



# School Gardens in Marin County

Update to Marin Food Policy Council

# Children in gardens: If they grow it, they will eat it! (and learn...)



# School Gardens in Marin

- In the 19 school districts, there are approximately 75 schools of which approx 50 have gardens. In addition, there are another 45 private schools.
- Various organizations have some presence in gardens: CCNB, MMG, 4H, Marin Organic, MMG, YLI, private community service programs, individual volunteers, several non-profits.
- The most critical need is consistent management over time, with material needs being secondary but important. The approx 32 lower-income schools struggle significantly more.\*

# Current Solutions in Process

- Seed, seedling, tool, materials' yards and resources/libraries (Fairfax & Mill Valley Seed/Tool Libraries)
- Tours and meet-ups for sharing best practices & connections
- Volunteer labor resources (various agencies and volunteer groups as listed earlier)
- Shared use – Good trend (CM, Marin City)
- Central coordination

# Broader Picture/Trends

- Green schoolyards, Environmental and sustainability Education\*
- State and Federal support through bond measures and grants
- Various teacher trainings/curriculum are available, but if district isn't committed, the teachers don't have enough time/support to implement long-term
- Environmental Education as a valuable vehicle for new California core curriculum (inc NGSS: Next Generation Science Standards) producing better student engagement

# Sample models

- 'Education Outside': 2-year corps, private-public coordination, successful local bond, housed at SFUSD, political support, private/foundation support.
- Berkeley Public Schools: Gardening and Cooking Program: 2 staff. (Had 11 coordinators for 20 gardens, K-12)\*

Can we institutionalize a school garden program, given Marin's fragmentation?  
If so, how?

- Import a program (ie: SF's Education Outside?)\*
- Staff a joint County/UCCE/Office of Education/private program? (Schools Rule?)
- Create a new program entirely?
- Thoughts, questions?