

## Guidance for School Food Gardens

Eating fresh garden produce is a healthy choice for all people. School food gardens are acceptable and encouraged by the District to foster further learning opportunities for students as well as continued community engagement and sustainable practices.

Recently, Oregon Health Authority reviewed scientific research about the safety of gardening in soil that could contain lead. The most significant contributors to soil lead concentrations are sources such as lead-based paint chips and dust. The research shows the amount of lead delivered to soil through water is quite small compared to the amount of lead already present at background levels in soil. In general, garden plants do not absorb significant quantities of lead. However, it is important to wash all soil and dust off vegetables and hands after gardening, as soil and dust are the primary potential sources of lead contamination on produce.

Per information from Oregon Health Authority, school gardens may be irrigated with water from hose bibs at schools regardless of lead level readings. The District encourages running the water from hose bibs for 1-