



Walking Softer Education Project Examples and Guide

2026-2027

Overview

This guide highlights real projects completed by Walking Softer Education students to help your group explore what's possible and find ideas that fit your interests, community, and resources.

As you explore, consider:

Time Commitment: How much time can your group commit?

Space Required: Do you need indoor or outdoor space?

Resources: What materials, tools, or partners will you need?

Team: What works for your group size and interests?

Support: Will you need specialized knowledge, permission, or community partners?

Each example includes a project summary and information to help you decide if a similar project would be a good fit for your group. You don't need to recreate these projects. Use them as inspiration, combine ideas, adapt an approach to your community, or develop something completely different.

Explore Project Ideas

Rewilding

Sustainable Food Systems

Material Waste Management

Choose Your Own Adventure

Seeds of Change

Hampton Roads Academy

Newport News, VA

Setting: After-School (Club)

Students: 10

Timeline: Year-long

Time: 20 hours

Project Summary: Students worked with community partners to transform approximately 10,000 square feet into native habitat. Their restoration work supported local biodiversity while giving students hands-on experience with planning, planting, and maintaining a healthier ecosystem.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You have an outdoor area that could become healthier habitat.
- Your group is interested in hands-on restoration and biodiversity.

Things to Keep in Mind

Look for partners who can help with plant selection, site preparation, or long-term maintenance. Hampton Roads Academy collaborated with the Mariners' Museum and Park and their school's maintenance team.



Rewilding with the Entire Community

GreenAllies

Pottstown, PA

Setting: Outside of School

Students: 17

Timeline: Year-long

Time: 200 hours

Project Summary: Students grew nearly 2,000 native plants at Althouse Arboretum and made them available to local residents, helping bring rewilding beyond their own site and into the surrounding community. They also created educational displays and hosted a large plant distribution event to teach community members about native plants and local ecosystems.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You want your restoration project to reach beyond your school or organization.
- You can partner with local nurseries, parks, arboretums, or community organizations

Things to Keep in Mind

Native plant projects depend on growing and planting seasons. Plan your timeline around your local climate and consider how plants can continue to be grown or distributed in future years.



Community Beautification

CreatorsCircle, Balboa High School

San Francisco, CA

Setting: Outside of School

Students: 5

Timeline: One-day event (with lead-up preparation)

Time: 15 hours

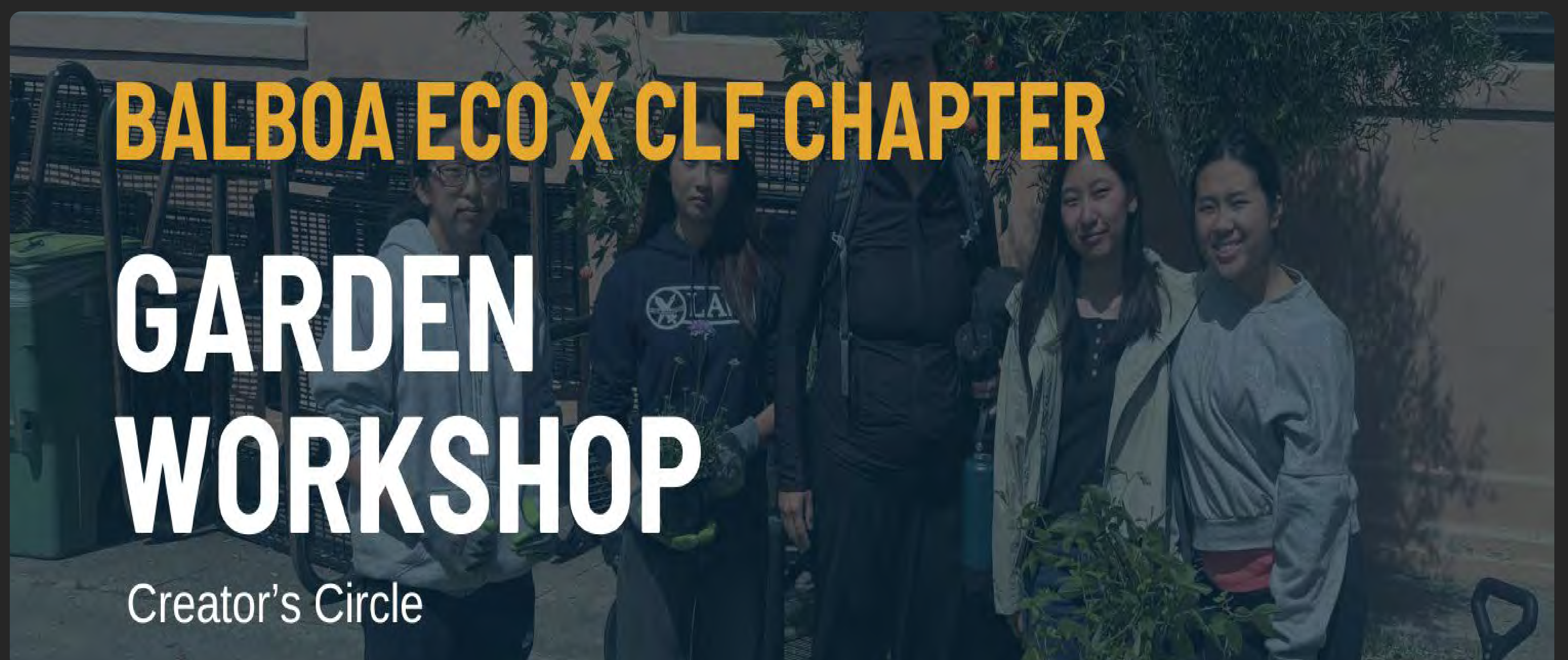
Project Summary: Students combined hands-on environmental action with community education by improving their garden and hosting a public workshop. About 20 volunteers participated, planting 20+ trees while building greater awareness and stewardship of the garden.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You want to combine planting with education or community engagement.
- You have a garden or green space that could benefit from community involvement.

Things to Keep in Mind

Think beyond planting. Workshops, volunteer days, signage, or other activities can help your project engage more people and build long-term support.



Hydroponics Project

North Penn High School

Lansdale, PA

Setting: In School

Students: 7

Timeline: 3-5 months

Time: 20 hours

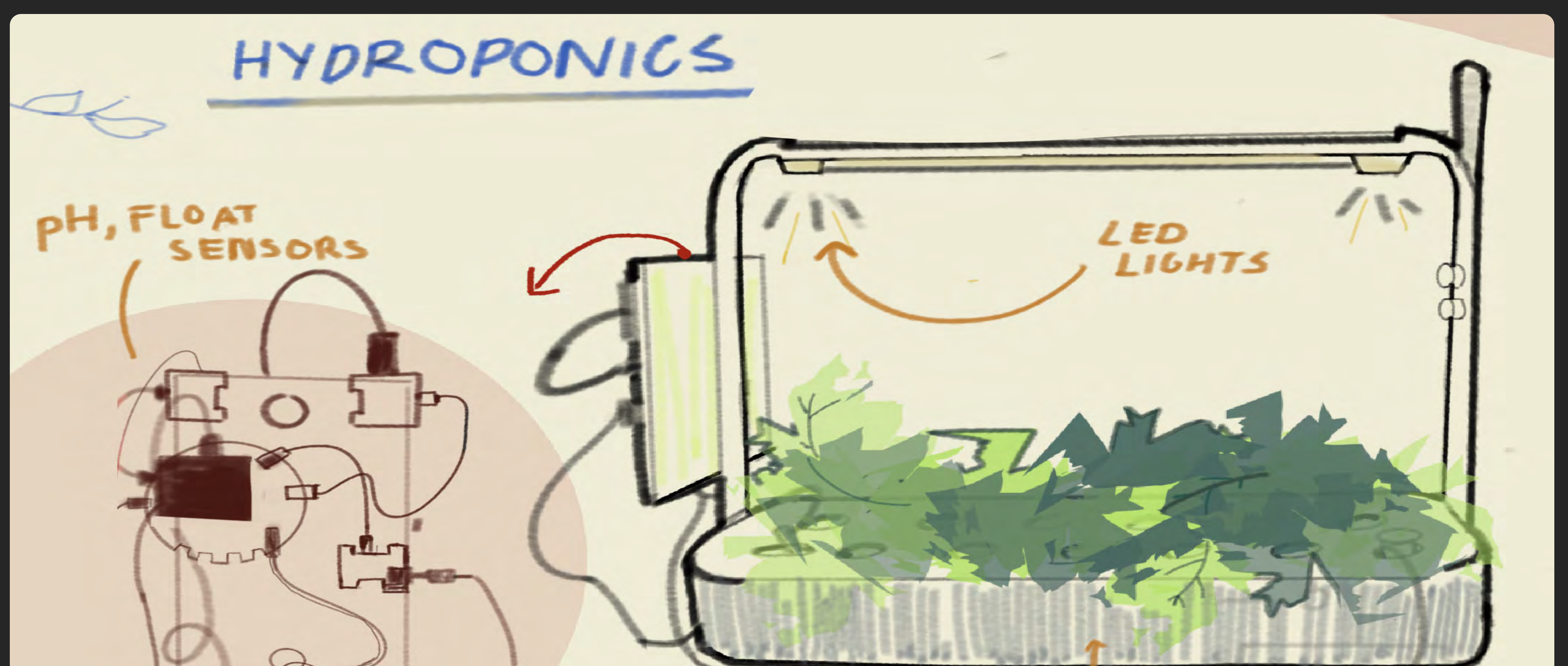
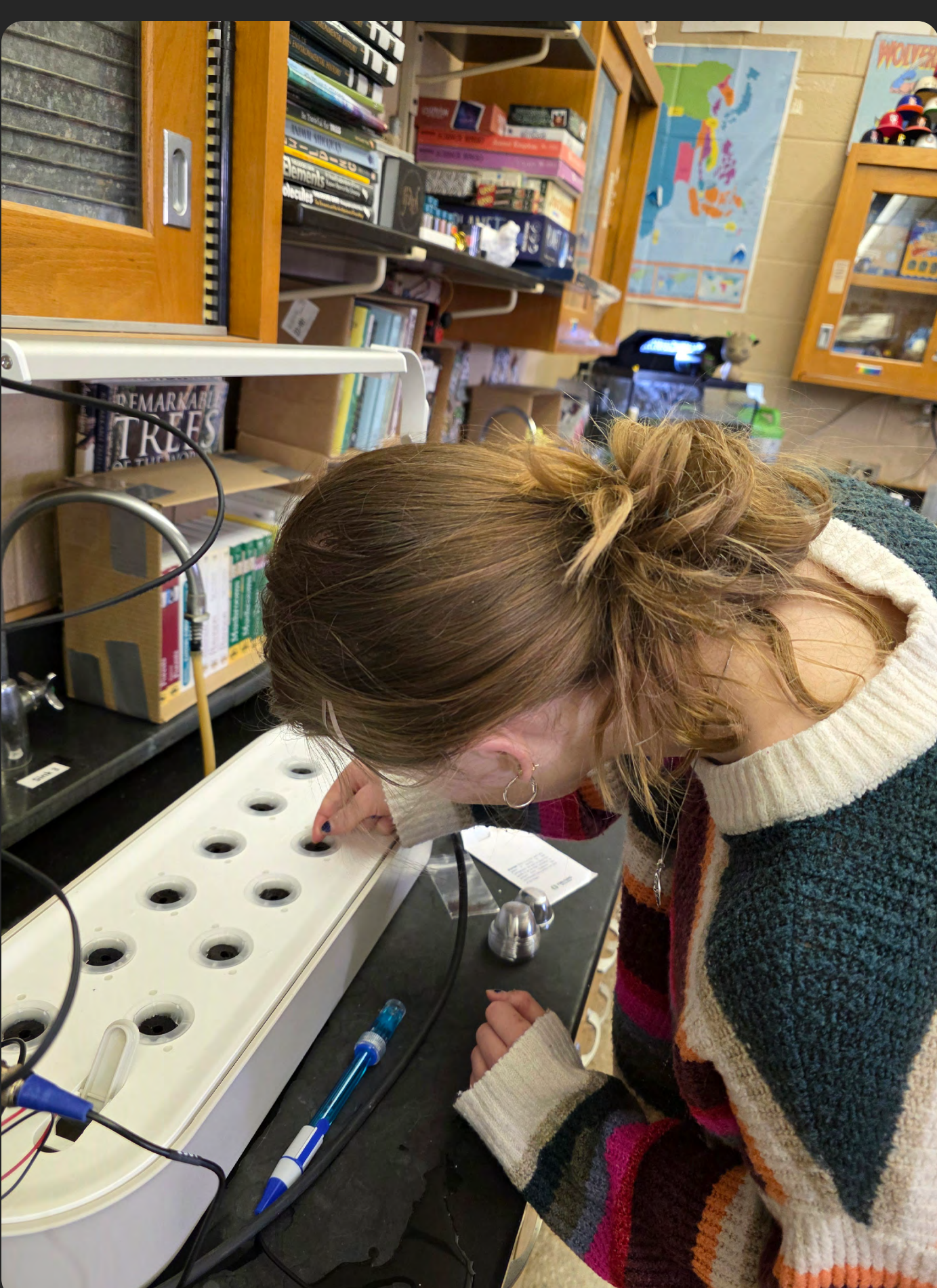
Project Summary: Students created five hydroponic growing systems, giving their school a hands-on way to explore sustainable food production without relying on traditional outdoor growing space. The project allowed students to experiment with growing food while learning about resource conservation and alternative agriculture.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You're interested in growing food but have limited outdoor space.
- Your group enjoys building, experimenting, and learning through hands-on systems.

Things to Keep in Mind

Hydroponic systems require regular monitoring and maintenance. Make sure your group has a plan for who will care for the system over time.



Cafeteria Food Waste Reduction

Herculaneum High School

Herculaneum, MO

Setting: After School

Students: 19

Timeline: Year-long

Time: 15+ hours

Project Summary: Students investigated food waste in their cafeteria and worked with food service staff to test solutions. After conducting a waste audit and surveying peers, they introduced a share table, second breakfast table, and pre-sliced fruit. On days with pre-sliced fruit, waste decreased by 45%.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You want to collect data and test practical solutions.
- You can collaborate with cafeteria or school staff.

Things to Keep in Mind

Build relationships with the people who manage the system you're trying to change. Their knowledge and support can make your ideas much easier to implement.



Native Crop Community Garden

Orange County Environmental Justice Youth

Santa Ana, CA

Setting: Outside of School

Students: 6

Timeline: 6 months

Time: 30 hours

Project Summary: Students partnered with CRECE Urban Farms to create a native crop garden using Indigenous growing practices. They planted a 16 x 27 ft garden using methods like the “Three Sisters” companion planting technique and explored soil health and bioremediation. The project culminated in a community workshop featuring student presentations and hands-on activities.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You want to explore Indigenous food systems and climate-resilient growing practices.
- You can partner with a local farm, garden, or knowledgeable community organization.

Things to Keep in Mind

Community partners can provide valuable knowledge and support. Consider local growing conditions and seek guidance when incorporating cultural or traditional.



Rooted Rewear

Red Oaks Forest School

Central and Eastern, KY

Setting: Outside of School

Students: 6

Timeline: 6 months

Time: 30 hours

Project Summary: Students tackled textile waste by creating an engaging reuse initiative that encouraged their community to rethink clothing consumption and keep usable materials out of the waste stream. The project made sustainability approachable by connecting waste reduction with an activity people could participate in directly.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- Your group is interested in fashion, textiles, reuse, or sustainable consumption.
- You want a project that can invite broad community participation.

Things to Keep in Mind

Think ahead about what will happen to leftover materials. A donation, reuse, or recycling partner can help ensure your project doesn't create additional waste.



Taos Day Without Waste

Taos High School

Taos, NM

Setting: In class

Students: 51

Timeline: One-day event + preparation

Time: 50 hours

Project Summary: Students turned an initial recycling-drive idea into a school-wide sustainability campaign. They taught classmates about waste, recycling, and local solutions, then challenged the entire school to minimize waste for one day. Together, the school diverted more than 400 pounds of waste.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You want to engage your entire school in a focused action.
- Your students enjoy research, education, and organizing others.

Things to Keep in Mind

Your first idea doesn't have to be your final idea. Research and changing circumstances may lead your team toward a more impactful solution.

Cups and Gnomes Project

Oakland Technical High School

Oakland, CA

Setting: In school

Students: 23

Timeline: 6+ months

Time: 22 hours

Project Summary: Students set out to reduce single-use cup waste by creating and distributing reusable ceramic mugs to students and staff. When making 130 handmade mugs proved more difficult and time-consuming than expected, they adapted, purchasing additional reusable mugs and creating custom school tags so they could still meet their goal. Students also created ceramic garden markers to draw attention to campus green space.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- You want to address single-use waste through a creative, reusable alternative.
- Your students are interested in combining sustainability with art or design.

Things to Keep in Mind

Your project may not go exactly as planned, and that's okay. Test your idea early and be prepared to adapt your materials, timeline, or approach while staying focused on your original goal.



Campus Climate Conference

Berkeley High School

Berkeley, CA

Setting: In class

Students: 104

Timeline: One-day event + preparation

Time: 51 hours

Project Summary: Students designed and led a full-day climate conference for their school community. Four student teams planned science and research workshops, community action sessions, creative activities, and a school-wide kickoff. Students coordinated 20+ workshops, recruited local experts and university partners, and reached 400+ students through the keynote event.

Is This Right for Your Group?

- Your students are excited about leadership and peer-to-peer education.
- You want to bring many sustainability topics together in one project.

Things to Keep in Mind

Large events require plenty of coordination. Start early, divide responsibilities, and expect plans to evolve as students work together.



Ready to Turn an Idea Into a Plan?

Use the Project How-to Guides to move from an idea to an actionable student-led project.

[Project How-to Guides](#)

Need more help choosing a project?

[Lesson Plan 5 - Project Selection](#)

Lesson 5: Project Selection provides a step-by-step process for groups that want additional guidance.