



# Little Green Thumbs

## Summary 2010-2011



Students enjoy reading near the garden.



Students planting seedlings into the self-watering containers.



Beautiful green peppers from a classroom garden. Some peppers even matured to red peppers!



Students preparing the soil.



Watching the peat pellets expand and planting seeds.

"My daughter enjoys feeding the worms and wants to try an indoor garden at home (worms included). I have not seen my daughter so excited about anything in her life."

- Mother of a grade 4 student, Yorkton

"We loved the the whole process from planting their seeds, to seedlings, to transplanting and eating! The kids absolutely loved having food from the garden."

- Grade 1 teacher,  
Prince Albert





## Little Green Thumbs Overview

The Little Green Thumbs project, managed by Agriculture in the Classroom, helps young people value the health of themselves, the environment and their community through active participation in classroom gardening. Indoor gardens are living classrooms that make learning concepts such as nutrition, environmental stewardship, sustainable food systems, and community interdependence fun and relevant. As students actively cooperate to care for the garden and ultimately eat the healthy vegetables, they become inspired and empowered by achieving success.



Making bannock during a classroom presentation. We even ground the flour ourselves!

*"It was so much fun and there were so many ways to incorporate the garden into other subjects."  
- Little Green Thumbs teacher*

## Results from the 2010 - 2011 School Year

The goal of Little Green Thumbs is to promote healthy food, a healthy environment and healthy communities. Based on our results from last year, Little Green Thumbs successfully achieved the objectives. The following statistics are taken from our year-end teacher survey. There were 45 respondents from the 53 participating schools.

In 2010/11 school year, Little Green Thumbs was active in 53 Schools.

- 🌱 11 First Nations
- 🌱 18 Rural
- 🌱 24 Urban

There were 1462 Students involved.

- 🌱 735 Males
- 🌱 727 Females

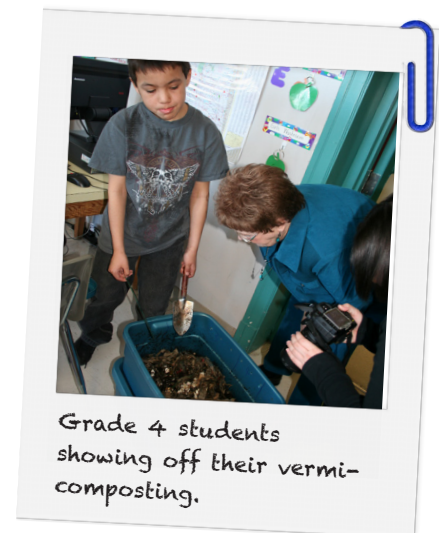
## Goals and Objectives

**Objective #1: Actively engage students in the gardening process each year.**

- 🌱 85.7% of teachers believed that their students had a good or excellent level of volunteerism when it came to taking care of the garden (watering, collecting food waste, etc.)
- 🌱 98% of teachers agreed that Little Green Thumbs promoted teamwork and co-operation among their students.

**Objective #2: Create change in the actions of students involved towards a more environmentally responsible manner.**

- 🌱 1315 students participated in vermi-composting this year and composted over 3200 Liters of food waste through their composting initiatives!
- 🌱 Little Green Thumbs classrooms participated in many environmental initiatives throughout the year; such as being the recycling coordinators at the school, cleaning up the schoolyard, bringing litterless lunches, creating environmental videos and gardening and composting outdoors.



Grade 4 students showing off their vermi-composting.



### Objective #3: Encourage young people to eat healthy and nutritious food.

98% of the teachers indicated Little Green Thumbs helped their students gain a greater understanding for how food is produced.

After being involved in Little Green Thumbs, teachers believe that the majority of the students (95%) had a positive or very positive attitude toward healthy food, compared to an indifferent or negative attitude toward eating healthy food seen in the over half of the students (57%) before their involvement in the program.

### Objective #4: Enhance the learning environment in the classroom.

98% of teachers indicated the learning environment improved since incorporating Little Green Thumbs.

78% of teachers believe that Little Green Thumbs is effective in encouraging inquiry-based learning.

96.9 % of teachers rated Little Green Thumbs as the most effective method to help students learn, when asked to compare the program with videos, textbooks, one-time activities, guest speakers and Smart-Board activities.

### Objective #5: Develop a Little Green Thumbs Community

43 teachers attended the annual Little Green Thumbs Teachers Workshop as professional development in September 2010.

17 Celebration Events took place this year where students and teachers celebrated their garden achievements at their schools; or went on field trips to local farms or farmers markets.

Teachers estimate that around 600 parents and 300 community members were involved in their projects.

"Each of my 19 students was paired up with a resident of our local nursing home. The residents were able to share their gardening expertise and the students provided the manual dexterity. On subsequent visits the state of the garden offered common ground to begin conversation. It was a wonderful way to recognize the tremendous wealth of knowledge our seniors can share on gardening and food sustainability." - Grade 6 teacher, Wynyard

*"Hopefully through the garden and other lessons and endeavors we can help them (the students) see the traditional way of supporting and taking care of Mother Earth."*  
-Grade 2/3 Teacher, Payepot School



Teachers can connect First Nations spirituality and knowledge into their gardens.

*many students who had never gardened before were very shocked that we actually had produce from our garden!*  
- Pre-k teacher, Saskatoon



Celebration Event at École Vickers School in Prince Albert. This is a Grade 1 French Immersion class who loves their garden!



## Impact on the Students

"Our garden was awesome. And the cucumbers were juicy. And the tomatoes were good! My favourite part was eating the bannock. I wish I was in this class next year."

- Grade 3 student

The following are quotes taken from our Year End Teachers Survey. When asked to describe the impact the program had on their students, Teachers responded:

- 🌱 "The student I thought may destroy the garden actually protected it. Other students from other classrooms showed an interest and desire to try the bit of food we grew which increased the pride in my students. They loved working with their hands and were more focused and on task than usual. They all wanted to help."
- 🌱 "A sense of community developed as students took ownership for the garden. Respect was important. Not once did a student 'take' even a little tomato, if there weren't enough for everyone in class. Everyone felt so knowledgeable because they were involved and learned every step of the way. When guests came in class, every single student, regardless of their academic or language ability, was able to 'give a tour' of the garden, answer questions, identify each plant, point out 'neat things to see'. Everyone loved to take turns and assume responsibility for their weekly job. Most importantly, students learned to 'observe', so share orally, to write about and they developed pride in their achievement."
- 🌱 "They have become aware that their actions have a direct impact on their environment and that positive actions can have successful, fulfilling results."
- 🌱 "Little Green Thumbs is an amazing program. It never fails to amaze me that in the agricultural community that we live in there are still students who have never planted a garden, never worked in a garden and never eaten vegetables fresh from the garden. I love the excitement and the sense of responsibility that the garden brings out in my students."



"In Math, we measured every cucumber that we harvested as part of our Linear Measurement Unit. In total we harvested over six meters of cucumbers!"

-Grade 2/3 teacher, Saskatoon



95 percent of the student respondents (100) in the student survey said the garden made learning more fun!







"My favourite part was eating the vegetables. My favourite vegetable that we ate was the cucumber!"  
-Grade 3 student, Saskatoon



## Impact on the Teachers



*"I will continue to do LGT as long I as am teaching."*

*- Grade 5 teacher, Assiniboia*

-  "I love the program. It has created lots of different learning experiences for me in the last three years. Each year the garden has taken on a different role and sometimes we are more active with it and other years a little less. But each year it brings a great sense of peace to the classroom. It allows me to explore and learn with the kids. It is a great program that has limitless possibilities."
-  "I love LGT. It makes my job as teacher a lot easier. It motivates my students and hooks them for a lot of learning that they don't even realize is happening. I have also learned a lot about plants and gardening and have been able to take that information home to my own yard and garden. My own gardens have been more successful since starting the LGT program."
-  "It has created an authentic learning environment in my classroom. The explicit teaching has led me to reflect on my own practices. I am actually planting a garden this year and will start vermi-composting at home this fall."
-  "I have started a garden at home and signed up for a plot at the local community garden since joining."

## The Future

Little Green Thumbs continues to grow...

-  We are looking forward to adding at least 5 new schools to our program in Saskatchewan for the 2011-2012 school year.
-  Little Green Thumbs is growing in Manitoba through Agriculture in the Classroom Manitoba. AITC-MB will be starting with 2 new schools in the fall of 2011.

## Contact Us

Please contact us for more information on our school garden programs.

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*"I enjoyed that teacher and students alike were partners in learning. We were united in our discoveries and the garden became part of our classroom identity."*

*French Immersion  
Kindergarten teacher*

*"How sad... Our garden session is over! But we're still a Little Green Thumb!"*

*- Grade 2 student*

