



Making the Character Connection with...

## Horticulture

Agronomy  
Entomology  
Horticulture

Being a person of good character means you follow the Six Pillars of Character<sup>SM</sup> every day. Taking care of a garden requires you to be responsible; perhaps you will give your produce to friends or family (Caring and Respect), or you may decide to sell some of your produce and set a fair price (Fairness and Citizenship). You may even decide to enter your produce at a local fair where you will compete against others while following rules and respecting the judge's decision. When you study the insects that surround your environment you have the opportunity to share how important these animals are with others. Each of these are ways you can show others you are proud of the produce you have grown and insects you have learned about and that you are proud to be a person of good character.

Projects in this Connection have been grouped because they have related information. There may not be an activity for every project listed however at least one of the activities can be adapted for each project. Be creative; let this be a stepping stone for many ways of teaching character.

### **In this character lesson you will find:**

- **Explanation of the Six Pillars of Character.**
- **Explanation of how the Six Pillars of Character relate to your Horticulture projects.**
- **Activities on how you can demonstrate good character while practicing your Horticulture skills.**
- **Questions to help you think of other ways to demonstrate good character every day.**

# Character Connection: Horticulture

Trustworthiness	Responsibility	Caring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Always be honest with your project leader.</li> <li>✓ If someone asks if you have taken care of your garden - weeding, hoeing and watering - tell them the truth.</li> <li>✓ It's OK to have family members help; it makes the project more fun!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Respect Mother Nature</li> <li>✓ Provide proper. nourishment to the soil by applying nutrients like fertilizer.</li> <li>✓ Return produce to the earth through composting.</li> <li>✓ Understand others may not enjoy every type of produce that you grow.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Share what you have grown with others.</li> <li>✓ Birds and insects like to eat leftovers from your garden and can help keep your garden healthy.</li> <li>✓ Think of ways to share your produce with people who may not have fresh food to eat.</li> </ul>
Respect	Fairness	Citizenship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Don't let produce stay on the vine too long.</li> <li>✓ Remember that you chose this project; you have the responsibility to grow the best product possible.</li> <li>✓ Are others counting on you? If you have promised someone produce, remember to get it to them on time and in good condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Don't charge others unrealistically high prices for your product. Remember they are helping you by testing your vegetables and telling you what you can improve.</li> <li>✓ Learn the rules of your local fairs and farmers markets so you know what to expect when you enter and sell.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Grow a garden in community space to see what it's like for people who don't have their own gardens.</li> <li>✓ Keep your garden space neat and clean</li> <li>✓ Share what you know about insects; help others see the benefit of having them around</li> </ul>

# Character Connection: Gardening

**Activity:** Visit A Soup Kitchen

## DO:

Visit your local soup kitchen to help serve meals to those in need in your community. Many of these kitchens will allow you to donate the produce you have grown. In doing so, you will be able to see the direct way your care and responsibility in growing your fruits and vegetables can help someone else. Showing others you care about them is very important, and sharing something homegrown is one very special way to show you care.

- While at the soup kitchen, talk with the other people serving the meals. Why do they choose to help out? Do they see the contribution as a way to show others they care?
- Talk to the people receiving the meals. Share with them about the process of growing and caring for your produce and donating it to the soup kitchen. How does this contribution make these people feel?
- Find out what everyone liked best about their meals; maybe this can help you decide what to grow next year!

## REFLECT:

1. Has anyone ever showed you they cared by sharing something personal/homemade/homegrown?
2. How does it make you feel to be able to share something that you have spent so much time caring for? Does it make you feel good to be able to show them you care as well?
3. Did this activity help you think of other times you could have helped someone but passed up the chance because you weren't sure how to help?

## APPLY:

Reaching out a helping hand is so important, particularly when others are in need. We often don't realize how appreciative someone might be of us showing we care and sharing with them something homegrown and heartfelt. Take the time to show someone in need that you care, and both you and they will take something from the experience.

**Expand on this Activity:** Visit a local food bank to see how produce grown around the world is bundled and handed out to those in need in your community. These food banks will let you help out in many different ways and you can see how just a little bit of caring can really help out. Remember to offer some of your produce; if they cannot accept fresh produce think of other ways you could donate - maybe a produce sale to benefit the food bank!



# Character Connection: Gardening

## Activity: Know What You're Growing

Supplies: World Map, Stickers, Produce Labels

How often do you look at a food and wonder what part of the world it grew in, what nutrients it needed to grow or how many days it took to cultivate before you take the first bite? It isn't very often that we take the time to think about the foods we eat, but now that you're growing your own garden it's time to take a closer look. It's your responsibility to ensure the foods you eat are safe and have been put through practices you agree with. Being a responsible gardener means knowing what your plants need to be healthy, and being a responsible consumer means knowing all about the history of the foods you eat. As you start to cultivate your own interest in foods, start to learn about the foods you eat.

### DO:

Take a good look at the labels on the produce you eat everyday. Can you find where your potatoes, green beans, corn, apples and strawberries are grown? Use your stickers to mark the places on the world map where your food is grown. Does all of your food come from the same continent, country, city? What does the location tell you about the foods you eat? Is it possible for you to grow every type of produce in your 4-H garden? Cut out pictures from magazines or ads of foods and place them on the map where they can be grown.

Now that you know where your food is coming from, take a look at the other information on the produce label. Arrange a meeting with your club's foods project group; these members can help you read food labels and help you figure out what nutrients are in your products, whether they are organic and what part of the world they are from. A responsible consumer understands the products they are eating and knows about the product's growing process. Can you think of things that might be different about the produce you buy and that you grow? Note these differences on your map, making sure to state which you think you would prefer for each difference.

### REFLECT:

1. Have you ever given any thought to where your food is grown before?
2. What does it mean to you to have produce that is homegrown or "Made in the USA"?
3. What types of things can you control in your home garden that you cannot control in major farming operations? Do these things matter to you?
4. Did this activity help you think about growing more or different foods in your own garden rather than buying them from another source?

### APPLY:

Today it seems nearly impossible to think one family could grow everything they eat. No matter where you get your food from - if you grow it in your 4-H project, if you buy it from a local farmer, or if you go to the local grocery store - it is your responsibility to know where your food is coming from. Taking responsibility for what you eat puts you in control and helps you to help others make decisions about what the best products are to buy and eat.



# Character Connection: Gardening

**Activity:** Use Everything You Grow

## **DO:**

Using everything you grow in some way is an important way of giving back to nature and showing that you are a responsible citizen. We often forget about using things like banana peels, apple rinds and vegetable peels, but all of these things can be reused and recycled. With your project group, set up a recycling plan for your unused produce. Plan a way to reuse all of your peels, rinds and uneaten fruits and vegetables. Have each person be responsible for a different week in the project year; you can each help each other remember not to throw out useable items, but reuse them in a good and helpful way.

During your week try to think of a different way to recycle the produce; every week there could be a different use for what you don't think you can use. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- This week there is just way too much to eat before it goes bad. Let's take the extra to the local nursing home and give it away to the residents.
- Let's use all of the food peels from bananas, zucchini, squash and oranges to create a collage on recycling to show our 4-H club.
- This week we will have a competition to see who can waste the least amount of food. Each member will weigh their food waste and at the end of the week we will see who wastes the least amount of food. The winner gets to choose any produce from any member's garden to take home and prepare for their family.

## **REFLECT:**

1. Have you ever thought about recycling before? When and where have you heard the terms recycling and reusing before?
2. How does recycling benefit your community?
3. Do you think growing your own produce makes you more responsible for making sure you recycle vegetables and fruits properly?
4. Does your family already have some type of compost or recycling at home? If so, how do you divide the responsibilities? If not, can you see your family using this at home?

## **APPLY:**

Recycling and giving back to nature is one very important way to show that you are thinking about the world around you. Showing citizenship means taking care of your surroundings and doing your best to better the world you live in. By recycling you are helping to decrease the waste and increase the productivity of your garden. Don't just stop at produce; remember to find other things around the house and in your community to recycle and reuse.



# Character Connection: Entomology

**Activity:** Bee Friendly

**DO:**

There are many people who fear insects and do not understand the everyday purposes these tiny animals serve. Now that you have learned more about different insects and their contribution to the environments they live in, share your knowledge with younger 4-Hers or students in your school. Talk with your 4-H Clover Kids leader or the teachers of the kindergarten and first grade classrooms at your school. Tell them you would like to bring in some of the specimens you have collected and share with their students some of the important purposes these insects serve. When you plan your speech, make sure you include some of the interesting facts you have learned in your project and share your coolest specimens with these students. Make sure you help these younger 4-H members or students understand why they should not be afraid when an insect lands on their shoulder. Give them some tips on what to do to keep insects away and allow them to live happily in their natural habitat.

**REFLECT:**

1. Do you remember ever being afraid of insects? What could someone have said to you to help you not fear these animals?
2. What feelings do you have when you present in front of a group of people? Does it make it easier when your audience is younger than you?
3. How do you think this younger audience looks at you, someone older but still close in age to them?
4. What did you learn from your presentation that will help you in future demonstrations or talks?

**APPLY:**

One of the best people to teach young people about a topic is someone close to their age that knows a lot about the topic. As someone close in age to your audience you helped them see how cool it is to learn about insects and that you do not have to be an adult to learn about something new. As a mentor for your audience you showed them that you are willing to give them your time and knowledge, a great example of caring and responsibility. As an older 4-H member you have the responsibility to help Clover Kids and younger kids stay excited about all the projects they can take in 4-H. Think about all of your other 4-H projects. Can you think of ways to share what you have learned in these projects too? Remember that every time you can share something new with a group of people you are showing what a responsible and caring person you are.

