



**TEACHER'S GUIDE TO
OUTDOOR LEARNING:**
SPRING



little bluestem
landscape architecture

Little studio, deep roots.

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Little Bluestem Landscape Architecture
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
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ABOUT landED

As landscape architects, we are responsible for the design of beautiful, livable outdoor spaces. At Little Bluestem Landscape Architecture (LBLA) this responsibility often translates to working with community groups in education, healthcare, and daycares. But we feel that there is potential beyond the construction of landscape designs for programming that establishes a key connection with nature. This belief led to the development of landED, a program through which we reveal the intricacies of landscape systems, and guide our communities to engage with outdoor space to its full potential. We have worked closely with the Manitoba Curriculum and local educators to ensure all our lesson plans and workshops can fit within the framework laid out by our province.

A source of inspiration for our team has come from the Landscape Architecture Foundation's *21st Century Call to Action*. This declaration critically examines the power of landscape architecture to respond to the global experience of climate change, urbanization, management of vital resources like water, and global inequities. Through our work, we join a passionate community working to answer the call to action at this critical time when the talents and services of landscape architects are so vitally needed.

We believe outdoor education is critical, especially in youth. So in 2019 we established landED: a landscape enrichment program by LBLA. landED is committed to helping communities engage with their environment. We offer land-based design and environmental learning through lesson packages, placemaking toolkits, and interactive outdoor workshops. Our focus on nature programming extends to all seasons of the year, adapting to the drastic landscape changes we experience in our northern climate.

landED programming takes into consideration the different scales of landscape availability, from hardtop schoolyards, to forest and field exploration. Our programming offers safe and inclusive lesson plans and activities that promote risky play through nature-based exploration. No matter the outdoor space, age, or skill level, landED offers programming that works to meet your needs. LBLA's design clients also have access to content specifically tailored towards activating the landscape spaces designed by our firm. With our knowledge and passion for landscape architecture and the design of ecological systems, our team is excited and ready to help you enliven and connect with your outdoor spaces.

LANDSCAPE + EDUCATION = landED

INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at LBLA acknowledge that the Indigenous people of Manitoba and North America have been providing land-based education to their children for centuries. We recognize that due to the history of colonialism and residential schools, the tradition of land-based teaching has been systematically disrupted. As signatories of Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord, we are committed to acknowledging the history and impacts of colonization, while consulting and engaging with Indigenous Peoples to address the need for ongoing land reconciliation. We believe in the importance of incorporating Indigenous pedagogy into educational practices, and cultivating places that are reflective of Indigenous worldviews. At landED we are dedicated to creating programming for individuals to engage in design-focused educational practices that reflect a spirit and intent of reconciliation, while advocating for landscapes that acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous teachings and practices.

We are a small business on Treaty One territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, filled with passionate, professional nature-lovers who are very committed to improving the environment. In order to support our local business so we can keep doing the work we love, please pay and download content for your own classroom use only. Honour system in full effect!

We would love for you to share updates using the hashtag #landEDMB, so we can be a part of your journey to integrate landED in your classroom. Your reviews and feedback help us grow, so please reach out to us on any of our social media platforms:



@landED.MB



@littlebluestemLA



littlebluestemla.com/landED

Thank you for your support!



CHANGING SEASONS

INTRODUCTION

As we shift into a new season, now is the time to assess your outdoor classroom practices, see what is working for you, and plan for the months ahead.

In this seasonal guide we will discuss establishing a daily routine, long-term planning, safety measures as the weather changes, and brainstorm activity ideas.

CLIMATE AS A GUIDE

Manitoba's drastic seasonal changes provide a clear framework for students to conceptualize the passage of time.

Students can create a seasonal notebook, to use at school or home to record the changes of the season. It is particularly important to suggest investigations that can take place whether learning is at school, or remote.



SEASONAL CHANGES STUDENTS CAN ADDRESS MAY INCLUDE:

- How do you know that spring is coming, what changes outside are a sign of spring?
- What was winter like this year, what was different about this winter compared to last winter?
- How do you feel when you are outside in spring, compared to how you felt outside in winter?

SAFETY MEASURES

Now is the time to work with parents to update outdoor safety kits for each student. During spring months, these kits may include items like bug spray, rubber boots, an umbrella, and extra clothing.



SEASONAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Run a risk-benefit assessment with students, considering seasonal risks such as weather fluctuations, partially frozen water bodies (talk about how to know when it is no longer safe to traverse across frozen water), ticks and mosquitoes. Students may be scared of these types of insects; talking openly about the risks and empowering kids with the knowledge of how to handle the situation will help to mitigate fear.

Updating this kit can be done in collaboration with the students, as a brainstorming exercise on how to stay safe as the weather fluctuates.

PLAN ACCORDING TO THE FORECAST

Don't pack away the winter gear too early; remember that spring weather on the prairies can fluctuate drastically even within the same day. If possible, try to be flexible with planning and base activities on what the weather conditions are day-by-day.

SPRING BRAINSTORMING

EXPERIENCE THE CHANGE OF SEASON

Establish a checklist of routines, with individual responsibilities that students can perform either at school or at home. These routines may include:

- Tracking precipitation using a rain gauge. If at home, students can track if there are differences between neighbourhoods.
- Daily photographing of trees (which trees begin to get leaves or flowers first, are there patterns?)
- Recording temperature change (charting predicted vs. actual)
- Animals migrating or coming out of hibernation, did you see a different animal or insect today that you didn't see during the winter?

A TIME FOR GROWTH

In the spring, plants will grow and change rapidly. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to observe these changes. Whether observing new growth on an existing plant or sprouting a seed. Regular observation will encourage kids to notice these changes. In the world of instant gratification, this type of observation can also lead to a discussion about relative time and the rate of change in the environment.



ACTIVITY IDEA

Show how plants grow or move based on their environment. Plant a bean seed in a cup with soil. Once the plant begins to sprout have students design and build a simple plant "maze" and watch as the sprout grows up and around the barriers.

WHERE DOES SNOW GO?

As snow melts, all that water has to go somewhere. Have students analyze the school yard or another outdoor area to predict where the water will flow and where puddles will be. For example, what happens to water that melts on the asphalt versus in the playground? If your school is close to a river or water body, you can make predictions on how high the water level will become. These observations can also lead to discussions about how human infrastructure and changes to the landscape effects flooding in urban and rural areas.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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