

Frequently Asked Questions

There are specific guidelines to follow when beginning or adding to a school garden. Below are suggestions of items and/or changes regarding schools gardens that are more likely to be approved when one submits a TMA Request. **In no way should this document be used as a means to go forward with any changes to LPS Grounds without submitting a TMA Request.** A [WebTMA is the Work Request / Work Order system for Lincoln Public Schools](#). A TMA request is filled out so LPS Operations can approve or deny any changes occurring on LPS grounds. LPS Operations must take into consideration that every school site is different, therefore approval may be granted to one site while no approval may be granted to another site. To find the TMA Request document to go through the approval process for any changes listed below, go to Appendix B in the [Lincoln Public Schools Garden Manual](#). The LPS Garden Manual also contains more in depth information on many of these topics.

Table of Contents

Q1: We need storage to put our tools in. What kind of storage can we use?	2
Q2: How can we gain access to water?	2
Q3: We need a holding tank to store our water in because there isn't an accessible water spout near our garden. What can we use?	3
Q4: We were donated a tree. What species are acceptable and how do we plant it?	3
Q5: What flower, shrub, and grass species are we allowed to plant?	3
Q6: We want a fence to enclose our garden space. How do we accomplish this?	4
Q7: What materials can we use to build our garden beds?	4
Q8: We want to compost in our garden. How can we begin this process?	5

Q1: We need storage to put our tools in. What kind of storage can we use?

Particular storage containers are acceptable, while others are not.

Here are examples of storage boxes that may be more likely to be approved when submitting a TMA request to gain a storage box for your school. [This 48 inch heavy duty storage box](#) is from Tractor Supply Co. This storage box is the most preferred because the product is durable, thus will last a long time. The following examples are made of plastic, therefore are more susceptible to vandalism, as well as faster degradation rates. [This 150 gallon storage box](#) and this [130 gallon storage box](#) from Amazon are larger storage options. [This 22 gallon storage box](#) from Amazon is a cheaper option for small tools.

Q2: How can we gain access to water?

When implementing a garden, you should be aware of where a water source is and try to place the garden in an area where water is easily accessible. You can work with the custodial staff to gain access to the water spout when needed, as the water spout is locked to avoid children getting into it. If placing the garden near a waterspout is not possible, storage containers can be used as a holding tank for water.

Q3: We need a holding tank to store our water in because there isn't an accessible water spout near our garden. What can we use?

A holding tank can be used to store water in if a nearby spout is not a viable option. A 50 to 55 gallon [food grade barrel](#) can be used as the holding tank. You can run a hose to the holding tank, fill it up, and put the hose back. A hose will need to be purchased as the schools will not provide one.

The holding tank needs to be raised so the water can flow out of it when needed. Due to the holding tank needing to be raised, the structure built to raise the holding tank will need to be submitted through a TMA request to ensure sound structure. The structure that holds the tank can be made out of wood. Keep in mind that wood rots, especially if it has regular contact with water. LPS building crafts has a standard building structure they can provide through the submission of a TMA request. The holding tank does not have to be raised far above the ground to achieve a successful flow of water out of the tank.

Q4: We were donated a tree. What species are acceptable and how do we plant it?

You must enter a TMA request to plant the tree. LPS Grounds can plant the tree if the TMA is approved. If you want LPS Grounds to plant the tree, place that information in the TMA request. Keep in mind, nut or berry bearing trees should not be adjacent to building entrances and play areas, unless approved by Lincoln Public Schools Operations. There is a list of acceptable trees in the [LPS Operations Design Guidelines](#) in the Table of Contents under “Planting.”

Q5: What flower, shrub, and grass species are we allowed to plant?

Before you plant, a TMA request must be entered before any changes are made to LPS grounds. Wildflower mixes should be predominantly perennial species. Both native and naturalized (non-native) species are allowed. If a mix of native grasses and wildflowers is desired, the proportions should be visually appealing and need to be approved by Lincoln Public Schools Operations. The [LPS Operations Design Guidelines](#) has a list of acceptable flowers, shrubs, and grasses in the Table of Contents under “Planting.”

Q6: We want a fence to enclose our garden space. How do we accomplish this?

A fence is a nice tool for clearly defining a garden space and establishing the Grounds crew will no longer be responsible for maintaining that space. All of the area within the fence will be school maintained. This is important because you are responsible for taking care of the space within the fence. The standard fence size is four feet. Smaller and larger fences are an option for special circumstances. If there is already a fence in place, the new fence will have to maintain the same height. A TMA request must be submitted before a fence can be built around your garden. You are responsible for the funds necessary to build a fence.

Q7: What materials can we use to build our garden beds?

Before you begin building the garden beds, you must submit a TMA request to gain approval to build the garden beds. Both wood and a material such as Trex (a mix of wood fiber and plastic) are acceptable to build the garden beds with. Beattie Elementary used Trex to build their garden beds:



Raised garden beds are preferred over planting straight into the ground due to a higher plant success rate. This higher rate is due to the healthier soil that is added to raised garden beds. Using soil straight from the ground will not lead to a successful garden. Soil from the ground is also susceptible to swelling and shrinking, which can lead to cracked garden beds. This can all be avoided by using soil and compost from companies such as [LinGRO](#), [Big Red Worms](#), or various landscaping companies around Lincoln. Garden beds also make a clear boundary showing the school is responsible for that area, meaning the LPS Grounds Crew knows they are not responsible for maintaining the garden area.

Q8: We want to compost in our garden. How can we begin this process?

Submit a TMA request if you are looking to have a compost structure in your garden. Composting in a garden can be done many different ways. First, it is important that a space is set aside to put the compost materials into.

A structured composting container can be made of wood that the compost materials are put into. The picture of Sheridan Elementary shows what a more structured compost container can look like. A wood structure is not necessary to have a compost pile, there are options that are easier to assemble. All that would be needed for an easier option are some posts to create a boundary for the composting space and some chicken wire (or other material to create a boundary) to attach to the posts. The picture of the Beattie Elementary garden shows a less structured compost pile. The compost pile must have some supporting structure, it cannot just be a pile on the ground.



Sheridan Elementary



Beattie Elementary

