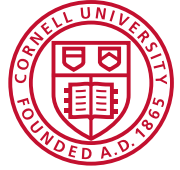


Cornell Cooperative Extension Cornell Garden-Based Learning



Planning a Successful School & Community Garden Program Course Syllabus Winter 2026

Instructor: Donna Alese Cooke dmc72@cornell.edu

Office Hours: If you would like to meet with the instructor individually via Zoom, reach out to set up a meeting during available Office Hours. Once the course begins, please contact the course instructor via messaging within Moodle.

Welcome!

Welcome to the **Planning a Successful School & Community Garden Program** online course. We are pleased that you are inspired to further enrich your practice of community-based gardening in schools and communities, for children, youth, and /or adult audiences.

Course Schedule:

- **January 26-February 1:** Welcome & Introductory Week
- **February 2-8, Module 1:** Introduction & Growing Your Team; Community Partnerships
- **February 9-15, Module 2:** Using Logic Models to Define Program Goals
- **February 14-22: Break**
- **February 23-March 1, Module 3:** Assessing Your Site & Tapping Your Community Resources
- **March 2-8, Module 4:** Evaluation and Assessment; Curriculum Toolbox
- **March 9-15, Module 5:** Creating Sustainable Gardens; Finding Funding
- **March 16-20, Module 6:** Project Portfolio; Next Steps

Although the last day of class is March 20, the due date for assignments in Module 6 is March 25.

Zoom Q&A Sessions & Office Hours

We have found that students benefit from regular one-hour Zoom Q&A check-ins, where all students come together to review the course content, ask questions, and share ideas and progress. These sessions are optional and recorded if missed.

Zoom sessions are held on Tuesday afternoons or evenings, EST:

February 3, 12pm

February 24, 7pm

March 10, 12pm

March 24, 7pm – share final portfolios

Zoom link for each session:

<https://cornell.zoom.us/j/5108598970?pwd=JYzFPtYDi3tHYycqBTcRRcQiWap6ZH.1&omn=92924310098> Meeting ID 510 859 8970 passcode 749417

Instructor office hours are available on an individual basis and scheduled on the alternate weeks of the Zoom sessions. Please reach out to the instructor to schedule a personal meeting.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Understand the foundations of garden-based learning and its benefits.
- Explore and identify available resources, case studies, research, and successful school and community-based garden programs.
- Utilize logic models to identify program inputs, activities, and desired outcomes.
- Use real world tools to practice and develop a garden-based learning program in alignment with program needs.
- Build a toolbox of resources and portfolio of program planning, deliverables, and strategies for sustainability.
- Utilize strategies to organize a community of volunteers and identify leadership.

Approach

Using a logic model approach to program development, this online course teaches methods and strategies on planning, organizing, and developing a successful and sustainable school and/or community gardening program. Participants will connect with and learn from each other, and by the end of this course will become more confident and knowledgeable garden-based learning educators and program organizers.

What to Expect

You will learn online asynchronously, at your own pace. Anyone enrolled in this course is expected to participate in all learning activities. For your own peace of mind and time management, submit all assignments by each deadline. Your online presence through interactive online discussion forum is essential. It provides an opportunity to ask questions while encouraging a network of state and nation-wide educators, volunteers, and communities to learn and grow together.

Plan to dedicate about 5 or more hours per weekly topic for online readings and assignments. Should you take extra time to explore the optional topics and additional resources in each section, expect to add on another hour or two. Given the flexible nature of a distance learning environment, it is easy to fall behind and lose out on what could be a very valuable learning experience for you. Keeping yourself well organized and current with assignments will help you get the most out of this course.

Academic Integrity

Participants are expected to do their own work unless otherwise instructed (e.g. group work). Any assignments should be your original work done, and to avoid plagiarism, other people's work should be properly referenced. Works that are copied from other students or plagiarized in any way will not be graded or evaluated.

Course Content & Assessment

Weekly modules will open on a Monday and contain the following components:

- A series of lessons that present the topic
- Required readings from online resources that expand upon and reinforce the material presented
- Activities and assignments that help develop your portfolio and toolbox of GBL program planning

- Whole class forum with topics and questions for discussion, and a place to share ideas with others
- Reflective writing that cultivates a thoughtful perspective and dialogue with the course instructor
- Additional readings, activities, and relevant resources

Journal Entries

Within each module you will be asked to submit a journal entry, where you will share your thoughts and ideas with your instructor who in turn will offer you constructive feedback throughout the course. Please keep in mind that this is a self-reflective activity, not a sounding board! Suggested writing prompts will be posted in Moodle; however, you are free to explore other topics if they relate to the course. The purpose of the journal is for you to reflect on something you have learned and take this knowledge to further your program planning.

Grading

While there are no accumulative grades for this course, all assignments are designed to help keep you on track and evaluate your understanding of the content. Assignments are expected to be completed on or before their due dates and will be evaluated on an **Exemplary/Developing/ Emerging** basis for you to track your progress.

- **Exemplary:** Student has submitted assigned task on time, referred to course materials to answer all questions and/or complete all assigned tasks.
- **Developing:** Student submitted assigned task on time or late, referred to course materials to answer some of the questions and/or completed some assigned tasks.
- **Emerging:** Student is just beginning to demonstrate learning in relation to the content, may or may not have referred to course materials to answer some of the questions and/or may or may not have completed some assigned tasks.
- **No grade:** Did not submit the assignment by the end of the course.

Supplies

A computer with reliable high-speed Internet access (to view videos, view readings, submit assignments, and participate regularly in discussion forums). There is no text to purchase.

Continuing Education Credits

This course is non-credit; however, we award the following to all who successfully participate and complete the course and all required assignments. CEU's are not automatically awarded. Should you wish to receive CEU's, please email dmc72@cornell.edu at the end of the course.

- Cornell University Continuing Education Credits: You may receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
- NYS Certified Teachers: Cornell Garden-Based Learning is now an Approved Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) Sponsor from NYSED
- If you are post-secondary undergraduate or graduate student, explore the possibility with your faculty advisor of receiving credit for the course (typically as independent study) using your CEU's as evidence of your completion.

revised January 2026