

What kinds of things can you grow?

- Vegetable beds
- Wildscape
- Wildflower meadow
- Pocket prairie
- Fruit orchard

Grow your own monarch waystation

Mexican milkweeds to raise caterpillars

- Needs at least half a dozen
- Expect them to regrow completely twice/year

Penta, lantana, sage, coneflower, porterweed to feed migrating butterflies

- Constant bloom needed March-November

Starbucks caterpillar habitat for upclose, safe viewing

- Count features on the caterpillar: stripes, toes, eyes, horns
- Draw picture of caterpillar
- Talk about what and how caterpillar eats
- Follow up with garden scavenger hunt for more caterpillars
- Best resource: Butterflies of Houston by Tvetens

Houston has LOTS of interesting butterflies you can attract

- Green beans grow long-tailed skippers
- Dill or fennel grow black swallowtails
- Passionflowers grow Gulf fritillaries
- Cassias and candlestick shrubs grow sulfurs
- Spicebush or camphor trees grow spicebush swallowtails
- Citrus trees grow giant swallowtails

Vegetable Gardening:

- Plant vegetables the kids will want to sample
beans in August & March, peas in December
native tomato plants in spring
cabbage & broccoli in fall and winter
- Plant an herb garden for the kids to feel & smell
basil in August & March
parsley, dill and cilantro in December
rosemary, Mexican mint marigold as perennials
- Teach them to weed, and learn plant parts from their weeding
this is particular fun if you have oaks and can pull oak saplings with the acorn attached
- Scavenger hunts for leaf shapes or flower colors

Should you be organic?

- Microlife fertilizer
- Composting
- Worm castings

What is your goal:

- lots of food?
- or lots of interesting experiences?
- Buy bug boxes and let your children handle pest control
- Fold your own seedling pots for easy growing and transplanting

Urban Harvest is a great resource for school vegetable gardening. A school membership is about \$40/year and provides some access to expertise and a quarterly newsletter with terrific gardening advice and a reliable schedule of WHAT to plant WHEN.

They also have the best community-gardening curriculum in town

Websites:

<http://www.urbanharvest.org/> -- best gardening expertise in Houston

<http://www.npsot.org/Houston> -- lists and sources of native Gulf Coast plants

<http://www.seedsavers.org> – source of fascinating heirloom vegetables and flowers

<http://www.seedsofchange.org> – source of excellent market-garden vegetables and (relatively) inexpensive garden tools and equipment