

Cultivating Funds with Indoor Plants

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OVERVIEW

Small student-led fundraisers are a great way to raise money to maintain your gardening program and help kids gain skills at the same time. This lesson outlines how to start and operate an indoor plant business within your school.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- set up an indoor plant business to raise funds for school garden projects
- learn horticulture and business skills

MATERIALS:

- indoor plants
- watering cans
- plastic containers

BACKGROUND

Many teachers enjoy having plants in their classrooms but don't have time to care for them. Your young gardeners can fill this need by selling or renting indoor plants to classrooms and then maintaining them for a small fee.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

1. Begin by asking the administration for permission to set up this fundraiser.
2. Have students research indoor plants that would do well in your school building (see [Easy Classroom Houseplants \(/node/11442\)](#)). Share some of the background information from [The Roots of Indoor Greening \(/node/11444\)](#) and [Basic Indoor Plant Care \(/node/11443\)](#). With this information, make a list of the plant needs and the limitations of the school environment so students can determine which plants will thrive. Then let students gain skills by growing some houseplants in your classroom or greenhouse.
3. Once students feel confident in their ability to care for the plants, begin the research for your business. Based on your work in step 2, choose plant varieties to offer, and then determine the cost to purchase these plants. Options are to find donations, or to start your own plants using propagation techniques. Also investigate the cost of watering cans and medium-sized plastic containers for catching drips and collecting dead leaves, and possibly carts to ease the transport of water or to provide a work surface.
4. As a group, determine a fair and marketable price for the plants and services. You can offer plants for sale or on loan from your business. Set up a plan for maintenance on a schedule that works for both teachers and students.
5. Write up a budget that lists expenses and anticipated income. Determine how you'll use that income (for instance, to buy seed for your outdoor garden or to invest in tools, etc).

EXPLORATION

Once plans are in place, implement the fundraiser.

1. Create an ad campaign for plants and services to solicit sales from educators and staff. This could include written media such as brochures, flyers, or newsletter articles or special pieces for the school radio or TV channel.
2. Distribute the plants and then begin your maintenance routine.

3. Train students to keep careful records of their work time and earnings. Allow them to take on as much of the responsibility as possible. Track the health of the plants and make adjustments if necessary.

4. At the end of the year, create a year-end report showing net profits, and solicit feedback both from your youth gardeners and their customers. Discuss the results with students and determine if you should continue the project. Make plans for summer maintenance of the plants. Brainstorm ways to improve your operation.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Check out some of these program spotlight articles about classroom businesses:

- [Rent-A- Plant \(/node/770\)](#)
- [Peddling Plants \(/node/819\)](#)
- [Basil-Buy-Ups \(/node/818\)](#)
- [Lettuce Rise Up \(/node/1061\)](#)
- [Plant Sale Grows Kids \(/node/772\)](#)

BRANCHING OUT

- Bring in guest speakers from the horticulture industry such as a greenhouse owner to talk more about business opportunities, or if possible, schedule a field trip to see an operation in action.
- Expand plant sales beyond your school to parents and community members.
- Ask students to brainstorm and plan other fundraising ideas.



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