

# JUST ONE THING

**Title:** Growing More Good Across the Nation

**Company/Organization:** Coast of Maine Organic Products Inc.

**Type of Organization:** For profit

**Number of Employees:** <100

**Category:** Community

**Challenge or Opportunity:** Many schools and nonprofits struggle with budget constraints that limit access to quality soil for gardening programs. Public education funding has made it increasingly difficult for schools to expand beyond core subjects, leaving experiential learning gardening programs underfunded. Nonprofits, relying on grants, face challenges with ongoing costs. This financial gap hinders gardening programs crucial for teaching about food origins, growing in a changing climate, and connecting with nature.

**Approach or Solution:** In 2018, we launched the Growing Good Program to address the challenge schools and nonprofits face in maintaining garden programs due to limited funding. Our solution is partnering with local garden centers to donate our organic compost-based soils, enabling schools to create sustainable gardens while also investing into their community. This year, we expanded our approach by collaborating with large organizations like cooperative extensions, FoodCorps, CitySprouts, Farm to School, and Gather.

**Impact:** As a result of this shift and increased dedication, we've nearly doubled our donations this year, reaching 575 gardens and solidifying our relationships with 270 garden centers nationwide. Partnering with large organizations has broadened our impact, allowing more schools and nonprofits to build sustainable gardens. These gardens not only provide access to fresh food but also serve as living classrooms, fostering sustainability education and strengthening local food systems across the country.