Seattle Youth Garden Works crew is learning how to grow food for market.

What the Gardens Teach Us

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Tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and peas. Seattle Tilth maintains several community learning gardens...at the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford, Bradner Gardens Park in the Mount Baker district, in Rainier Beach and at the Pickering Barn in Issaquah. During the past year we have added two farm-to-market job training programs,

Seattle Youth Garden Works and the Farm Incubator Program

These gardens and farms show-off tasty crops throughout the year, our outdoor classrooms demonstrate more than just annual vegetable gardening. These sites showcase clever techniques and features that you can try at home including irrigation, water collection, raised beds, creative use of containers, perennial vegetables and production scale farming.

Smart Watering

At Bradner Gardens Park, learn how to integrate a drip irrigation system into your landscape. Check out the automatic drip irrigation lines running throughout the veggie beds and soaker hoses used to water established plantings. Protective mulch prevents evaporation of moisture from the soil. Creative approaches include a 2-liter plastic bottle screwed into a water spike, sending water directly to plant roots.

Water Collection and Storage

At the Good Shepherd Center you can see a rain garden where native plants mitigate storm water by slowly absorbing excess runoff into the soil. There are multiple rain barrels that store water for summer use. If you want to collect more water, large cisterns are featured at Bradner and the Pickering Barn in Issaquah.
Unique Raised Beds
The Rainier Beach Learning Garden shows off several beautiful raised beds. Constructed out of stacking blocks and rough-hewn logs, they are the perfect height for students at South Shore School to lean against and plant their seeds. You can see flocked concrete beds with shapes and baubles pressed into them at Bradner. At the Good Shepherd Center you’ll find two types of beds made from layers of recycled organic waste – a straw bale garden and bed.

Container Gardens
Container plantings are an important resource for gardeners without a lot of space and integrate wonderfully into larger gardens. At our learning garden in Issaquah, you can see examples of horseradish, comfrey, sunchokes and even a columnar apple tree living permanently in containers. The children’s garden at the Good Shepherd Center features a demonstration patio garden incorporating many different and creative containers.

Perennial Flavors
Because they are easy to care for and have bright textures and tastes, perennial herbs are a favorite in our children’s garden at the Good Shepherd Center. Silver-shield sorrel, fennel, lemon balm, rosemary and thyme are always a hit as well as less obvious perennial eats like cardoons and burdock. And of course, who can forget the espaliered fruit trees and giant fuzzy kiwi vines.

Farm-Scale Food Production
Two new Seattle Tilth programs showcase large scale production. Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW) empowers homeless and underserved youth through farm-based education, employment and life skills. Visit SYGW at the Center for Urban Horticulture. The Farm Incubator Program (FIP) provides small farm education, training and support for individuals starting farm businesses at the United People’s Farm in Auburn.

To find out more about these programs and our learning gardens, see our website seattletilth.org/about. Or learn more about these topics by taking a class. Visit seattletilth.org/learn.