

TOOLS AND MATERIALS FOR YOUR SCHOOL GARDEN

Below we have put together a list of tools and equipment you will need plus some nice to haves for your Growbag project.

USEFUL TOOLS FOR YOUR GARDEN

If you don't have any tools, it's always worth putting a request out to parents, grandparents, and carers for donations of gardening tools and equipment. You'd be surprised what people have under the stairs or in the garden shed that they never use.

- **Garden forks and spades** - Choose child or border size garden forks and spades, adult ones are too large and heavy for most primary aged children to use. You won't need many for a whole class (about 8 -10 forks and 4-5 spades for a class of 30).

[Draper gardening tools](#) are good with Draper carbon steel boarder spade and fork with plastic coated steel cored shaft are affordable, robust and will not rot or rust.

- **Hand forks and hand trowels** – It is best to purchase adult sized hand tools as these are better for gardening and more durable (10 of each would be ample for a class of 30). Often schools choose the very small hand trowels and hand forks suitable for Early Years, whilst these are good for the little ones they do not last long.

Draper plastic hand fork and trowel are affordable and robust. Alternatively, Draper heavy duty carbon steel hand fork and trowel 2 piece sets are good. Avoid the carbon steel hand trowel with hardwood handle as the handles break off easily. For early years the Draper young gardener weeding fork and hand trowel offer the best value for money.

- **Hoes and Rakes** – these are non-essential tools, but are useful to have for weeding, preparing soil beds and collecting autumn leaves for composting, plus the children love to use them (1 garden rake, 1 hoe and perhaps 2 lawn or leaf rakes would be ample for a class of 30 children).

Draper young gardener rake, lawn rake and Dutch hoe are ideal because the handles are shorter making them easier for the children to manage safely.

- **Buckets** – essential for weeding and gathering your harvested vegetables. Old storage trugs or catering food buckets from the school kitchen work just as well. If you can't get these B&Q or Screwfix do cheap orange or black buckets
- **Watering cans** - an essential piece of kit. Needed over the summer month, any dry spells and for seed and plug planting. Its best to get ones with a rose for seed and seedling watering. Ward does a good sturdy 5 or 10 litre can with a nozzle for storing the rose when it is not needed. These are available from B&Q as well as other outlets [Ward watering cans B&Q](#)
- **Broom and Brushes** – Useful for clearing up after a session in the garden. A couple of stiff brooms (try to buy children's brooms as the handles are shorter so they're safer

and easier for them to use) and a dustpan and brush to put the soil back in the beds after a session in the garden. B&Q do a good range of affordable brooms and brushes

- **Gloves** – ensure to buy washable gloves and a range of sizes to fit your year groups, don't forget a few pairs of adult sizes for staff too – 30 pairs of mixed sizes should be adequate.

safetygloves.co.uk have a good range of child and adult washable gloves at very reasonable prices [Briers junior gardening gloves](#) and [Briers adult gardening gloves](#)

REALLY HANDY ITEMS FOR YOUR GROWBAG BOX OR GARDEN SHED

- **Seed markers & pencil** – wooden lolly sticks are available from most pound shops and they are cheaper than buying seed markers from garden centres. Alternatively, most school suppliers do jumbo craft sticks which are better for younger children. Always write on your marker with a pencil as they work even when its wet and they fade less in the rain or sunshine.
- **Scissors** – Useful for so many jobs in the garden. Always keep a few pairs of scissors in your Growbag box or garden shed.
- **String** – String is always handy in the garden. You will need it for dividing up the beds, tying back unruly plants and marking out where to sow your seeds to name just a few uses. Always buy jute twine as it rots down in the compost bin unlike synthetic string.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED FOR THE GROWING YEAR

- **Bale of straw** – useful for mulching your bare soil year-round. In the summer it helps conserve moisture and adds organic matter and during the winter months it helps retain nutrients, reduces compaction from heavy rain and provides a suitable environment for valuable soil organisms to thrive. If you can't get straw, you could use shredded paper, cardboard or pea gravel.
- **Horticultural fleece** – Needed from Autumn 2 or Spring 1 half terms to protect your winter crops from harsh frosts. How much you need depends on the size of your beds but [Gardening Naturally](#) will cut to the size you request.
- **Flexible canes** – for building arches to make your fleece and netting tunnels. We recommend using willow but if you don't have access to this cut any old (large) PE hoops and plunge into the soil or flexible canes or plumbing pipe from Screwfix will work as well. Again [Gardening Naturally flexible hoops](#) have a range of sizes available.
- **Pegs** – useful for pinning down fleece and netting. Old tent pegs or metal landscape/weed control fabric pegs from the garden centre are ideal. Large stones or rocks can also be used. We tend to avoid the plastic anti pull pegs as they are a nightmare to remove from netting and fleece. Available from B&Q and other garden centres

- **Large bamboo or other canes** – a must for any growing space. They are used for staking plants and making bean tepees. The 6-foot ones are the best length. Remember when using canes always use cane stoppers or tie plant pots on top to prevent any injury. These can be bought from any garden centre and sometimes from Home bargains or B&M.
- **Soil improver &/or sterilised farmyard manure** – Needed in the spring and autumn to improve the structure and fertility of the soil in all the vegetable beds. Most garden centres have deals on for 2 or 3 for between £10-£12. You can use peat free veggie compost as an alternative here.
- **Insect netting** – essential for the cabbage family to protect them crops from pigeons all year and cabbage white butterflies in the summer.

Gardening Naturally has a suitable [Veggie mesh netting](#) that you can buy cut to the size you need. Remember when you're measuring your beds for netting to add the height of the frame as well as the width and length of the bed.

You may find a frame or cage easier, but they will be more expensive. Again, Gardening Naturally have a good selection and the Organic gardening catalogue has a good [pop up dome](#) - check it's the right size for your beds though.

- **Pea sticks** – not needed until the spring but essential for peas to grow up. Keep a look out for twiggy branches and start collecting them for garden. You can also use bamboo canes to create something for the peas to climb up.
- **Washed sand** – is available from most builder yards and garden centres. It is used to create a looser sandier soil structure for the area where carrots are being grown. You don't need much so a bag will last for years if you keep it in your garden shed.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

If you have space to store and the budget to buy a stock of all-weather clothing and some wellies it can be useful for the children who do not come equipped on a gardening day

- **Waterproof jackets** – Its always worth having a few spare jackets in various children's sizes.
- **Wellies** – A few spares in a range of sizes from child 8 to adult 6 are always handy.
- **Warm socks** – wellies have to be the coldest footwear around so a pair of thick socks is a good solution. A box of spare socks is essential if nothing else.