachers, or planted in school gardens on the island

- Expenses: $913
- Gross $2,528; net: $1,615
$ Options:

- **Apply for a grant** or ask for a grant from a local Master Gardeners club or organization (then they can help support you in plant knowledge and/or mentor your students as well)
- Can be supported through an **after school Garden Club** that has a small budget
- **Start small** - can do just tomatoes, or just different types of basil - doesn’t need to be more than about $200-$300 start up cost - then the profits can go towards expanding next year
- Can **front the cost personally** and be reimbursed by the profits, putting the excess into a school garden fund
What do you need?

**People**

- Administration approval - give them the week you plan to do it in advance; and location - school lobby is great or set up outside the front of the school)
- Community awareness - post on facebook, around school, via school newsletter, website, marquee, signage by the road
- Teachers on board (generally very excited about it!)
- Students during school - one particular grade can be the main organizers and then other classes can help out as needed (ours was 2nd grade)
- Students after school - need to commit to staying after school to help customers and do the cash register etc. (ours was from 2:30-3:30pm - school is out at 2:40pm)
- 1st grade - sowing large seeds
- 2nd grade - choosing seed varieties, sowing seeds, making seed packets, transplanting into pots
- 3rd grade - sowing small seeds, transplanting into pots
- 5th grade - back up assistance, sowing tomato seeds, manning the plant sale 1 day
- 8th grade - community service
- ELL groups - 3rd grade made translated posters, working on marketing and persuasion vocab, 2nd grade made care posters - “care for your plant” “give your plants water”
What do you need?

**Space**

- **Space for small growing seedlings** (I have 2 - 10 by 3 feet wire tables in an old art room that has many windows! - can also set up a shelf with grow lights

- **Indoor/Outdoor space for potted up seedlings** - nearby to bring overflow and plants that are fine with cooler weather (broccoli, violas, etc.)
Indoor space
Outdoor space