

# Winterizing the Garden

## Lesson Description

Students learn and practice how to properly winterize the garden using the 3 techniques of weeding, adding compost and mulching. Depending on the invited Elder's chosen topic, students may also learn how to traditionally store harvested vegetables.

- Time required: 60 minutes
- Location of lesson: Classroom and garden.

## Learning Objectives

- Be able to define the idea of “winterizing the garden”.
- Understand the benefits to winterizing the garden.
- Gain practice in the 3 techniques of winterizing the garden: weeding, adding compost and mulching.

## Materials and Preparation

- Invite an Elder to lead the outside class activities on “winterizing the garden” or to speak at the end of the lesson on winterizing or harvesting vegetables for winter use
- Garden tools including rakes, shovels, hoes, gloves; enough for all students to participate
- Compost, either your own or purchased; quantity needed depends on your garden space
- Mulch (bark, newspaper or straw)
- 🙌 **Winterizing the Garden**
- Prepared vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

## Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer and Veggie Taste Test (5-10 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Give each student the prepared veggie snack of the day.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the 📖 **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water and eat the veggie snack together.
- Have students complete their 📖 **Taste Test Observations** about the vegetable snack of the week.

**Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)**

- Review the evaluation questions from last week's lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook .

**Class Discussion (10 minutes)**

*We are going to “winterize” our garden to protect it from the cold months ahead.*

- *Have you ever winterized a garden or farm before?*
- *What did you do to winterize?*
- *Have you ever pulled weeds from a garden or farm?*
- *Have you ever used compost in a garden or farm?*
- *Who remembers what compost is and how it is helpful?*

*These tasks are part of cleaning up a garden and getting it ready for winter. Steps to winterizing a garden are:*

- *Clear away any remaining vegetables still in the garden. Either compost them or discard them.*
- *Pull up any weeds that might still be in the ground. If we do not weed the garden before we winterize it, the weeds' roots will continue to grow over the winter, making it harder to plant in the spring.*
- *If you have any winter vegetables still growing, such as carrots or onions, keep them in the ground and cover them with 8 inches of mulch.*
- *Use a rake to sift soil, add compost, and mix the compost and soil together. Compost helps the soil stay fresh and full of nutrients over the winter.*
- *Spread a light layer of mulch on the garden beds. Too much mulch will become a home for rodents.*
  - *What is mulch?*
  - *Do you think mulch is good for the garden?*

*Mulch is any type of material that is spread or laid over the surface of the soil as a covering. It is used to retain moisture in the soil, suppress weeds, keep the soil cool, and make the garden bed look more attractive. Organic mulches also help improve the soil's fertility as they decompose. Types of mulch include bark, newspaper and straw. See  **Winterizing the Garden** for more information.*

At this time, you have the option to pass the lesson to the Elder or complete the rest of the lesson and only have the Elder speak at the end of the lesson. If you choose to have the Elder teach the rest of the lesson, please refer them to the outside activities listed below. If they have other traditional ideas about preservation and how to winterize gardens/farms please have them do an activity around that topic. Have them decide what fits their tradition of winterizing gardens and farms. They can also touch base on the traditional ways that dried crops are used.

**Activities (35 minutes)**

- **“Winterizing the Garden” (20 minutes):** Students practice the techniques of weeding, adding compost and mulching outside in the school garden.
  1. Walk the students around the garden and show them how everything is decomposing and dying out. Explain to the students that this is a natural process of the plant’s life cycle.
  2. Separate the students into 3 groups and designate a leader for each group.
    - Group 1: Weed the garden and rake the garden beds.
    - Group 2: Turn over the soil and add compost to it, mixing well.
    - Group 3: Prepare mulch and add to the garden.
  3. Distribute garden tools among the groups as appropriate for their task. Allow groups to either rotate through to each task or spend the entire time at 1 task.
  4. Make sure to pick up any dying vegetables still around and put them in the compost pile. Do not put any diseased vegetables in the compost bin. It will just spread the disease into the rest of your compost.
  
- **Elder Discussion (15 minutes):** If an elder does not choose to do the winterizing activities with the students, have them talk about the following topics with the students:
  1. Traditional methods of preparing a garden for winter and/or ways to store or harvest vegetables for the winter months.
  2. Why is it important to preserve food in your community?

**Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)**

1. *Why is winterizing your garden helpful to your garden?* (Answer: protects it during harsh winters)
2. *Why should we pull weeds out of the garden before winterizing it?* (Answer: to keep them from spreading and taking over the garden)
3. *How does compost help your garden?* (Answer: adds nutrients to the soil)
4. *Why should we mulch the garden before the winter months?* (Answer: keep moisture in soil)
5. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)
6. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
7. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

**Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor**

- Review the materials and preparation needed for the next lesson.
- Remember that an Elder guest instructor is needed for these Fall lessons: Lesson 2 (Exploring Plant Parts), Lesson 4 (Traveling Seeds), Lesson 6 (Winterizing the Garden) and Lesson 10 (Companion Planting and Traditional Cooking).

**Notes**

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