

GARDENING W/ KIDS

Children have a wonderful sense of curiosity, finding new and exciting things all the time. Getting your child interested in gardening is a good way to spark their interest in all types of outdoor activities and nature. Create a family garden, where children of almost any age can grow their own plants, use their own tools, and gain a sense of ownership and creativity. Allow children to experiment, but resist the temptation to “fix” crooked stalks or deadheading. A child’s own experience in their garden serves as the best source of learning and delight.

Choose your plants carefully. Buy plants that are quick to grow or bloom; annuals are usually your best bet. Research plants that are easy to grow, as failures tend to kill a child’s interest and enthusiasm. Plants like sweet 100 tomatoes and morning glories might just have them running for the garden every day!

Be careful with sharp tools and discuss which tools are safe for them to use and which tools are not. Buy children’s tools, made for small hands. They should never eat the leaves or fruit without adult supervision, since some plants/plant parts are poisonous. Never spray pesticides in a child’s garden !

Below is a list of some good starter plants. **Really interesting ones are in bold type :**

sunflowers (range from 2’ to 8’ tall)

snapdragons

cosmos

zinnias

marigolds

four o’ clocks

morning glories (opens and closes during the day)

purple and gold string beans

radishes

purple carrots

sweet 100 cherry tomatoes

dill (to attract monarch butterfly caterpillars)

portulaca (opens and closes during the day).

pitcher plants (great if you have a pond or a wet swampy spot)

peppers in any color but green

corkscrew rush

Indian corn