



**Rhodora J. Donahue Academy**

4955 Seton Way  
Ave Maria, FL 34142

**School Profile:**

- Private
- K-12<sup>th</sup> grades
- 278 students

**Garden Profile:**

- First year for garden program
- 145 K-5<sup>th</sup> graders participate in garden
- 3 students are in new High School Garden Club
- Gardening is part of PE curriculum
- No additional volunteer support

**General Garden Information:**

This is our first year, and we began planting in August 2015.

**Garden Site:**

The overall garden is about 800 square feet, with 99% of it planted in edible plants. We have:

- Thirteen 4' x 8' raised beds, nine of which are currently planted
- Six 8' x 8' raised beds, 3 planted
- Six EarthBoxes, sitting on tarps in the unplanted raised beds.

Themed beds include a basil garden with five varieties, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade tomato and pepper garden bed, a radish bed, cucumber bed, and honeynut squash bed. We also have a freestanding composting bin.



**Student Involvement & Education:**

The students in PE classes visit or work in the garden once a week. The High School Garden Club, started in March 2016, meets once a week after school, and occasionally on the weekends.

Structured lessons are used in the garden. The Collier County Extension agent has visited and planted seedlings with our students. We have used excerpts from the following curricula:

- *Junior Master Gardener Program*
- *Gardening for Nutrition*, by Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc.
- *How to Grow a School Garden, A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers*, by Bucklin-Sporer and Pringle

**Garden Product:**

The students taste produce during PE class; they take it home in plastic bags; salads have been made for the faculty; excess is put in the faculty lounge; baskets of produce are on display at events like Grandparents Day, Open House, etc.

**Parent Engagement:**

We send the students home with the vegetables that they have grown and encourage parents to enjoy eating with their children. Parents have donated time, soil, mulch, and fertilizer.

**Goals:**

1. Plant a Strawberry Patch for the 4th grade class (They read "Strawberry Girl" by Lois Lenski)
2. Teach students to identify local plants and learn the botanical name
3. Challenge students to identify every plant that is growing at school and in their own yard
4. Introduce some xeriscaping concepts
5. Beautify the school landscaping
6. Install durable benches
7. Provide creative, shady areas for students
8. Install a watering system
9. Teach and practice composting lunch waste

Our newly formed Garden Club will meet once a week, and is planning to have a basil fundraiser for Mother's Day.

**Contact:**

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