

Curriculum for the  
**Tower Garden® by Juice Plus+**

Written by Steve Koontz, [www.KeepItWatered.com](http://www.KeepItWatered.com) with the help of Dr. Rebecca Reynolds M.A., EdD.

## Learning With Lettuce



### **Tower Garden® Curriculum For High School Students**

#### **Curriculum Overview**

This 7-week curriculum will help you take your 9th-12th grade students through one growing cycle on the Tower Garden. Good lettuce varieties to grow are black seeded simpson, arugula, pok choi, buttercrunch, and red salad bowl. These varieties will sprout quickly and be ready to harvest in 6-7 weeks.

Need help with your Tower Garden or need supplies and don't have a distributor? Email Steve Koontz at [steve@keepitwatered.com](mailto:steve@keepitwatered.com).

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## **Weekly Overview**

### **Week 1**

Students will learn the value of building on the experience of others by building the Tower Garden.

### **Week 2**

Students will learn how to agree in a group on a course of action and work through the conflict that might arise when other opinions are shared. They will learn this by researching seed starting procedures and planting their first seeds.

### **Week 3**

Students will learn to adjust their behavior based on other's success. Students will evaluate which group's seeds grew the best and use that group's procedure to replant seeds.

### **Week 4**

Students will use collaboration skills to determine how the class as a whole will use the lettuce they grow. Students will fill the Tower Garden with water, add nutrients, and balance the pH of the water. Then they will put their seedlings into the Tower Garden.

### **Week 5**

Students will tend the Tower Garden and create action steps for using the lettuce.

### **Week 6**

Students will be asked to recognize personal qualities in themselves and others.

### **Week 7**

Students will harvest and use the lettuce in the way they determined.

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## Howard Gardner's Learning Styles

Many teachers are familiar with three broad categories in which people learn: visual learning, auditory learning, and kinesthetic learning. Beyond these three categories, many theories of and approaches toward human learning potential have been established. Among them is the theory of multiple intelligences developed by Howard Gardner, Ph.D., John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs.

Read more at:

<https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/gardners-theory-of-multiple-intelligences.shtml>

This curriculum utilizes the different learning styles listed below. Each assessment references at least one of these learning styles.

Differentiated possibilities:

1. Verbal-linguistic intelligence: well-developed verbal skills.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence: Questions that begin with "Why?"
3. Visual/spatial Learners: Learn best with visuals. Questions about "Where is best?", video & other visuals
4. Bodily Kinesthetic Learners: learn best with Hands-on, and movements that need students to be physically active
5. Interpersonal learning style: learn best working together with others
6. Intrapersonal: learn best independently
7. Naturalistic learners: learn best with natural materials
8. Existential Learners: learn best with spiritual type questions. Concerned with body & soul

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## **Week 1**

### **Learning Goal**

Students will learn the value of building on the experience of others.

Introduce the concept of growing produce indoors compared to growing produce outdoors. (see the article "Growing Indoors Compared to Growing Outdoors" at the end of this curriculum.)

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 1's activity:

Linguistic Learners  
Logical/mathematical  
Visual/spatial Learning  
Bodily Kinesthetic  
Intrapersonal  
Interpersonal  
Naturalistic learners

### **Measurable Learning Objective(s):**

- Students will be able to explain the usefulness of building on the work of others.
- Students will be able to work together to problem solve.
- Students will be able to demonstrate how healthy, edible plants can be grown indoors.

### **Questions to assess previous knowledge**

- What do edible plants need to grow healthy outside?<sup>1</sup>
- We're growing indoors, so how do we provide inside what plants need to grow healthy?
- What's the difference between 1) hydroponic (plant roots are always in the water), 2) aeroponic (plant roots are in the air and the water washes the roots) and 3) aquaponic, (plant roots are in the water but fish are grown in the water) soil-less gardening systems? (See included PowerPoint.)

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<sup>1</sup> Plants need light, water, and nutrients to grow healthy. Plants do not need soil. They do need the nutrients that come from the soil. We plant seeds in rockwool to give support for the plants.

## Introduce activity

1. We're going to build an aeroponic growing system to grow edible greens and herbs in our classroom.
2. Divide the class into groups of 5. (If the class isn't divisible by 5, an odd number of students in each group works best.)
3. Place the pieces of the Tower Garden in the middle of the room. Ask group #1 to spend 5 minutes (3 minutes if building instructions given to the class) working together to assemble the Tower Garden while the rest of the class watches silently. NOTE: Don't correct a group if they put together a section incorrectly. Allow the class to learn from the success and failures of others.
4. After group #1 has worked for 3-5 minutes, Ask group #2 to pick up where group #1 left off. Continue with each group building where the other group left off.

## Discussion questions after the Tower Garden is completed.

- What did you learn from the previous group's experience?
- How does the Tower Garden provide light, water, and nutrients to the plants?
- How can you learn from others' successes and failures in real life?

## Assignment

Ask students to individually research the best way to start seeds in rockwool<sup>2</sup>. Students should come to class prepared to present to their group the steps they've chosen to plant seeds in rockwool. (See PowerPoint with photo of what a good seedling looks like. A good seedling has large leaves and short stems.)

## Learning Styles Differentiation:

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 1's Assignment:

Linguistic

Visual

Interpersonal

Students will be able to demonstrate how healthy, edible plants can be grown indoors.

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<sup>2</sup> Rockwool is the growing medium used in a Tower Garden. There are several different methods for starting seeds other than the one that comes with the Tower Gardens. The method I use is here: <https://www.KeepItWatered.com/seed-starting-procedure> Links to others can be found here: [https://www.KeepItWatered.com/seed\\_methods](https://www.KeepItWatered.com/seed_methods)

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## Learning Styles Differentiation:

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 1's Assessment:

Interpersonal

Visual

Linguistic

## Assessment:

### Exit Slip (See included handout)

- Explain how the previous group helped or hindered your progress.
- Explain why it was easier or harder to work together as a group. Would you have preferred to work alone?
- Explain how the time constraint helped or hindered the overall progress of building the Tower Garden.
- Explain what plants need to grow healthy indoors and how the Tower garden provides these needs.

### Teacher observation. (See included checklist)

- Students were able to assess where previous students left off
- Students were able to communicate effectively for assigning responsibilities
- Students worked well together
- A leader emerged in each group guiding decisions that were made. Note who the leader was.
- Students demonstrated a clear understanding of how a Tower Garden provides what plants need to grow healthy indoors.

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## **Week 2**

### **Learning Goal**

Students will learn how to agree in a group on a course of action and work through the conflict that might arise when other opinions are shared.

Either create new groups of 5 students each or use the same groups throughout the growing cycle.

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 2's activity:

Linguistic Learners  
Logical/mathematical Learners  
Interpersonal learning style  
Intrapersonal  
Naturalistic learners

### **Measurable Learning Objective(s):**

- Students will be able to research.
- Students will be able to compromise with their peers.
- Students will be able to listen to others' opinions.
- Students will be able to recognize multiple ways to attain the same outcome.
- Students will be able to communicate to gain knowledge of other student's feelings and perspectives.
- Students will be able to describe the procedure of growing seedlings from seeds using rockwool.

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## Activity:

Ask each student to share the seed starting procedure on which they've decided in their group. Have the groups talk through and agree on the procedure they'll use. This could be a combination of procedures. Ask groups to report to the class the seed starting procedure they'll use and why it's best. Groups may not switch methods due to other groups' presentations.

- Encourage students to ask questions to gain a better understanding of the group's procedure choice.
- Give each group a packet of seeds and 5 rockwool cubes. Ask them to plant using their group's procedure.
- After a week, students will report to the class their successes, failures, and what they learned.

## Learning Styles Differentiation:

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 2's Assessment:

Linguistic Learners  
Interpersonal learning style  
Intrapersonal  
Naturalistic learners

## Assessment:

### Exit Slip (See included handout)

- Explain how you came to an agreement as a group.
- Be able to compare and contrast the other groups' procedures with your own group's procedure.[Explain if it was difficult to hear the other groups' procedures, but not make changes to your own.]
- Explain how well your seed starting procedure worked.
- Evaluate your personal ability to gather information, generate possible solutions, and anticipate the consequences of decisions.

### Teacher observation. (See included checklist)

- Did students come into class having done good research?
- Did students use good compromising skills to decide on a procedure?
- Did students learn from the research of others?

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## **Week 3**

### **Learning Goal**

Students will learn to adjust their behavior based on other's success.

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 3's activity:

Verbal-linguistic intelligence  
Interpersonal learning style  
Intrapersonal  
Naturalistic learners  
Existential Learner

### **Measurable Learning Objective(s):**

- Students will be able to use observation and collaboration skills to choose the best seedlings grown.
- Students will be able to determine the best course of action independent of their personal preferences.
- Students will be able to collaborate putting the needs of others before him/herself to reach a goal.

### **Activity:**

Groups must determine which seed starting procedure worked the best. (See PowerPoint with photo of a good seedling.)

Have the entire class re-plant seeds using the group's method that worked the best. Keep the seedlings alive that have sprouted to place in the Tower Garden later. Extra seedlings are good to have.

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## Assignment for next week

Each group decides how the lettuce should be used and prepares an oral presentation telling the class how the group wants to use the lettuce and why.

If you want to help the groups, here are a few ideas.

- Conduct a fundraiser for a needy family with produce grown on a Tower Garden.
- Grow lettuces to use in the school cafeteria or a cooking class.
- Give a staff appreciation salad party.
- Invite a younger class to join you for a salad party.

## Learning Styles Differentiation:

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 3's Assessment:

Linguistic Learners

Intrapersonal learners

## Assessment:

### Exit Slip (See included handout)

Explain if it was difficult to choose another group's seedlings even if they grew better than yours.

### Teacher observation. (See included checklist)

- Were students successful in growing seedlings?
- Did students do well at following their seed starting procedure?
- Did students use good observation skills to determine the best seedlings grown?
- Did students do well at admitting that another group grew better seedlings?

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## **Week 4**

### **Learning Goal**

Students will use collaboration skills to determine how the class as a whole will use the lettuce they grow.

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 4's activity:

Verbal-linguistic intelligence  
Bodily Kinesthetic Learners  
Interpersonal  
Intrapersonal  
Naturalistic learners

### **Measurable Learning Objective(s):**

- Students will be able to use collaborative negotiation skills to reach a win-win situation.
- Students will be able to get the Tower Garden ready for planting.
- Students will be able to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
- Students will be able to resolve conflicts in order to come to a group decision.

### **Activity:**

#### **Questions for review**

- What do edible plants need to grow?
- How do we provide those needs indoors?
- Why is correct pH level important for plant growth?

Fill the tub with water, put in the nutrient mix, check and balance the pH of the water. Place the best seedlings into the Tower Garden.

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## **The class decides how the lettuce will be used**

Each group gives their presentation to the class on how the lettuce should be used. Students ask questions to better understand the group's idea.

The class must decide together how the lettuce will be used. Each group chooses a representative to discuss their group's idea using collaborative negotiation skills to reach a win-win solution.

As the student representatives discuss their ideas, don't make a decision for them, but ask these questions to help clarify.

- Which idea seems most feasible?
- Are you arguing for your idea because you think it's best or because you just want to win?
- What's good about another group's idea?
- What ideas might be able to be merged together?
- How will we come to a decision?

## **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 4's Assessment:

Intrapersonal

Verbal-linguistic intelligence

Interpersonal learning style

## **Assessment**

### **Exit Slip** (See included handout)

- Did you feel frustration trying to solve conflicts?
- Do you feel that a good decision was made?
- Did you feel your leader represented your group well?

### **Teacher Observation** (See included checklist)

- Was a good outcome achieved by the students?
- Did students become aware of the difficulties of coming to a group consensus?
- Did students put aside their personal feelings for the betterment of the group?

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## **Week 5**

### **Learning Goal**

Students will tend the Tower Garden and create action steps for using the lettuce.

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 5's activity:

Verbal-linguistic  
Logical-mathematical  
Bodily Kinesthetic  
Intrapersonal  
Naturalistic learners

### **Measurable Learning Objective(s)**

- Students will be able to balance the pH of water and add necessary nutrients. (See article at the end of this curriculum.)
- Students will create an action plan for using the lettuce.

### **Activity**

#### **Questions for review**

- Why is the correct pH level important to plants?
- Where do plants grown without soil get nutrients?

Work with students to add water to the tub as needed, balance the pH, and add nutrients. (See article at the end of this curriculum.)

Help students prepare the action steps needed to use the lettuce the way it was decided last week.

For example: If students decided to sell lettuce as a fundraiser, have students research how much to charge, what containers to use, how to promote the fundraiser, etc.

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 5's Assessment:

Verbal-linguistic  
Visual/spatial Learners  
Interpersonal learning style  
Naturalistic learners

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## **Assessment**

Exit Slip (See included handout)

- Has the growth of the lettuce met with your expectations?
- Do you feel like a good action plan has been established?

## **Teacher Observation**

- Do students understand how to grow lettuce indoors?
- Did all students contribute to the action plan decision?

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## Week 6

### Learning Goal

Students will be asked to recognize personal qualities in themselves and others.  
Standards used

### Learning Styles Differentiation:

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 6's activity:

Interpersonal  
Intrapersonal

### Measurable Learning Objectives

Students will be able to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses

### Activity

Work with students to add water to the tub as needed, balance the pH, and add nutrients. (See article at the end of this curriculum.)

Work through steps in the action plan as needed.

Write a report on the previous five weeks answering these questions.

- What positive role models did you see in your fellow students?
- What personal strengths did you discover in yourself that you can use to meet a need in your school or community?
- What personal challenges did you see that you can work on in the next three weeks?
- How did conflict-resolution skills contribute to work within the group?

### Learning Styles Differentiation:

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 6's assessment:  
Intrapersonal  
Interpersonal learning style

## **Assessment**

### **Exit Slip**

The report is the exit slip this week.

### **Teacher Observation**

Students were able to articulate their strengths, weaknesses, and critically evaluate their peers.

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## **Week 7**

### **Learning Styles Differentiation:**

The following learning styles (Reynolds, n.d.) are included in Week 7's activity:

Intrapersonal

Interpersonal

The lettuce should be ready to harvest and used as the class decided. If not, wait another week.

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## **Growing Indoors Compared to Growing Outdoors**

For a plant to grow well, it needs light, water, and nutrients. Outside the plant gets light from the sun, water from rain, and nutrients from the soil. For a plant to grow well indoors, in a Tower Garden, it still needs light, water, and nutrients.

The water will come from your school's water supply and be added to the tub. The light will come from the Tower Garden light kit. Since the Tower Garden doesn't use soil, the nutrients will come from the Tower Garden Mineral Blend.

The pH level is important for plant growth. Soil typically has a pH close enough to grow plants well. But the water used for soil-less gardening usually needs the pH adjusted. (See article below.)

### **Why is pH Important to Plants?**

pH stands for Potential Hydrogen. It's a measurement used for growing in both soil and soil-less gardening. A balanced pH for water is 7. Anything below 7 is acidic and anything above is alkaline. Most plants do best with a slightly acidic pH of 6, but anywhere between 5 and 7 is good for most plants in your Tower Garden.

A balanced pH helps plants to take up the nutrients in the water. If the pH isn't correct plants won't be able to use the Mineral Blend (nutrient) you put in your Tower Garden. Plants won't wither and die overnight if the pH isn't correct. The effects will be gradual. Growth will slow. Leaves might wither over time and you might get brown spots on the leaves.

### **What to do if pH isn't correct**

Don't stress out if your pH doesn't adjust after a few tries. Just wait a day or two and try again. Your plants won't die overnight. If you get it close to 7, then wait another week and check it again. Since the plants tend to raise the level of the pH, it's better if the pH is a little low than a little high.

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## **Setup and Weekly Tower Garden Maintenance**

### **Setup**

When you first fill the tub with water, add 200 ml of Mineral Blend A and 200 ml of Mineral Blend B. Follow the same instructions for balancing the pH as in the Weekly Maintenance.

### **Weekly Maintenance**

The weekly maintenance for indoor growing is usually very consistent. The only change is that as the plants grow, they'll use more water.

A regular, outdoor watering can that's about 2 gallons will work well to refill the tub. Don't use softened water or very hard water.

Once the water is added to the tub, measure out 50 ml of Tower Tonic A and 50 ml of Tower Tonic B for every full watering can poured into the Tower Garden. Add each Tower Tonic separately to the water.

Use the pH test kit to test the pH of the water in the tub. Put 5 ml of water from the Tower Garden into the vial. Drip 5 drops of the solution into the vial and compare the color with the test strip. The pH should be within 5.5 and 6.5. Use about 10 ml of the pH Up or pH Down as needed to bring the pH to the correct number. (Further Instructions come with the test kit.)

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