



SGN Contact: Sue Davis
Sue.Davis@SchoolGardens.org
(415) 812-3924

For immediate release
April 28, 2022

**School Garden Network Distributes Fruit Basket Grow Kits
to support Food Literacy and Access to Fresh, Seasonal, and Diverse Produce**

Sebastopol, CA: Spring has arrived in Sonoma County, and School Garden Network (SGN) recently delivered a variety of fall bearing strawberry & raspberry plants and fruit trees as part of their first ever distribution of "Fruit Basket" Grow Kits. SGN distributed 500 strawberry plants, 250 yellow raspberry plants, 250 red raspberry plants, 12 mandarin trees, and 12 pomegranate trees to 25 school gardens across the county, serving over 6,000 students.

SGN's Executive Director, Sue Davis shared, "For many years SGN received plant donations for schools that were considered leftovers; plants that were often rootbound, past their prime and frankly ready for the compost pile. Rather than pass these along and continue this cycle, we decided to change the experience. Our vision with these seasonal Grow Kits is to collaborate with local farmers and nurseries to procure plants and seeds that offer healthy and prolific fruits and vegetables that are easy to harvest and ready to eat during the school year. It's been inspiring to watch this program launch, to hear stories and see photos of students planting fruit trees or brewing compost tea, and to receive support from individuals and businesses that want to be a part of this tangible and important project."

Throughout the school year SGN offers three themed Grow Kits that include a variety of plants to support verdant and high output school gardens. The **Eat Your Greens** Kit offers leafy and crunchy winter vegetables; **Fruit Basket** Kits bear sweet and juicy fruits; and **Harvest** Kits provide the essential plants and seeds for a spring planting and a cornucopia of fall abundance.

The Harvest Kit distribution will occur in May 2022, just in time to plant with students prior to summer break. This kit is made up of various collections of plants and seeds that we know students LOVE. Our "Salsa Party in the Garden" plants include tomatoes, peppers, onions,

cucumbers and cilantro that together yield fresh dips, as well as prolific cherry tomatoes that students enjoy to snack on while gardening. Other collections include ancient grains, dry beans, sensory and culinary herbs, native plants that attract seasonal pollinators, and the Five Sisters seeds. The classic “three sisters” includes corn, squash, and beans; SGN decided to enhance this kit with a few more seeds including amaranth and sunflower seeds, which provide beauty and added nutrition. As part of each Grow Kit, SGN offers Cooking from the Garden recipes, tips and more that supports food literacy and increases children and family’s preferences for local fruits and vegetables.

Seasonal Grow Kits are one of School Garden Network’s program offerings; SGN also supports local schools in establishing edible and native plant Schoolyard Habitats, provides Teen Apprentice Programs, Summer Camps, and Educator Workshops, all designed to grow healthy students, families, schools, and communities through garden-based education.

If you would like to become a partner school and receive these seasonal, local seed and plants, visit SGN’s website here: <https://www.schoolgardens.org/growkits-harvest.html>

If you are a local business or farmer and want to contribute to the sustainability of this offering, SGN is always looking for vibrant plant donations and seeds to enhance the Grow Kits and maintain the momentum of this exciting program. Please contact Sue Davis at Sue.Davis@schoolgardens.org, or text GROWGARDENS to 44321 to donate to this program.

SGN’s Grow Kits are made possible by the generous contributions from Bella Luz Foundation, Bohemian Seeds, Catholic Charities, Community Seed Exchange, Farm to Fight Hunger, Grab ‘n Grow Soil Products, Harmony Farm Supply, Hobo Wine Company, Synergy Compost Tea, and Occidental Nutrition.

www.schoolgardens.org

