



A Participatory
Approach to Developing
An Evaluation Tool for
Well-Integrated School
Gardens in Arizona





Herb your enthusiasm...

We developed a new, draft School Garden Evaluation Tool!



Lettuce think back...

We asked for your help to co-create our new garden evaluations. Here's what happened next!





Step 1: Recruit Expert Gardening Panel

We developed a new Community Garden Evaluation Tool!

The School Gardens Panel (n=29) represented:

- LIA Staff (20)
- School Partners (6)
- State Agencies (3)
- 11 of 15 Arizona's counties

We used the Delphi approach (2018) to understand what the panel felt was important for a well -integrated garden.





Step 2: Send out first questionnaire

We asked 2 questions: [Community Garden Evaluation Tool!](#)

- Please list all “seeds for success” that help to CREATE a school garden.
- Please list all “seeds for success” that help to MAINTAIN a school garden.

The panel offered 104 seeds!





Herb your enthusiasm...

Step 3: Send out second questionnaire

Panelists then rated the 104 seeds on their perceived importance for a successful school garden, on a scale from 0 (not important) to 4 (essential).

94 seeds were rated as the most important
(average scores above 2.5)!





Step 4: Send out last questionnaire

Herb your enthusiasm
We developed a new Community Garden Evaluation Tool!

- Panelists rated the remaining seeds on their perceived importance for a well-integrated school garden, on a scale from 0 (not important) to 4 (essential).

68 seeds were rated as most important,
with an average score above 2.95!





The *DIG in Schools* Cycle of Change

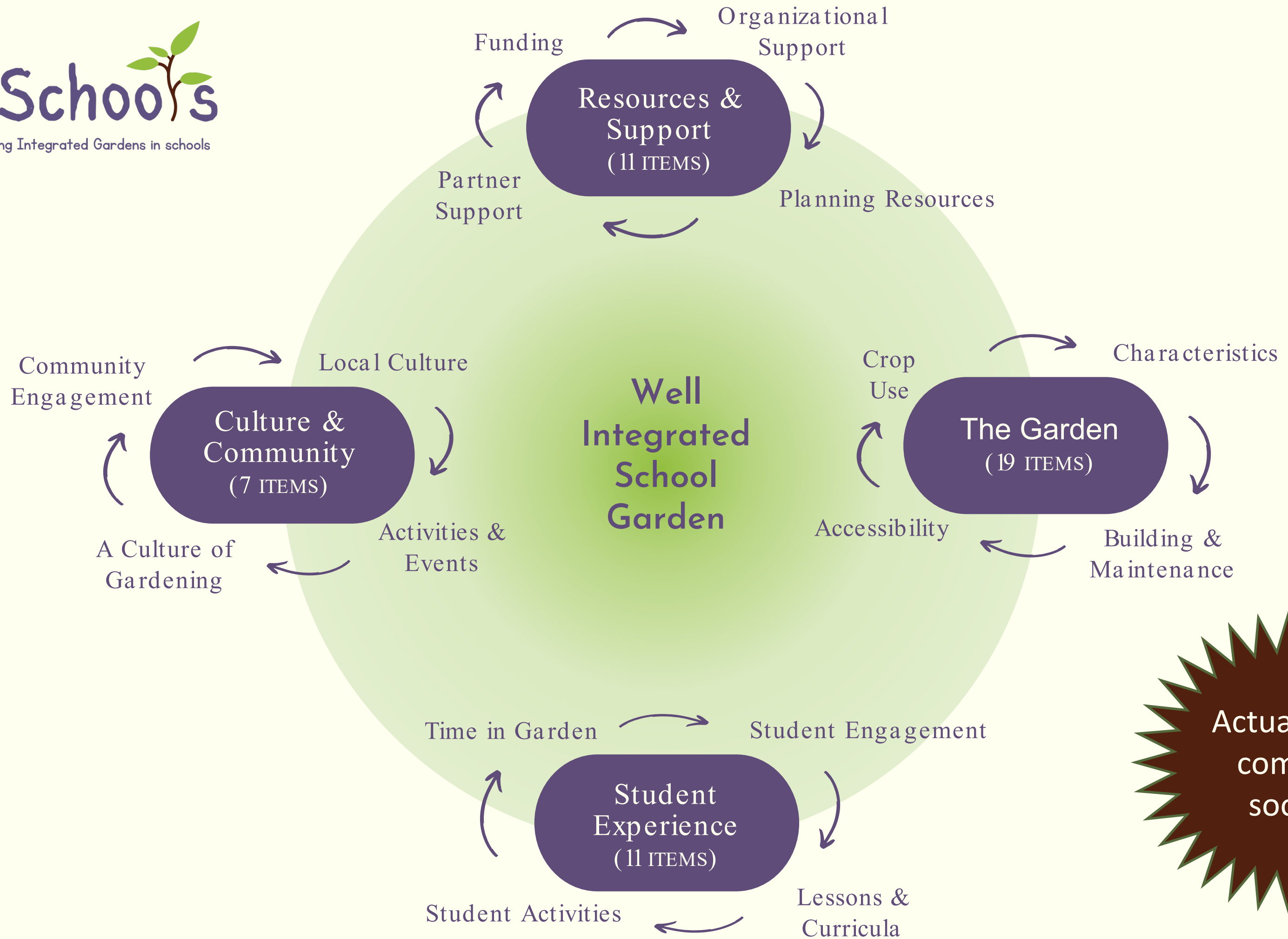
Step 5: Create the New Tool!

Developing Integrated Gardens (DIG) in Schools will be an improvement process with 4 “seasons”

The DIG in Schools tool will be used during the first (Till) and last (Reap) seasons. It will include:

- 48 seeds
- 4 domains





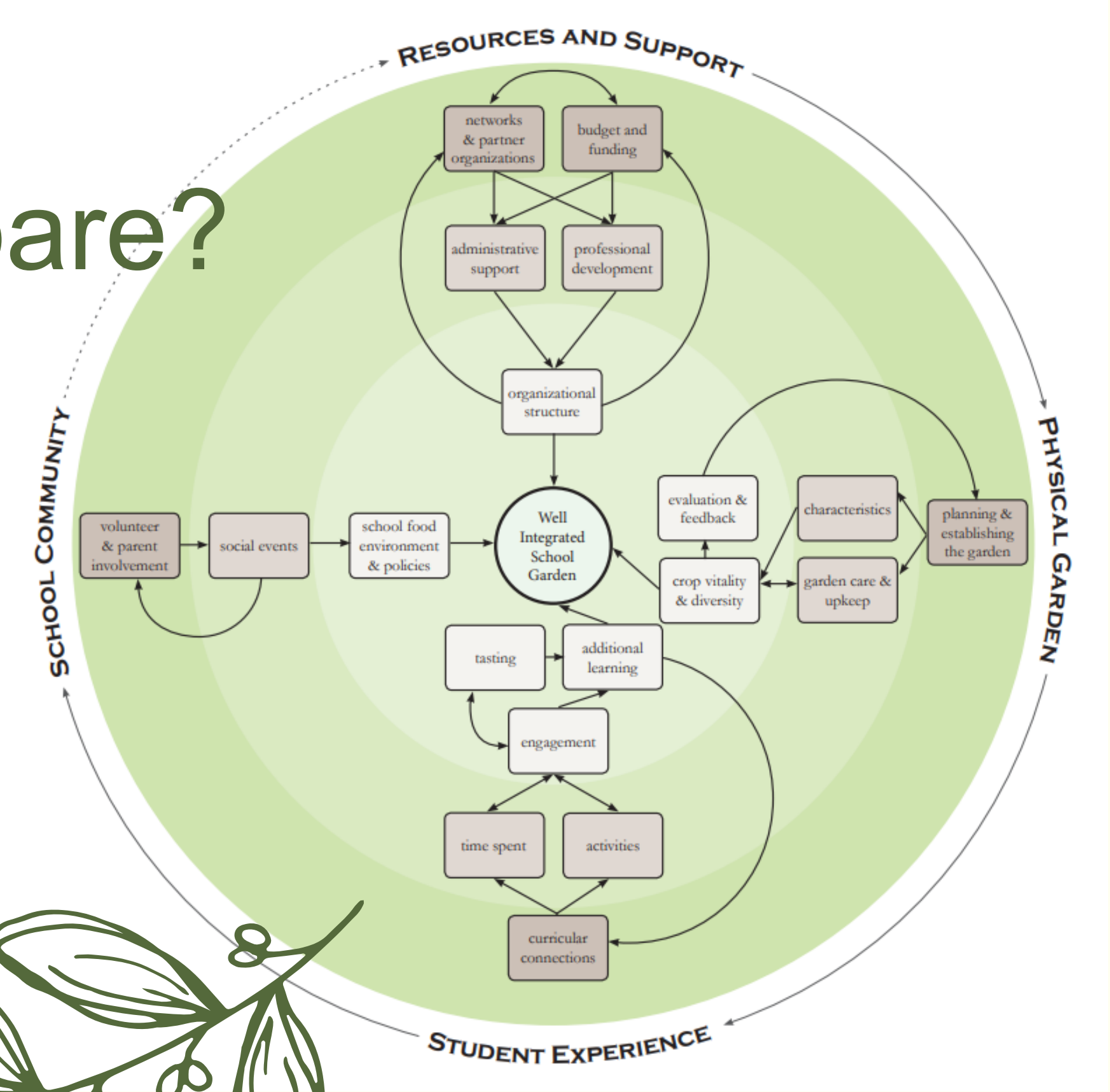


The GREEN Tool

How does DIG compare?

- The GREEN framework and associated scale developed from a New York City school gardens initiative were foundational to this work.
- Many but not all AZ -specific domains align with GREEN.
- The GREEN tool does not provide "seeds" to guide integration.

.Burt KG, Koch PA, Uno C, and Contento IR. (2016)





Next Steps: Pilot (2024)

We developed a new Community Garden Evaluation Tool!

The pilot will involve visiting a partner school with Theresa LeGros to complete the DIG in Schools tool. Partner schools will receive a garden themed gift basket worth about \$50 for their time.

- Early interest?
- Questions?





Thank you for you help!

Your a-maize-ingness is un-beet-able!

Theresa LeGros

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