

Waconia Edible Classroom. It is a wonderful project that began in our school district in Waconia, Minnesota about 4 years ago. The project was a wonderful serendipity of events: Our Nutrition Services Department wanted to spend down their fund balance a bit, and wanted to plant an orchard. The science department wanted to begin some hands-on experiences for students to understand seed-to-table progression. Our Family & Consumer Science (formerly Home Ec) wanted to help students use local produce. Our summer Adventure Club (school age day care) wanted an opportunity for regular outdoor activities for kids. Finally, we had an old farm property immediately adjacent to our middle school, and the farmer was moving off of the land.

The garden is modeled after the Edible Schoolyard in Berkley, California, which began by Chef Alice Waters. Obviously, our project is significantly more impacted by weather than the California model, but it became a wonderful community-wide initiative. In short, we have a part-time garden manager who works with teachers to plant seeds indoors in early spring, and then transplant in late May. Our summer day care programs have kids work to help with weeds, harvesting, and have cooking classes, etc. We also rent out plots to community members who want to garden there (It is irrigated, so it is desirable), and sold CSA (community supported agriculture) shares to community members who wanted to invest in the garden.

We hired about 3 summer interns to work in the garden, coordinate with volunteers, invite seniors, youth groups, etc. to be there. They also helped with blogging, providing recipes, etc.

Here are some sites for you to view:

<http://www.clearwater.new.rschoolday.com/page/3357/category>

<http://edibleschoolyard.org/program/waconia-edible-classroom>

<http://thewaconiaedibleclassroom.blogspot.com/>