

SCHOOL GARDENS

Report of the Fairview Garden School Association
Yonkers, N. Y.

BY

MRS. A. L. LIVERMORE
Chairman of the Executive Committee



Photo by Edward Mahoney

A Prize-winner

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Fairview Garden School Association

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SCHOOL GARDENS

Claim to Recognition

The school garden's popularity and growth are accounted for in many ways, but chiefly because of its rare combination of essential educational qualities. It is a happy mingling of play and work, vacation and school, athletics and manual training, pleasure and business, beauty and utility, head and hand, freedom and responsibility, of corrective and preventive, constructive and creative influences, and all in the great school of out-of-doors. It is a corrective of the evils of the school room. It is a preventive of the perils of misspent leisure. It is constructive of character building. It is creative of industrious, honest producers. In fact, there is no child's nature to which it does not in some way make a natural and powerful appeal.

History of the Movement

Individual educators first realized the value of school gardens. Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel all used them. In 1869 Austria decreed that every rural school should have an experiment garden attached to it. Switzerland, France, Belgium, England, Norway, Sweden and Russia, wherever possible now make a garden with each school compulsory. At the present time Berlin has a large school garden outside the city, with a plot for *every* child who applies. In Canada the new Macdonald Institute at Guelph has the finest equipment in the world for teaching nature study and school gardening. The United States is tardily following the footsteps of other countries in this movement. Boston started the first school garden in the United States at the Putnam School, in 1891. Now there are school gardens in St. Louis, Chicago, Washington, Omaha, Cleveland, Yonkers, Brookline, Rochester, New York City, Philadelphia and Hampton. In each of these cities, the school gardens are on a different basis, working out their own problems, and meeting differing local conditions.

VACANT LOT



Photo by Edward Mahoney

Before



Photo by Edward Mahoney

After

The Children's School Farm in De Witt Clinton Park, New York City, is made a part of the park system. It has proved successful in the heart of a congested tenement-house district, surrounded by a lawless element. Here hundreds of children enjoy and maintain their little gardens unmolested.

The National Cash Register Company of Dayton, Ohio, opened school gardens on a purely business basis. The president of the company found that the men who made successes in life were the ones who had had farm or garden chores to do as boys. The influence of the Dayton Gardens raised the price of land in the vicinity, changed the spirit of the locality, and improved the character of the boys.

Correlation with School Work

Garden instruction has been placed on a pedagogical basis by Principal Baldwin of the Hyannis, Mass., State Normal School. He exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition "Charts and diagrams of a correlated system of instruction in all the studies of the ordinary curriculum, based on the school garden." His system has been successfully used and adapted in other places.

Here are a few suggestions as to how the school garden can be allied to the studies of the school, without taking a minute's time from the pupil's routine work. The school garden furnishes:

1. Source of best nature study material.
2. Art work—design, color, form, grouping, etc.
3. Language—topics, composition, some of best literature.
4. Mathematics—measuring, plotting, etc.
5. Physics and chemistry—natural forces.
6. Domestic science—raw food stuffs, large world relations.
7. History—plants, old customs, trade routes, industries.
8. It is industrial training.
9. Manual training—making tools and accessories.
10. It is elementary agriculture—curiosity aroused, monotony banished.
11. Improves school—a social bond, ethics, civics.
12. The conditions of living given in miniature.

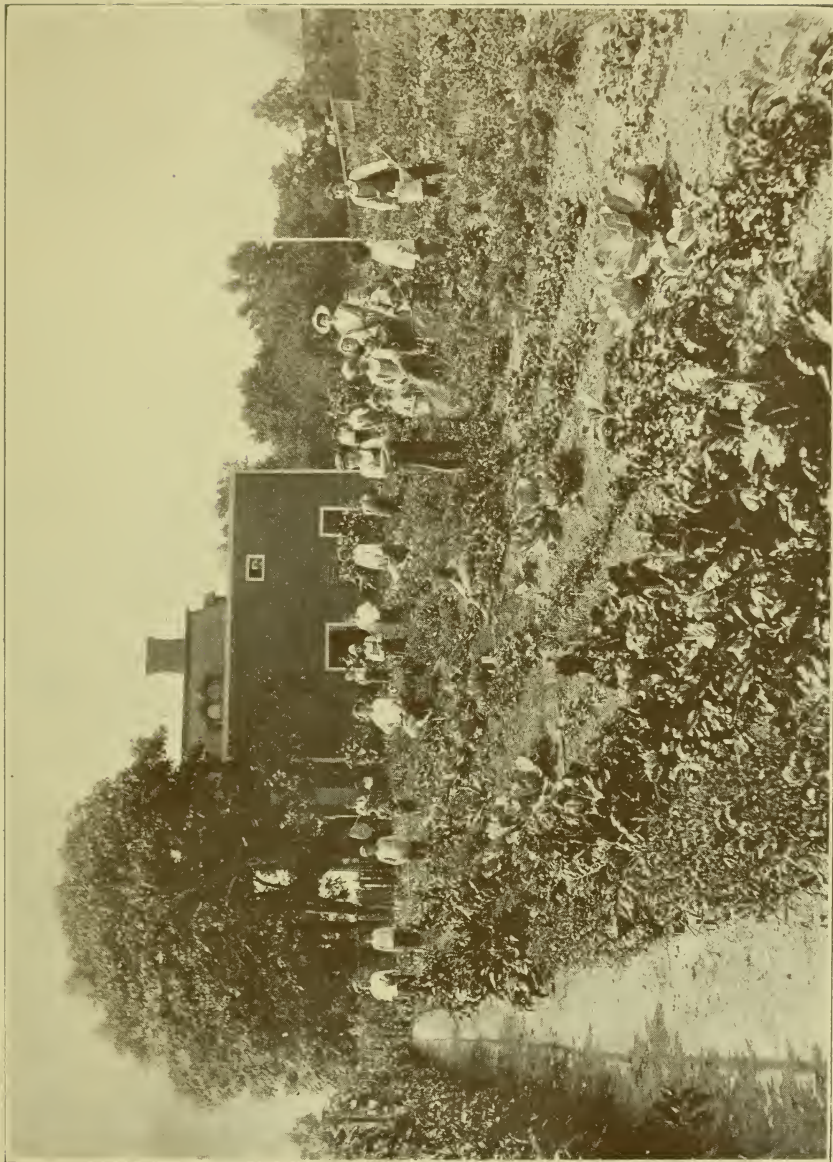


Photo by Edward Mahoney

The Workers in the Field

Home Gardening

The City of Cleveland has eight school gardens, and its Board of Education has appointed Louise Klein Miller, Curator of School Gardens. Cleveland has the distinction of being the originator of the home gardening movement. Their Home Gardening Association works chiefly through the schools, and has done much to beautify, not only the individual homes, but the whole city as well. What Cleveland originated has been copied by other cities, and for the sake of definiteness, I will describe the home gardening work in Yonkers.

About March 1st, cards are distributed through the public schools, containing lists of flowers and vegetable seeds that can be purchased at a penny a packet, for home planting. There are sixteen kinds of flower and eight kinds of vegetable seeds, gladiolus bulbs and grass seed on this list. These order cards are collected. The orders and the money from each school, or school room, are placed in envelopes and returned to the Fairview Garden School. The Garden School then purchases the seeds in bulk, measures the seeds with tiny seedsman's measures, and puts the seeds in their proper envelopes. This work was formerly done by a volunteer committee of ladies, but now much, if not most of it, is done by the Garden School children themselves, who love to assist, and are quite expert. The cards and packets have full directions for planting of seeds and cultivation of crops. The seeds are delivered to the school children about April 1st. Similar penny packets of seeds can be obtained from the Cleveland Home Gardening Association, or from Vick, the florist in Rochester, if orders are sent through the school teachers. It is wiser and easier to order the penny packets when first starting the home gardening work.

Last year 33,000 penny packets of seeds were ordered by 3300 children of Yonkers, for home gardens. In 1908, the Cleveland Home Gardening Association distributed, in Cleveland, 264,777 penny packets of seeds; out of Cleveland, 307,777 packets, and 131,000 bulbs. Last summer, 210 children from eight Yonkers schools entered the competition for the best home gardens. Each of these gardens was visited by a committee during the summer, which reported that 70 gardens were really creditable and deserving of some recognition. Near the end of August, an exhibit is held for those pupils who order seeds, and



Photo by Edecard Mahoney

Weighing Their Crops

plant and cultivate their own home gardens. The flowers and vegetables are brought to the Garden School and prizes are given for the best individual displays. The influence of the garden movement is thus felt in many humble homes, waste time is made profitable, and the city's back yards are beautified. Some associations extend this work to include potted plants at home, window boxes and vacant lot cultivation, for the many who have no back yards of their own.

School Gardens

Now for the *School Garden* itself: There are many kinds of school gardens, and many divisions of the subject. (1) There are ornamental and planted grounds which become an example to the community. (2) There is the formal plot for handicraft, or to show varieties of plants. (3) There is the problem garden, a laboratory to study blights and varieties. (4) The plantation gardens, where things are grown in masses. (5) There is the improvement of school grounds. (6—and best) There is the school garden, where either each class may have a plot in common, or individuals of classes may have individual plots. It is called a "school garden because it is a school in which to grow, as much as a garden in which things are grown; a school to develop children, as much as a garden where children develop vegetables and flowers." We, in Yonkers, call ours "A Garden School" instead of "A School Garden" because we are, as yet, independent of the schools. We hope, however, that in time our work will be taken over by the Board of Education.

FAIRVIEW GARDEN SCHOOL OF YONKERS

Origin and Growth

The Fairview Garden School of Yonkers is a direct outgrowth of the interest in civic betterment taken by the Civic League of the Woman's Institute, and of the personal initiative of its president, Miss Mary Marshall Butler.

In the summer of 1903, two small gardens were started in the tenement district with 36 boys from public and parochial schools in the vicinity. Two unsightly vacant lots were transformed into such successful little gardens that, the following

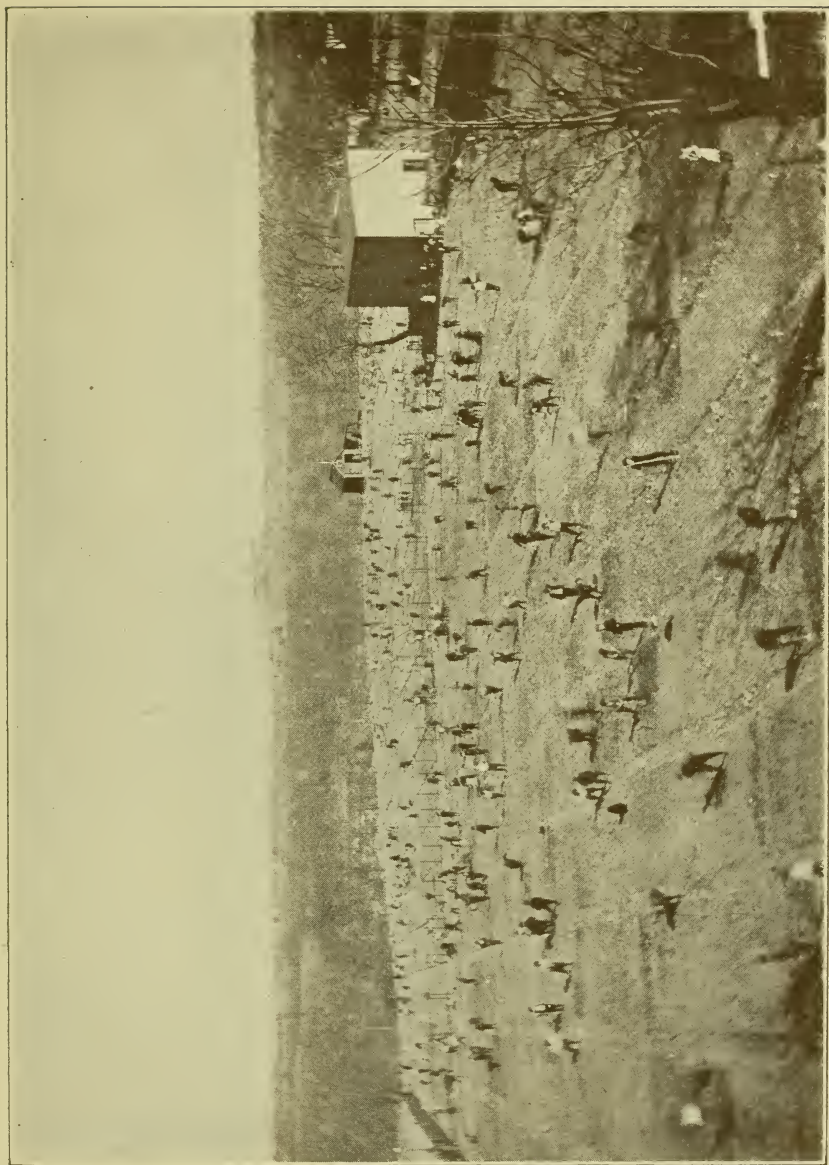


Photo by Edward Mahoney

Getting Ready for Planting

year, the gardens were planned on a larger scale. Through the generosity of one individual, $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres of land on Fairview Street were secured for a garden school, and were divided into 250 plots, averaging 10 x 16 feet. This land, together with an additional tract of $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres has been purchased and the use of it given temporarily to the Fairview Garden Association. Besides having the free use of the land, buildings and improvements have also been provided. This leaves it necessary, however, for the Association to provide funds for all running expenses.

Six hundred boys and girls wait patiently for the opening day, when they can go in and take possession of their land of promise, their little 10 x 16 foot plot. These children are from 8 to 13 years old, and are children that have no other garden opportunities, living in the immediate vicinity of the garden school. What does the possession of this little plot mean to the children? What benefits do they obtain? Why should such an enterprise be supported?

Benefits

We feel that no other form of philanthropy gives so direct, so abundant and so far-reaching results for the money expended as this. The Fairview Garden School is a great educational and social power for the physical, mental and moral growth of the child. First, physically: It is a foe of the "White Plague," it gives healthy exercise in the open air, next to the soil for six months in the year, on a high, breeze-swept piece of land. Second, mentally: The children receive definite instruction in the care of the soil, planting, weeding, plant-growth, harvesting crops, insect pests and care of tools. Notebooks of the record of the plot are carefully kept by each child. Only common grain and other products, such as hemp, flax, cotton, jute, are studied in the Observation Garden. Third, morally: Character growth is nearly as rapid as that of the plants. The children form habits of neatness, method, regularity, persistence, observation and industry. The child possesses the fruit of his own labor, whether vegetables or flowers. The value of the crop is estimated at \$5. per plot. A love of nature is developed. The great laws of life are watched. Nature's miracle is revealed to each child. The reason for the growth of the plant, in food, air and sun is seen in plant life, and, by inference, in child life. The joy of a useful occupation is experienced. The child learns to

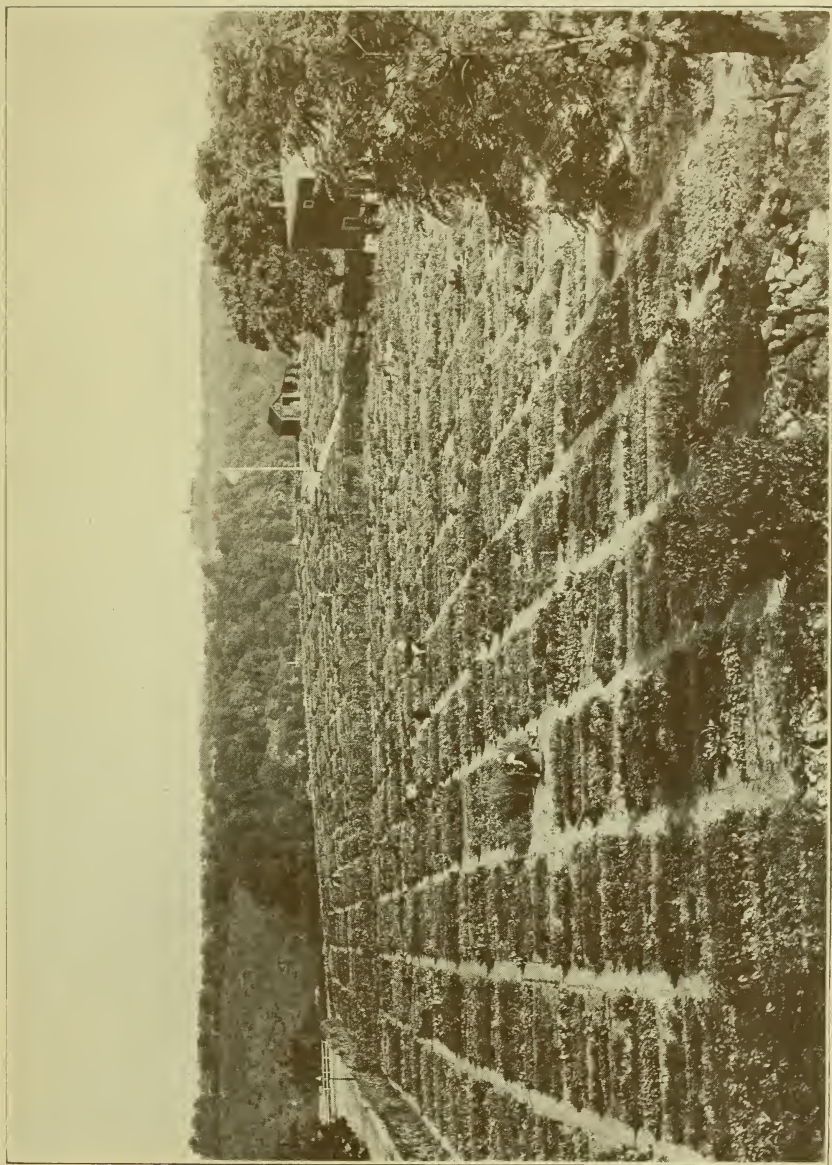


Photo by Edward Mahoney

The Garden in July

respect the property rights of others and to coöperate. Are not these qualities at the very basis of our social fabric? Agriculture is the primary basis of wealth in America. Is not the need of more farmers a national need today?

A Good Investment

Americans are just beginning to realize that the greatest asset of our nation is our children, and that every American child has a right to start the race even, not handicapped. "Give the children their chance," is the slogan of the 20th Century. We have no right to so construct a city that the children are deprived of their natural rights of play and of breathing pure air. The city's lack of responsibility in this matter throws the burden on others, and the Fairview Garden School is one attempt to meet this need. To some a garden means only flowers and sentiment. But, wait a moment. Let us talk on a money basis.

Did you know that a child can raise \$5. worth of vegetables on a 10-by-16-foot plot? If, any morning this summer, you were to go to Fairview Street, you would see children with vegetables in baskets, in little carts, in baby carriages, in wheelbarrows, in flour bags, triumphantly bearing home the products of their toil. The foreign born laborer knows, better than the American, that vegetables in summer mean health in winter, and some of these families have formerly seen no vegetable but a potato on their dinner tables. As you look at the faces of these children, in some of them the only expression is a predatory one. The little fingers instinctively reach out to lay hold on something to snatch—the eye furtively turns to see whom it can outwit. These children's only education thus far has been to prey on others. They are embryo city-made thieves. One lady wrote us she would not contribute to the Garden School because, forsooth, her plants had been stolen. The very reason why she should contribute. How can a child realize what it means to respect others' property, until he has had something of his own to possess? He cannot respect *teum* until he knows *meum*. By the end of one season in the Garden School, the most inveterate snatcher no longer has to be watched, but can be perfectly trusted. In dollars, what does this *save* the city, the police courts, the protectories, the prisons, besides making a productive citizen out of one with criminal tendencies?

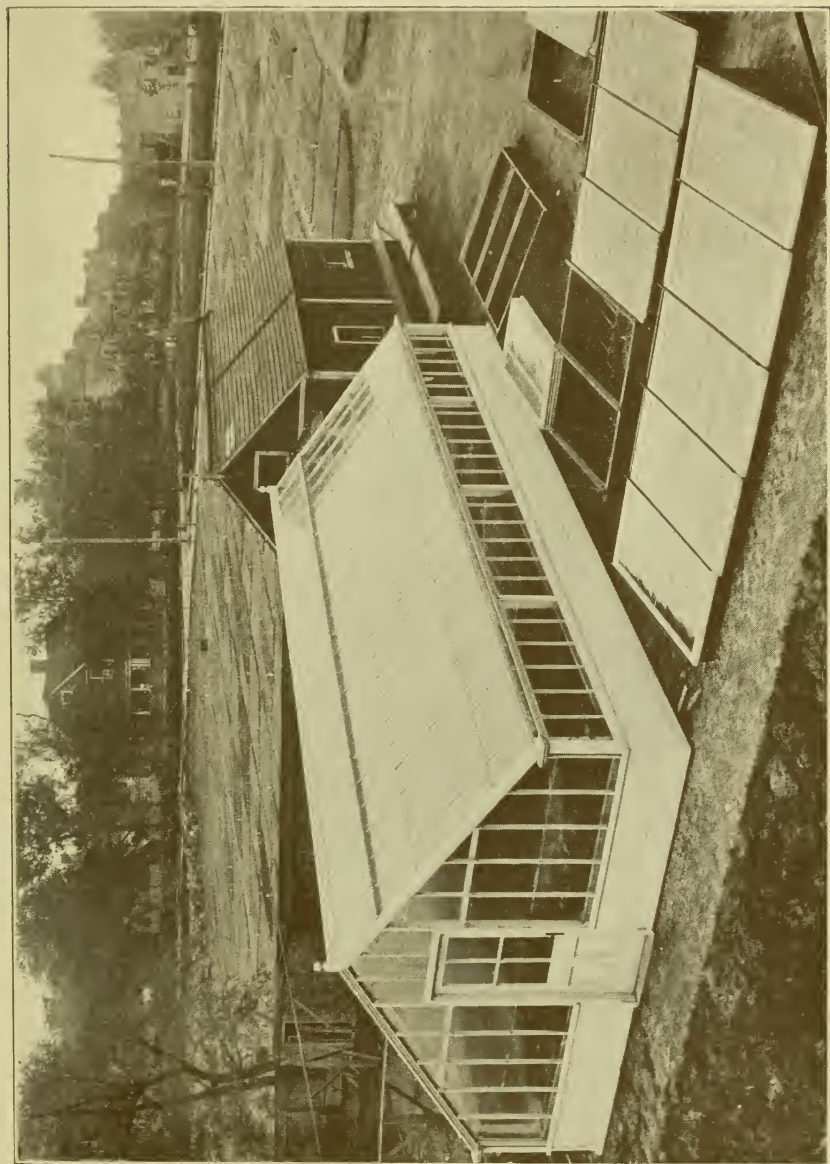


Photo by Edward Mahoney

The Hot-House and Seed Beds

There are other little children in braces, some with hip disease, some with coughs, whose summer in the Garden School makes the tubercular shadow hover less darkly over them. There is one little fellow who has worn the same buttonless shirt all summer. Can you imagine what care he gets at home, and what this summer means to him? The girls, especially, are industrious in their gardens. Most of them are "little mothers" with a baby in tow. These same little girls, when they become real mothers, will not settle in a tenement house. The Garden School has prevented that. They will choose a house with a bit of land, where they will work and raise vegetables, as did primitive woman before them. Two little brothers have daily brought their lunch and spent the entire day at the Garden School all summer through.

It is needless to speak of the many children who come with beaming faces and whose every minute in the garden is one long happiness. We are dwelling on the dollar side, and what the money equivalents of the Garden in prevention and construction mean to a city. We have enumerated but a few instances, but just one boy saved from a criminal life and turned into an honest wage-earner would more than pay the expenses of a garden school.

Summer of

1909

The Fairview Garden School opened about May 1st, and was open after school hours, and all day Saturdays, and all vacation until October 1st. Although 582 children had plots, 10 x 16 feet, last summer, of 1,000 children who applied 418 had to be refused. Hardly a day passed that the question was not asked, "Is there a vacant plot for me?" Of the garden children, 382 were boys and 200 girls. About forty per cent. attend the parochial schools and sixty per cent. the public schools. The nationalities were very varied, but Irish-American, Polish and Slavic predominated. There were but few Italians, and these, without exception, were fine gardeners. The average age was eleven and one-half years, the average daily attendance, 236. A child is required to cultivate his plot twice a week. From the children's record books, we find that they work in their plots every day for the first two weeks, and, generally, three times a week thereafter. Boys who get jobs during the summer, work in their plots on Saturday afternoons, while their sisters often



Photo by Edward Mahoney

A Set of Tools

attend to the plots in midweek. Forty-six children fell out during the season, most of whom moved away from the city. The health of all the children was noticeably improved by the end of the summer. There has been no trouble with discipline in the garden this summer, or any other, although some of our boys represent a very "tough" element.

It is estimated that the little gardeners raised during the season, 8,120 quarts of string beans; 34,800 beets; 1,740 pecks of Swiss Chard; 23,200 carrots; 14,500 heads of lettuce; 4,640 bunches of parsley; 11,600 parsnips; 5,060 quarts of onions; 70,480 radishes; 6,960 heads of celery. The entire product is valued at \$3,306. Each child owns what he raises. Some show thrift in disposing of their vegetables to customers, but most of the vegetables are used in the homes. Several children of the 1908 garden had their fathers dig up their sun-baked back yards with pickaxes, and they planted and tended their own vegetables at home.

Influence

The influence of the garden in the neighborhood is a benefit and not a detriment. One neighbor expressed herself as upholding the work in every way, saying that for the first time in a dozen years, her grapes and peaches had had a chance to ripen without being stolen. But our best recommendation comes from the Mayor, whose letter we quote entire:

MANOR HALL, CITY OF YONKERS

MRS. ARTHUR L. LIVERMORE,

Dear Madam:

Residing, as I do, in the immediate neighborhood of the Fairview Garden School, I have had an exceptional opportunity of ascertaining by personal observation its growth and the benefit it has been to the children, particularly in the congested sixth ward. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I enclose my check, and I assure you that whatever influence I may have, officially or privately, will be willingly extended to your useful and beneficial association.

Sincerely,

JAMES T. LENNON

An interesting commentary on the influence of the garden is shown by the varied occasions for which children ask for flowers. Bouquets are in demand for decorating the altars of



Photo by Edward Mahoney

Transplanting

churches, for anniversaries, for weddings, for the dedication of the Slavonic Catholic Church, for giving to sick schoolmates in hospitals, and, sad to state, for the many funerals of babies who die in the summer months. Two wheelbarrows of flowers have been sent weekly to the New York hospitals through the New York Flower Mission. We feel that these facts point definitely to a widened community interest and growth in altruism, although some of this interest is undoubtedly due to the influence of the home garden work.

Recognition

We have had many visitors from other cities who are engaged in similar work, and come to study our methods. There have been constantly growing demands for information concerning our garden, and requests for photographs, lantern slides, lectures and magazine articles. The State Department of Education and the Cornell College of Agriculture have asked for duplicates of a number of our lantern slides, declaring that they gave the best idea of garden school work that they had seen. Our cabinet of large photographs of the Garden School, which won for us a silver medal at the Jamestown Exposition, has been on a continuous tour, being exhibited at Albany at the State Fair, by the Division of Visual Instruction, New York State Education Department; at Rochester by the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, and at Whitney's Point at the State Institute.

The School Garden Association of New York City awarded a diploma to the Fairview Garden School "as a mark of high excellence in a children's garden, having attained first rank in the Annual Plant and Garden Exhibit of the School Garden Association." The Garden School Contest conducted by Doubleday, Page & Co., in the Garden Magazine, has awarded our Garden School the first prize, consisting of fifteen volumes of the Nature Library, valued at \$60.00, for the best display of garden products at its fall exhibit, also four prizes to children in our school, for excellence in individual exhibits. While these results in themselves are not of prime importance, they are immensely significant in revealing the growth of and increased interest in the Garden School idea. The finest results are those which cannot be seen. They are less obvious and more valuable. They are like planting the seed in the soil, leaving the flowering



Photo by Edward Mahoney

Knocking Off Work

to a higher power. The influence on character, on ideals, the widening of the horizon, the joy of being useful, the pleasure of competition, the growth of social solidarity and community interest—these are intangible results, but very real, and the foundation of our faith in this work.

Winter Season of 1909-1910

So encouraged was the Association with the summer's work that it undertook a new and enlarged scheme of work for the *winter* months. The garden was ploughed and smoothed and turned into a winter playground, while the large house at No. 95 High Street, owned by the Russell Sage Foundation, was to be used for social and club purposes by the Garden School children.

We quote the following from the report of the Superintendent, Mr. Edward Mahoney.

"In preparation for the playground, the garden was plowed and harrowed and more stones taken away. One basketball court and two football courts were laid out. These were used eagerly by the children, there being an attendance of over 100 daily for six weeks, until December 31st, when the weather rendered the ground unfit for play purposes. On December 27th, a portion of the garden, about 75 by 125 feet, was flooded with water to make a skating pond. This has been very successful, owing to the prolonged cold weather. The children have had, up to February 20th, eighteen days of skating. There has been an average attendance of 125 on the pond."

On announcing to the children that we were going to have the house open during the winter for various activities, they came in such numbers that it was impossible to handle them, and it was decided to divide them into three groups according to locality, and again divide each of these groups according to age. Each of the groups came twice each week to the house, afternoons or evenings.

That the Garden House is a center of child activity is shown by the fact that 102 children come to it each day, to enjoy the privileges of the library and game room, to meetings of the various clubs, or to hear talks on outdoor life and on subjects related to garden work which are illustrated by lantern slides loaned the Garden School by the Division of Visual Instruction of the New York State Department of Education at Albany.



Photo by Edward Maloney

A Good Showing

Six of these talks are given weekly. There are 930 children on our records for the winter season. About 800 of these children come regularly to the house either in the afternoon or evening.

There are two sewing clubs, both of which meet weekly for an hour in the afternoon—Monday Club, 18 members; Tuesday Club, 40 members. A Vegetable Club, 30 members, meets twice a week, and has for its object the study of the various vegetables grown in the gardens during the summer, their history, food value, ways of growth and methods of cooking. Meeting twice a month is a Dancing Club, 30 members, in which the girls learn the dancing steps and the round and square dances.

Three clubs, meeting in the evening, were organized by the boys and girls themselves, who keep their own records and make their own plans. One of these, a Reading Club of girls, 14 members, while they listen to some story or talk, work on bits of fancy work or sewing brought from home. The two boys' clubs discuss at their meetings, ways and means for the coming season's activities.

One of the features of our winter's work was the establishment, on January 17th, for the children of the Garden School, of a Penny Provident Station. Working on the very small capital of \$25, we have at this time, after running only a little longer than one month, 124 depositors, with but one withdrawal (which was used to purchase a pair of shoes), and have taken in, mostly in pennies and nickels, deposits to the amount of \$71.57.

The children have also received much pleasure and profit from interesting lectures and entertainments which have been given during the winter.

Another new departure is the greenhouse (18 x 34 feet), for which funds were raised, and which is now completed and in use. This permits of widening our scope of work, and giving an all year round course in garden subjects and garden experience. It will be used, First: For growing such plants as require an earlier start than the out-door season allows in this latitude. This permits a longer season of flower and fruit with many of the plants which are used in the Garden School; also it gives a wider choice of decorative and economic plants for use in the children's plots, decorative beds, borders and observation gardens. Second: The children will be given instruction and practice in potting, propagation, the care of plants at home, the care of plants under glass, and of window boxes; the use of cold



Photo by Edward Mahoney

The Plunder

frames in combination with greenhouse and without greenhouse; also of hot-beds, and the testing of seeds.

The playground embodies the play instinct, the club house develops the social instinct, and the greenhouse stimulates the productive instinct. By these means we retain our influence on the children throughout the entire year, and make the garden work continuous, and continuity doubles efficiency.

Equipment and Maintenance

The Fairview Garden School began with the following equipment for 260 children:

50 Hoes	50 Trowels
50 Rakes	25 Watering pots
50 Spades	1 Portable tool house
50 Garden lines	260 Notebooks.

After seven years' growth has an equipment for 600 children, of—

110 Hoes at \$4.75 doz.
110 Rakes at \$4.75 doz.
110 Spades at \$12.00 doz.
110 Garden lines at \$.60 doz.
100 Watering cans at \$15.00 doz.
14 Wheelbarrows at \$36.00 doz.
75 Garden trowels at \$5.00 doz.
3 Sets brass seed gauges at \$2.00 set
Stenciling outfit, \$2.00
Entomological materials, \$30.00
6 Blackboards, \$6.00
600 Notebooks, \$24.00
1 Doz. measures for vegetables, \$3.00
1 Weighing scale, \$10.00
Workshop outfit—benches, vises, hammers, saws and carpenter's tools, etc., \$150.00
100 ft. Garden hose, \$20.00
1 Lawn mower, \$14.00
1 Barn building which contains: Tool room, office where seeds and children's note (record) books are kept, and workshop, \$150.00 for fitting up.
1 Greenhouse, 18 x 34 feet, with work room attached, flower pots and necessary equipment, \$2000.00
Installing water system, \$250.00
Flag pole, \$38.00
20 Cold frames, \$125.00
1700 Feet new fence, \$1500.00
Large frame house which is used as club house and center of activities for winter season.

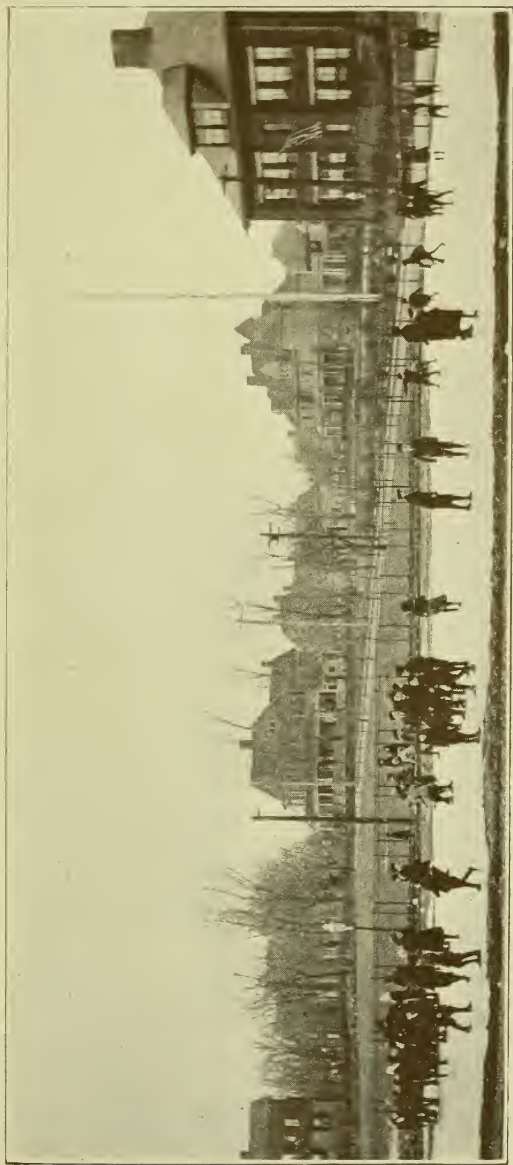


Photo by Edward Mahoney

How the Garden May be Used in Winter

MAINTENANCE

Salaries of staff—six in number—for garden season (eight months).....	\$2585.00
Fertilizer.....	300.00
Seeds.....	100.00
Office—Printing, stationery.....	125.00
Water rents.....	30.00
Sundries.....	60.00
Insurance.....	5.00
Prizes and exhibit expenses.....	50.00
	<hr/>
	\$3255.00
Winter session (four months):	
Salaries, for four.....	1020.00
Fuel and light.....	300.00
Sundries.....	26.00
Playground games.....	25.00
Furniture.....	100.00
Water rents.....	25.00
	<hr/>
	\$1496.00
Summer season.....	\$3255.00
Winter season.....	1496.00
	<hr/>
Total.....	\$4751.00

The approximate cost of running the Fairview Garden School is \$1,000.00 to the acre; or, as an acre furnishes 200 plots, 10 x 16 feet—\$5.00 a plot.

For every six children a set of garden implements is allotted, consisting of:

1 Hoe.....	\$.40
1 Rake.....	.40
1 Spade.....	1.00
1 Trowel.....	.42
1 Watering pot.....	1.25
1 Garden line.....	.05
6 Notebooks.....	.24
	<hr/>
For the set.....	\$3.76

A FEW OF THE PUBLICATIONS ON SCHOOL GARDENS

- Agricultural Education, including Nature Study and School Gardens, Jewett 1908, published by the Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C. No. 368
- Children's Gardens, by Louise Klein Miller, published by D. Appleton & Co., New York. Price \$1.20
- School Gardens, Galloway 1905, published by the Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C. No. 160
- School Gardening in English Rural Schools and London, Sipe 1909, published by U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. No. 204
- Principles of Vegetable Gardening, by L. H. Bailey, published by Macmillan Co., New York. Price \$1.50

TWO BOOKS JUST ISSUED (1910)

- Among School Gardens, by M. Louise Greene; published by the Charities Publication Committee, 105 East 22d Street, New York City. Price \$1.25, postage prepaid
- Children's Gardens for Health and Education, by Henry G. Parsons; published by Sturgis & Walton Co., 33 East 27th Street, New York City. Price \$1.00 net



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Photo by Edward Mahoney

Happy Farmers