

# Collis Primary School

## GROWING IDEAS



### Commitment level:



### Equipment List

- Shed
- Trowels & forks
- Spade
- Watering cans
- Compost heap
- Pond dipping & creepy-crawly investigation equipment
- Activity sheets



## PROJECTS

**Courtyard beds:** four areas left unplanted when the new junior block was built in 2005-6 have been turned into raised beds for children to grow vegetables, herbs and flowers. In 2009 Year 4 created a "dig for victory" garden with potatoes, carrots, runner beans, broad beans and marrows. Year 3 planted tomatoes, runner beans, salad, rainbow chard and courgettes in their bed. The Year 2 bed was a riot of colour containing herbs and annuals such as borage and love in a mist. The fourth bed is permanently planted as a Tudor knot garden.

**The Greenhouse:** Year 4 children raised a variety of plants from seed for their "dig for victory" garden. Year 3 children sowed tomato seeds which they visited at regular intervals to measure and monitor progress, and planted a giant pumpkin on a patch of ground next to the greenhouse. Most of the tomato plants

were taken home to be grown on and shared with families and spares were used in the courtyard beds. Year 3 also planted pots of mixed salad to take home. The greenhouse was also used to grow seedlings for sale to raise funds for gardening activities.

**The Veggie Tanks:** Disused water tanks sourced from the recycling centre were used by Year 3 in 2008 to grow a variety of vegetables. They have now been placed outside a Year 1 classroom and in 2009 were planted up with tomatoes and strawberries for sampling by the children.

**Growing to eat:** Extra tomatoes grown in the greenhouse to supply the lunchtime salad bar and to make tomato sauce for pizzas. Year 3 grew a pumpkin which was displayed at harvest festival and then used by the kitchen to make pumpkin soup.

**Art:** In 2007-8 children and parents made a mosaic showing a variety of

activities at Collis, including vegetable growing, and this is on permanent display in the Main Corridor. In 2009 the children made colourful scarecrows for the courtyard beds and drew their seedlings at different stages.

**Visits:** Year 3 visited the RHS gardens at Wisley in summer term 2009. They learned a lot about how plants grow and sowed pumpkin seeds to take home.

### Whatever next?

**Herb planters:** redundant planters are being planted up with herbs to supply the kitchen

**On the wish list:** A new greenhouse as the existing one is very old and leaks! Perhaps a larger permanent allotment site once the current project to redesign the school grounds is funded and completed.

## Project Timeline

### Before 2007

Food growing happened only occasionally with small groups of special needs children or in pots in the nursery and reception garden if teachers and volunteers had time to organise it.

### 2007

The CSA Eco-group decided to carry out some food growing activities during the summer term. It already had tools as a result of work on the nature area and many pots and seeds were donated by parents.

Parent volunteers grew potatoes and peas on a patch of ground on the playing field with Year 1 and carrots and lettuces with Year 3 adjacent to the greenhouse. The activities were popular with children but the locations were not suitable as they were too far from classrooms for children to see their plants growing every day.

### 2008

Veggie tanks were brought in so that children could grow vegetables near the classrooms.

### 2009

Courtyard beds converted to raised beds and used to grow a large range of vegetables, herbs and flowers. Years 3 and 4 used the greenhouse to raise seedlings.

## Commitment & challenges



Considerable time commitment by parents from the Collis School Association (CSA) Eco-Group to create suitable growing spaces and liaise with teachers.

Parent volunteers who are confident about gardening and able to participate regularly during school hours need to be recruited for summer term.

Most activities need to be carried out with children in small groups so teachers cannot participate as they have to be with the rest of the class.

Rota of parents to organise watering, weeding and picking produce, including keeping it going during the summer holidays.

Still insufficient space for the number of children wanting to plant things!

## Funding



Funding for work to create raised beds and fill with good quality soil/compost was provided through the CSA which gives an annual grant to the Eco group. Funds raised from plant and tea sales during opening of the Nature Area for Teddington in Flower each June. Donations of pots, seeds and tools. Donation from Dexters Estate Agents during 2008.



## What we grow



- Tomatoes
- Rainbow chard
- Runner beans
- Broad Beans
- Carrots
- Lettuces
- Potatoes
- Courgettes
- Marrows
- Herbs
- Strawberries
- Flowers

