# Week 1: Green Beginnings: An Introduction to Gardening and its Role in Healthy Living

## Objectives

* Define gardening and its various forms.
* Highlight the importance of plants and their role in a healthy lifestyle.
* Discuss types of gardens and the concept of site assessment.

## Handouts

* 5 Reasons to Add Color
* Color Diet
* Week 1: Garden Journal
* Site Assessment Worksheet

## Lesson Outline

### Defining Gardening

* **Description**: Cultivating plants in designated areas, spanning from small home gardens to large agricultural ventures.
* **Steps Involved**:
  + **Planning**: Deciding what and where to grow.
  + **Soil Preparation**: Enriching soil for planting.
  + **Planting**: Introducing seeds or young plants to the soil.
  + **Maintenance**: Ensuring plants' health through care routines.
  + **Harvesting**: Collecting mature plants or produce.
  + **Seasonal Care**: Preparations based on climate and plant type.

### Benefits of Gardening

* **Physical Health**:
  + Exercise through gardening activities.
  + Fresh and organic source of nutrients.
* **Mental Health**:
  + Stress reduction and relaxation.
  + Achieving satisfaction through growth.
* **Environmental, Educational & Community Benefits**:
  + Sustainability and biodiversity promotion.
  + Learning platform about plant biology.
  + Building communities and promoting cultural exchanges.
* **Economic and Aesthetic Benefits**:
  + Cost savings and potential income sources.
  + Beautification and creative expression.

### Plants & Healthy Eating

* **Nutritional Importance**: Plants offer vitamins, minerals, and more.
* **Environmental Impact**: Growing plants reduces carbon footprint.
* **Psychological Aspects**: Fosters connection and mindfulness.
* **Integrating into Diet**: Promotes a balanced, diverse diet and disease prevention.

***Handouts and Video***

* *Share and discuss "5 Reasons to Add Color" and "Color Diet" handouts*
* *Arthur: Kids in Action - https://www.pbs.org/video/arthur-nutrition-kids-action/ (2 minute video)*

### Garden and Farm Types

Some include:

* **Container Gardens**: Ideal for limited spaces, allowing for diverse growth.
* **Raised Beds**: Enhanced drainage and soil quality; ideal for diverse plantings.
* **Passive Hydroponic Systems**: Soil-less growth using nutrient-rich solutions; innovative teaching tool.

***Handouts and Video***

* [15 Different Types of Farming](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETZF-oyPSy0&ab_channel=Agronomag) *(15 minutes)*

## Garden Journal 1: Products from Farming

**Objective**: Understand and document the diverse products we derive from farming.

**Duration:** 15 to 20 minutes

**Instructions**:

1. **Brainstorming**: Encourage students to think about the various products we get from farms, both plant and animal-based.
2. **Group Discussion**: Divide the students into small groups and have each group discuss and list out the products they believe come from farms. This list can include food, materials, or other derivatives.
3. **Journal Entry**: In their garden journals, students will:
   * Draw or represent their chosen farm product.
   * Write a brief description of the product and its uses.
   * Share any personal experiences or stories related to the product.
4. **Class Sharing**: Each group can present their findings, ensuring a diverse range of products is discussed in class.

***Handouts and Video***

* *Share and Discuss "Garden Journal Entry 1"*

## Activity: Site Assessment Introduction

Understanding and exploring the prospective garden site to ensure optimal growth.

* **Supplies**: Paper, pencil, gloves, optional camera.
* **Duration**: 15 to 20 minutes.
* **Procedure**:
  + Break up into small groups or do as a class.
  + Observe and familiarize oneself with several potential gardening spots at your school for this spring.
  + Use the checklist to guide the assessment.
  + Record observations through notes, drawings, or photos.
  + Share as a group! Keep findings to 3-5 minutes each to ensure every one can share.

***Handouts and Video***

* *Share and DIscuss "Performing a Site Assessment"*