

# School-grown vegetables increase salad selection

May 14 2015, by Brian Wansink

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If kids grow vegetables, they're more likely to eat them. A new Cornell study published in *Acta Paediatrica* shows that when garden grown vegetables were slipped into school salads, kids were over four times as

likely to take a salad.

"This is a small study, but it suggests gardens can help children's diets - even in the snow belt," said lead author Brian Wansink PhD, Director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab and author of *Slim by Design*.

This pilot study, conducted in upstate New York, measured the change in vegetable selection and plate waste when school grown [salad](#) greens were incorporated in the cafeteria school lunch. The researchers measured the selections and plate waste of a total of 370 enrolled [high school students](#) over three separate days.

When the [salad bar](#) contained produce grown by students, the percentage of those who selected salads with their meals increased from 2% to 10% and on average, students ate two-thirds of their salads. Unfortunately, in addition to increased salad selection, the amount of plate waste also increased. Overall salad consumption for the entire student body increased from approximately 5 to 12 servings per day.

This study implies the larger potential benefits of the school garden programs. "We see great promise with this research. The first hurdle in increasing vegetable consumption is simply getting kids to put them on their plate," concluded co-author Drew Hanks of Ohio State University.

**More information:** Wansink, Brian; Drew Hanks; and David Just (2015). A Plant to Plate Pilot: A Cold Climate High School Garden Increased Vegetable Selection but Also Waste. *Acta Paediatrica*. [DOI: 10.1111/apa.13028](https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.13028)

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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