



## pe·ren·ni·al

(n.) a plant that produces flowers and seeds more than one time in its lifespan, and thus lasts for more than one year.

From Latin *perennis* meaning continual: per "through" + annus "year"

## The School Grounds Greening Project

brings children closer to nature by enhancing the grounds of Pittsburgh Public Schools with greenery and outdoor green spaces. A partnership of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the Grable Foundation and Pittsburgh Public Schools, this project will bring low-maintenance, sustainable greenery to all Pittsburgh Public Schools by 2012.



Planting day at the Gifted Center.

## TREES: A Breath of Fresh Air



A group of Zelkova trees await their planting at Sunnyside K-8.

Trees are incredible assets to school communities. They beautify entrances, shade hot pavement and playgrounds, and help prevent soil erosion. Yet one of their most amazing capabilities is to purify the air that we breathe. According to Tree Pittsburgh, a nonprofit dedicated to urban forestry, tree leaves act as filters by removing dust and other airborne particulates. Leaves even remove toxic pollutants such as:

- Carbon dioxide
- Carbon monoxide
- Ozone
- Sulfur dioxide

By filtering out harmful impurities, trees help reduce the symptoms of asthma and other lung-related illnesses. Planting more trees on school grounds and making sure they receive proper care is a long-term investment, one that will help our children to breathe easier for years to come.

**Want to learn more about how trees and other plants benefit schools? Check out page 3!**

# KICK START SPRING



## ORGANIZE A PLANT BED CLEANUP!

Spring is in sight and school plants need care. As the weather grows warmer, the ground will begin to thaw out and plants will start growing again. Help give the plants at your school a fresh, healthy start:

**Organize a cleanup!** Plant bed clean ups are an excellent way to get outdoors and work together as a class or community group. WPC is here to offer advice, instruction, and the tools needed to help you get started.

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SCHEDULE ONE AT YOUR  
SCHOOL TODAY!

## SCHOOL TENDER SPOTLIGHT

*School Tender (n): a volunteer who helps care for new plants provided by WPC at Pittsburgh Public Schools.*

### Bethany Foster-Wilhelm

is an enthusiastic School Tender and 6th grade science teacher at South Hills Middle School. Bethany is dedicated to making her school and community more environmentally responsible. Some of her accomplishments include:

- Creator of the "Green Team"
- Management Coordinator for SECTEM (Student, Employee, Community Teamed for Energy Management)
- Certified Master Gardener



Bethany and her son Carlos taking a tractor ride.

### *Are you a teacher looking to start a Green Team at your school?*

The South Hills Green Team works to reduce their school's environmental impact. Here are 3 pieces of advice from Bethany on how to start your own Green Team:

- Take an informal audit of the school's needs.
- Look at things through a "green lens;" you can teach almost anything with an environmental bent to it.
- Involve the kids as much as possible.

**THANK YOU,** Bethany, for your passion and hard work. You are an inspiration to School Tenders and teachers looking to improve school environments for students and communities.



# The Benefits of Greening

When creating school planting designs, WPC considers factors ranging from the environmental impact of individual plants to the education and well-being of students. Colorful, fresh, natural spaces can offer much more than visual appeal. Below are examples of recent school greening projects that demonstrate the value of school greening.

## WEST LIBERTY K-5

Natural play spaces provide safe and engaging landscapes that inspire imaginative play. Manufactured play sets are often made of hard metals and plastics that can become uncomfortable on very hot or cold days. Their fixed, rigid structures also limit children's creativity. With West Liberty's low-to-the-ground boulders, soft grasses and colorful shrubs, students are encouraged to explore and move about freely.



*"Nature is important to children's development in every major way - intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically"*

- Stephen R. Kellert

## GREENFIELD K-8

Outdoor classrooms provide students with the opportunity to learn in open-air spaces. Teachers can use these "classrooms" to hold self-directed reading time or teach lessons of any kind. Greenfield's locally made log benches and surrounding shrubs form an ideal space for students to enjoy fresh air while learning.



## ARLINGTON INTERMEDIATE

Shade trees can help decrease energy costs and maintain comfortable classroom temperatures. The five maple trees planted in Arlington's courtyard are currently 2" in diameter. If they are well cared for and grow to 8", they have the potential, per year, to:

- Conserve** 175 kilowatt hours of electricity
- Absorb** 2,575 gallons of storm water runoff
- Reduce** atmospheric carbon by 1,025 pounds
- Provide** **\$275 in overall benefits**



\*Approximate results provided by The National Tree Benefit Calculator [www.treebenefits.com](http://www.treebenefits.com)

# GREENSOURCES for your school

Are you a teacher, parent, or administrator looking to expand upon a greening project at your school? Our Greensources section offers excellent opportunities to help better connect your students to the natural world.

## Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Environmental Studies Lessons  
[www.WaterLandLife.org](http://www.WaterLandLife.org)

The WPC website offers a wide array of environmental lesson plans designed for grade levels 1 through 7 and that meet Pennsylvania's environmental education standards. These lessons include fun, creative ways for students to explore their natural environments. Lessons include: a garden scavenger hunt, journal keeping, and bug identification.

## Grow Pittsburgh

Summer Youth Intern Program,  
 Edible Schoolyard Project,  
 Seedling sales  
[www.growpittsburgh.org](http://www.growpittsburgh.org)

Grow Pittsburgh's mission is "to demonstrate, teach and promote responsible urban food production." Grow Pittsburgh is dedicated to educating students about the importance of producing locally and sustainably grown, healthy food. Their Summer Youth Intern Program is an excellent opportunity for youth to get their hands dirty and learn the ways of urban gardening.

## Phipps Conservatory

Green and Growing Outreach Program  
[www.phipps.conservatory.org](http://www.phipps.conservatory.org)  
 (412) 441-4442 ext. 3220

Phipps offers a variety of interactive learning programs that can be brought straight to the classroom. Programs are typically 45-60 minutes long, meet state academic standards, and are available for students in grades pre-K through 12.

## Pennsylvania Resource Council (PRC)

Composting Classes  
[www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org)

At the PRC's composting workshops, you will learn how to set up a compost pile, proper maintenance techniques, and how to use the finished product to nourish plants. Classes are \$40 per person or \$50 for a couple, and include one compost bin per registration.



## The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Mission

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
 PLEASE VISIT:  
[www.WaterLandLife.org](http://www.WaterLandLife.org)

Western Pennsylvania  
 Conservancy

