

THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND SEEDLING SALE 19-20 October 2019

Guide for schools

Introduction

Garden to Table has developed The Great New Zealand Seedling Sale as a fundraising opportunity for our member schools.

Schools are encouraged to produce sufficient seedlings to host a sale on the weekend of 19-20 October. You may wish to do your seedling sale on another date which is fine. However the promotion for the event will focus on 19-20 October with the event being promoted nationally, asking people to get out and support their local Garden to Table school by purchasing seedlings grown by the school's children.

We hope that this fundraiser can become an annual feature which makes a significant contribution to your school's annual Garden to Table budget, and helps raise the profile of your Garden to Table programme within the local community.

Planning

Good planning will help make your seedling sale a success. Think about:

- 🌱 Who will produce seedlings, how and when?
Different seeds will take different lengths of time to grow into sellable seedlings. You will need to plan carefully which seeds will be sown when – read seed packets and gardening books to find out how long they will take to germinate and when they'll be ready to transplant, then work backwards from the sale date.
- 🌱 What kind of plants will you grow, and how many of each?
Think about what you think your community will be most likely to grow. Include summer garden staples like tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, pumpkins, sweetcorn, peas, beans and lettuces. Offer your favourite varieties or a range to choose from. You might like to also provide a range of herbs and non-food plants – sunflowers are easy to produce in bulk, and swan plants might also be popular.
- 🌱 What resources will you need – seeds, pots, containers, packaging, seed raising mix, promotional material etc.
- 🌱 When and where will you host the sale?
- 🌱 How will you promote the sale, and to who?
- 🌱 What prices will you charge?
- 🌱 Will you take pre-orders?
- 🌱 Who will staff the sale and handle cash?
- 🌱 What is your fundraising target, and what will you use the raised funds for?



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Pots, containers and packaging

You will need a large number of pots and containers to grow seedlings in. Think about the plants you plan to grow and how you will present them – in six cell punnets, larger single pots or trays. Paper pot makers can be bought from some garden centres or online, and allow for a large number of pots to be produced quickly at no cost, using recycled newspaper. Note that they will degrade relatively quickly if repeatedly soaked in water, so use them for fast-growing seedlings planted close to the sale date.

Many home gardeners accumulate plastic plant punnets and pots at home and don't know how to get rid of them. Consider putting notices in your school newsletter, on Facebook gardening groups and on Neighbourly offering to collect and reuse pots. Your local garden centre might have pots available – some offer a return scheme where you can help yourself. Some landfills have recycling centres or stores where seedling punnets and pots are sold very cheaply. Tell them it's for a school sale and they may give you lots for free! Have students collect suitable plastic containers from their recycling bins at home – yoghurt containers and other small pottles can be useful (again, you could ask your wider school community to contribute), and recycling these further illustrates your school's commitment to sustainability.

Check out www.greatnzseedlingsale.co.nz for downloadable sticker sheets.

Seeds

Hopefully you have saved sufficient seed to grow seedlings from seeds of your own. Otherwise, you could reach out to local gardeners to fill any gaps you have, or purchase seeds from a garden centre or online store. Kings Seeds are a new partner of Garden to Table and will provide Mixed Lettuce Seeds to each school who signs up to participate in The Great New Zealand Seedling Sale. They're a supplier who offers some seeds in bulk, and a 10% discount to schools who buy seeds to grow into seedlings to sell. See their great range of seeds online at www.kingsseeds.co.nz



Seed raising mix

Garden to Table partners Tui will supply 2 vouchers for seed raising mix to all participating schools. You'll no doubt need a lot more, so perhaps you could invite a local garden centre to sponsor your event by providing seed raising mix and other materials you need. Or here's a simple "recipe" for making your own seed raising mix:

- 🌱 1 part sand (eg. river sand)
- 🌱 2 parts fine coir fibre (available in briquettes which you rehydrate in water)
- 🌱 3 parts sieved compost (or 2 parts compost + 1 part vermicast from your worm farm, for extra growing power!)

Mix well to combine.

Larger seeds like beans and sunflowers can be started in compost, which is cheaper to buy than seed raising mix.

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Other products

Think about what else your kids can produce to sell alongside seedlings – surplus produce from the school garden, packets of seeds, wildflower seed bombs, bottled worm wee, refreshments and preserves are all things you could produce on session to sell at your seedling sale event.

Pricing

Think about how you will price your plants for sale. Take a trip to a garden centre to see what current prices are, and compare the size and quality of plants you are selling. Other considerations will include ease of cash handling (\$1/\$2/\$5 might be easy – make sure you have a float with plenty of gold coins for change) and your community's ability to afford what you are selling.

Promotion

The Great New Zealand Seedling Sale website will have many downloadable resources to help with you sale – check it out at www.greatnzseedlingsale.co.nz You might like to produce your own posters and brochures, and include notices in your school newsletter, local paper, and perhaps even do a mail drop in your neighbourhood. Think about the key messages you want people to consider – that the seedlings you are selling are locally grown, organic, and will support your school to teach kids how to grow and cook their own fresh food.

Reflection and forward planning

After this year's seedling sale reflect on what went well and how you could improve next year. What were your top sellers, and where did you overestimate demand? What else could you produce next year? (With plenty of lead time, could you grow berries and fruit trees from cuttings, and pot up lots of strawberry runners for sale?)

Good luck for your seedling sale! We hope you enjoy the process and make a good profit for your Garden to Table programme.

