

MCC Environmental Club
Schoolyard Habitats Guide Sheet
Physical –

"Bring students, staff and community together to create an outdoor learning environment which can enhance education, wellness and stewardship."

1. Planning & Preparation: May take a full year to prepare a site (invasive plants, soil development, etc...
 - a. Decide where trails will be placed.
 - b. Decide on trail substance:
 - i. Wood Chips.
 - ii. Limestone.
 - iii. Asphalt
 - iv. Other: _____
 - c. Benefits of fencing:
 - i. Helps keep kids/general public on the trails, helping to maintain the natural plant life.
 - ii. Birds like to sit on the rails.
 - iii. Spot to attach signs, bird houses, etc.
 - d. Trail Design:
 - i. Make sure they are wide enough, larger than 'single-file'.
 - ii. Consider raised platforms, especially in wetland or low-lying areas.
 - iii. Incorporate areas where people can congregate for discussions, observations, or for rest "loafing areas'.
 - iv. Utilize the guidelines for the Handicapped.
 - v. Outdoor seating for classroom use.
 - e. Plant Life: (See Vegetation Notes) Match Plant plants with the conditions of the site.
 - i. Consider the various types of vegetation suitable for the area(s).
Such as: woodland flowers, prairie flowers, or wetland flowers.
 - ii. Consider which plants will be visible during the school year.
 - iii. Plant vegetation for wildlife -- Crab Apple trees, Dogwoods, Service Berry, etc.
 - f. Compost Area:
 - i. Consider placing a compost area at the site.
 - g. Trees:
 - i. Start trees early since they take the longest to grow.

- ii. Make sure you have appropriate spacing—think long-term growth.
 - iii. Landscape businesses can help educate students on how to plant.
 - iv. Mulch around the tree in a 'cereal bowl effect' (not volcano shaped) to the 'drip-line' helps keep the moisture in, and reduce the amount of time/water needed for watering.
 - v. Many nurseries sell their stock in the fall and may offer discounts. Fall is a good time of year for planting.
- h. Consider the Guidelines used for Handicapped people.
- i. Seeds –vs– Plants:
- i. Seeds are hard when pulling weeds, since it is hard for most people distinguish weed growth from new plant growth.
 - ii. Plants are easier to plant because they have already been identified. It is easier to distinguish new plant growth (weeds) from the plant that you know was planted.
 - iii. Plant small and plant diverse (small trees need less water).
- j. Plans:
- i.. Use experts (people who are knowledgeable on the topics).
 - ii. Use drawings & written communication
 - iii. Use the habitat for all curricular.
 - iv. Aim for sustainability.
- k. Homes:
- i. Bird Houses
 - ii. Duck Houses
 - iii. Owl Houses
- l. Watch-Out For:
- i. Spraying chemicals, such as Poison Ivy –vs—Yellow Slippers
 - ii. Run-off, divert unwanted, damaging run-off. For example: nutrients from the roads, damaging to wetland areas.)
 - iii. Your imagination is your limitation.