

The Bronx Salad

TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS



Toolkit Created for NYC School Gardeners by
Bronx Health REACH and **Grow to Learn**

Introduction

The Bronx Salad Toolkit is a resource to encourage school cafeterias and other institutional settings to serve more healthy food options throughout the Bronx. The original recipe, included on the final page of this toolkit, is a delicious mixture of flavors representing the culinary diversity of the Bronx and is currently being offered at a number of Bronx restaurants. This toolkit includes an adapted recipe and planting guide for schools that would like to grow a version of The Bronx Salad in their own school gardens. Each ingredient in The Bronx Salad Toolkit can be grown in a shortened ‘school garden’ season for a late May or early June spring harvest. Ingredients can also be grown starting in the fall for a late October or early November fall harvest. These crops are low maintenance and quick to germinate, making them easy for beginner level gardeners. Schools are encouraged to include additional ingredients that represent their unique school community.

New York City public and charter schools are welcome to participate in Grow to Learn’s citywide school gardens network. Register your school at www.growtolearn.org to receive garden technical assistance, apply for mini-grant funding for your space, pick-up seasonal give-away items like seeds or seedlings, and attend weekly professional development sessions with the staff. For registered school gardens, all seeds and seedlings required for the salad can be picked up for free in the spring! Seed giveaways are in February each year, followed by seedling giveaways in April.

Toolkit Contents

The History of The Bronx Salad	4
The Bronx Salad Recipe - NYC School Garden Adaptation.....	4
Preparing The Bronx Salad with Students	5
Classroom Tasting Tips.....	6
The Bronx Salad: School Garden Planting and Harvest Instructions	7
Indoor vs. Outdoor Planting	10
The Bronx Salad Original Recipe.....	11
The Bronx Salad Nutrition Information.....	12
Glossary of Gardening Terms.	13
Resources.	15

The History of The Bronx Salad



Launched in The Bronx in 2016, The Bronx Salad is part of the Healthy Restaurant Program, a partnership with the Institute for Family Health's Bronx Health REACH, the South Bronx Overall Economic Development (SoBRO) and the United Business Cooperative (UBC).

The Bronx Salad and its signature dressing have received unanimous praise from over 1,000 Bronxites. Made with simple, fresh ingredients, the dressing includes the famous Bronx Greenmarket Hot Sauce, created by acclaimed Chef King Phojanakong, using peppers grown at more than 40 Bronx greenmarket farms and community gardens.

Many Bronx residents are not eating as healthy as they should. By working with community gardens and local restaurant owners, we aim to improve the health of Bronx residents by providing healthier food.



The Bronx Salad Recipe: NYC School Garden Adaptation

Salad ingredients:

- Mixed baby greens (hardy greens like kale, collards, swiss chard, mizuno are recommended)
- Radish-thinly sliced in rounds
- Chives-thinly sliced
- Mexican sour gherkins - whole or sliced
- Sungold cherry tomatoes
- Sunflower sprouts
- Popcorn sprouts

Salad dressing ingredients:

- Cilantro
- Olive oil
- Lime juice or Apple Cider Vinegar
- Honey
- Salt & Pepper

Substitutions for the Bronx Salad:

- Instead of mixed baby greens, try Asian greens (like arugula, mustard or tatsoi) or hardy winter greens (like kale, cabbage and collard greens)
- Instead of radish, try harukai (Japanese) turnips, carrots or sliced beets
- Instead of chives, try scallions, cilantro or radish sprouts
- Instead of Mexican sour gherkins, try Kirby or Persian cucumbers
- Instead of Sungold cherry tomatoes, try beefsteak or heirloom tomatoes
- Instead of sunflower or popcorn sprouts, try buckwheat sprouts or pea shoots

If your school has a garden that is regularly maintained over the summer, additional ingredients like sun-loving bell peppers, red tomatoes, and red onions can also be added.

Keep experimenting! There are lots of delicious substitutions for The Bronx Salad we haven't thought of! Try different combinations and tell us what works for you! Show us your versions of The Bronx Salad by posting on social media and tagging #TheBronxSalad.



Preparing The Bronx Salad with Students

Materials:

- Knives and cutting boards. Butter knives or serrated plastic knives will work for younger children.
- Safety scissors
- Whisk
- 2-3 large bowls: 1-2 for washing, 1 for the finished salad
- Dressing bowl or large wet measuring cup
- Zester or grater
- Tasting cups, forks, serving spoons



Process:

Divide the classroom into four groups: (1) Washing station: all veggies; (2) Scissor chopping: herbs, chives, greens; (3) Chopping station: gherkins, tomatoes, radishes; (4) Dressing station

Washing Station: Fill a large bowl with water. Take the harvested vegetables (harvesting into a large colander works well!) and have students rinse each type of vegetable carefully in cold water. As they finish washing, they can bring the washed produce to the prep stations. Special attention should be paid to sprouts and baby greens.

Scissor Station: Using safety scissors or garden scissors, students can snip cilantro (or other herbs) and chives into small pieces. Set aside in a bowl. If greens are harvested at a larger size than baby greens, they can be cut into smaller bite-size pieces with scissors.

Chopping Station: Cut each gherkin and cherry tomato in half or quarters. Radishes can be sliced or quartered.

Dressing Station: Zest and juice the lime into a bowl or large measuring cup. Add olive oil, salt, pepper, and honey. A good rule of thumb is to build a dressing with 2:1 oil to acid ratio. Whisk the dressing together with the snipped/scissored herbs and chives.

Once the class has completed all the station tasks, mix the greens, sprouts, and chopped vegetables in a large bowl with the dressing. If you are harvesting larger greens, students can first 'massage' the dressing into the greens to soften the larger leaves. If they are baby greens this is not a necessary step. Mix the salad and serve in small tasting cups. Have a few students bring salad tasters in to the main office, neighboring classrooms, the school wellness room, etc. to draw attention to your project and share the goodness of your garden!



Classroom Tasting Tips:




- Serve all the students together and ask everyone to wait to take a bite until all have been served. Use this opportunity to remind them that many of the ingredients in The Bronx Salad were grown with their own hands.
- Make sure you have set guidelines before any student takes a bite. A key rule for tasting is that no one should be allowed to say that something tastes simply 'bad' or 'good'. Instead, ask students to describe what they are tasting using descriptive words: wet/dry, cold/hot, smooth/bumpy, sweet/sour.
- All students should have the opportunity to try something, but it should be voluntary; forcing children to eat something they don't want can give them a negative feeling towards that food.





The Bronx Salad: School Garden Planting and Harvest Instructions

*Seeds can be found in starter seed kit and can be replenished through Grow to Learn, Johnny's Seed Catalog and Urban Garden Center (116th Street NY, NY)

Crop Name	Crop Picture	Days to harvest	Spring Planting Date	Fall Planting Date	Harvest Notes
Baby greens: Kale, Collard Greens, Mizuno Lettuce		21-30 days	Early May	Mid September	Harvest by pinching outer leaves or 'mowing' the greens with a pair of scissors. Greens can be harvested as 'micro' greens after only 10 days, baby greens after 21-30 days, and larger heads of greens after longer periods.
Radish		21-30 days	Early May	Mid September	You can see how big the radish is by brushing aside the top layer of soil to see the top of the root (the radish). Thin seedlings if they are growing too close. You can eat the greens as well!

Chives		60 days	Mid April direct sow outside, or transplant in late April from seedlings	Early September direct sow	Cut chives with scissors - students can 'chop' chives into smaller pieces with safety scissors when prepping the salad.
Mexican Sour Gherkins		50-70 days	Seed indoors in mid to late March, transplant outside in late April/Early May	This crop is not recommended for fall planting	Sour gherkins look like baby watermelons, but taste like lemony cucumbers! These vining plants are fun and pretty, and will fruit all spring and summer long and into later fall.
Sungold Cherry Tomatoes		50-70 days	Seed indoors in mid to late March, transplant outside in late April/Early May	This crop is not recommended for fall planting	Tomatoes can be harvested when they change color from green to yellow (or red if you're growing a red cherry!) Growing cherry tomatoes gives you more fruits throughout the summer, which is a good idea when working with students.

<p>Shoots- Popcorn, Sunflower</p>		<p>10-14 days</p>	<p>Late May or early June</p>	<p>Early to Mid October</p>	<p>Sprouts can be cut with scissors or pinched off with your fingers. For winter projects, keep multiple trays of sprouts going in your classroom year round for weekly harvests!</p>
<p>Cilantro, other herbs</p>		<p>21-30 days</p>	<p>Late April</p>	<p>Early September</p>	<p>Snip with scissors - cilantro can be continuously harvested throughout the season. If it goes to seed, harvest the seeds and dry them- that's coriander!</p>

Indoor vs. Outdoor Planting

Planting indoors is a great way to prepare for the gardening season while it's still cold outside and there is snow on the ground! Read your seed packets carefully to fully understand the care steps and how much time they will need to grow. This information is especially important when growing the ingredients for The Bronx Salad as you want to make sure all of the ingredients are ready to harvest at the same time.

Outdoor Planting	Indoor Planting
Sunlight	Grow lights, often set on a timer to make sure plants get enough light and warmth to grow, but not too much to burn them.
Heat from the outdoors	Heat from the light/lamp (70-75 F)
Water from rainfall	Watering done by hand
Nutrients from the soil	Manually add compost or nutrient solution to help plants grow.



The Bronx Salad Original Recipe

Created by Chef King, Bronx Health REACH, SoBRO and the United Business Cooperative

Salad Ingredients:

- Red leaf or green leaf lettuce (or kale if preferred)
- Red peppers
- Red onions
- Black beans (low-sodium)
- Corn
- Tomatoes
- Mango
- Cilantro
- Avocado
- Plantain chips

Salad dressing ingredients:

- Apple cider vinegar - 1 teaspoon
- Lime juice - 1 teaspoon
- Orange juice - 1/4 teaspoon
- Olive oil - 1 teaspoon
- Dijon mustard - 1 teaspoon
- Salt & Pepper - 1/4 teaspoon of each
- Honey - 1 teaspoon
- Hot sauce - 1 teaspoon

The Bronx Salad Nutrition Information

- ✓ **Red leaf or green leaf lettuce** (or kale if preferred) - contains a healthy dose of vitamin A which improves eye function.
- ✓ **Red peppers** - have vitamin C and ascorbic acid, which keep the immune system healthy and strong.
- ✓ **Red onions** – contains calcium that is necessary to grow strong bones and teeth.
- ✓ **Black beans (low-sodium)** – made up of mostly protein and fiber that keep a person feeling full and energized.
- ✓ **Corn** - main source of energy which are carbohydrates. Corn contains the mineral potassium which helps keep muscles moving freely.
- ✓ **Tomatoes** - filled with the super vitamin C that helps fight the toxins that attempt to make the body sick. Tomatoes provide us with Iron which gives oxygen to the whole body.
- ✓ **Mangoes** - good source of vitamins A, C and E. Eat this fruit to maintain strong skin and tissue growth.
- ✓ **Cilantro** - contains vitamin K which promotes healthy bones and speedy healing.
- ✓ **Avocados** - loaded with vitamins and the heart healthy fats to combat heart disease and aid digestion.
- ✓ **Plantain chips** - a tasty and healthy snack when consumed in moderation. Plantain chips can support the immune system and keep skin healthy due to the vitamin A and C. Plantains are high in fiber, supporting a healthy metabolism.

Salad dressing ingredients:

- ✓ **Apple cider vinegar** - a great base for salad dressings, apple cider contains acetic acid. The active ingredient in apple cider vinegar can help blood sugar levels stay stable.
- ✓ **Lime juice** - can help the body achieve daily intake of Folic Acid and vitamin C to battle illnesses. Limes also have antibacterial properties.
- ✓ **Orange juice** - contain vitamin C that will increase absorption of Iron. They also contain minerals like phosphorus, magnesium and potassium to help sustain a healthy nervous system.
- ✓ **Olive oil** - this healthy monounsaturated fat protects cells from damage with vitamin E and K. Olive oil supports normal heart functions.
- ✓ **Dijon mustard** - made from mustard seeds, which have minerals such as Selenium to promote good blood flow.
- ✓ **Salt & Pepper** - an essential spice mixture is a staple for good reasons. Salt is a mineral needed by the body to perform tasks like regulating the heartbeat. The Manganese and Iron in pepper make it great for bone and intestinal health.
- ✓ **Honey** - packed with antioxidants that repel and fight the pollutants encountered daily.
- ✓ **Hot sauce** - contains capsicum which gives it the heat that has anti-inflammatory benefits.

Glossary of Gardening Terms

Starting seeds



Planting seeds, usually indoors under grow lights.

Direct seed/Direct sow



Planting a seed directly in the soil outside.

Thin seedlings



Snipping or pulling out some seedlings to allow others the room and resources (moisture, light and nutrients) to grow. Thinning seedlings also allows for more air to circulate around the plants, helping to ward off disease.

Transplant



Taking the seedlings you started indoors and planting them outdoors when they have grown big enough, have been hardened off and outside weather is permitting. Dates and conditions for transplanting outside should be listed on the back of your seed pack.

Hardening off



Slowly letting seedlings acclimate to outdoor weather before transplanting outside, preventing transplant shock. This is usually done by bringing seedlings outdoors for a few hours a day (sometimes protecting them with row cover or heavy duty plastic) and bringing them indoors at night, increasing the number of outside hours until transplanting.

Resources

Grow to Learn NYC promotes sustainable gardens in NYC public schools. Apply for a mini-grant to start a school garden, find resources such as how-to-garden guides and participate in seed giveaways (February/ March) or Seedling Giveaways (April). Visit growtolearn.org

Bronx Health REACH provides technical assistance and materials to schools to promote the consumption of more nutritious foods and beverages and increased physical activity. There are limited mini-grants available for wellness efforts in Bronx-based schools. Bronx Health REACH is a project of the Institute for Family Health. Visit www.bronxhealthreach.org

Edible Schoolyard NYC promotes hands-on learning in school gardens and kitchen classrooms, allowing students to gain the knowledge and skills to make healthy food choices. It also provides professional development and curriculum to help schools establish and improve garden and kitchen programs. Visit edibleschoolyardnyc.org

Build It Green! NYC provides free or low-cost materials for planter boxes or other projects. Visit bignyc.org

Captain Planet Learning Garden Program offers free resources for teachers, including planting guides, cooking cart recipes and demos and lesson plans (tied to standards) for kindergarten through 5th grade. It also funds small grants for environmental stewardship projects. Visit captainplanetfoundation.org

Fiskars Project Orange Thumb provides grants, tools, and hands-on garden makeovers. Visit www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb

Horticulture Society of New York has designed and built school gardens for over 50 years. It hosts workshops with schools and communities. Visit thehort.org

Kids Gardening funds gardening programs that share the common vision of a greener future and powerful impact. The organization offers grants and online resources. Visit grants.kidsgardening.org

Lowe's Toolbox for Education funds school gardening and landscaping projects. Visit toolboxforeducation.com

NY Sun Works builds innovative kindergarten through 12th grade science labs in urban schools. Visit nysunworks.org

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation Green Thumb (GT) supports community and schools gardens throughout NYC. It provides monthly workshops covering gardening basics and more advanced farming and community organizing topics. Visit greenthumbnyc.org

Woolly School Gardens can be hung on a wall or a fence to provide garden pockets. Good for small spaces or indoor gardens. Visit woollyschoolgarden.org