



## HELLO PARENTS,

The warmer weather has arrived, and what better way to spend time than enjoying some gardening. Gardening offers so many fun and interesting opportunities for children. They can learn about the different species of plants and what those plants need to help them grow. They also get to learn about the different seasons, weather and the affects they have on the plants. It also offers an opportunity to learn about different shapes and colours, and different animals and insects they might come across. In this newsletter, you will find ways to engage your child in gardening.

## ACTIVITIES

### INFANTS (3 – 18 MONTHS)

#### SENSORY GARDEN

- Create opportunities for your child to move through the grass. Being "in" the garden is more engaging than looking "at" it.
- Look for different surfaces your infant can explore (grass, stone, bricks, wood chips, soil, etc.).
- Find interesting natural objects your child can touch, smell, see, etc.
- Enjoy the moment, do not rush, explore with your child.

[Click here](#) to learn how to do gardening with infants.

### TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

#### DIGGING FOR WORMS

##### MATERIALS:

- Sand/soil · Large container or tray · Pieces of thick string
- Tweezers · Small shovel

##### DIRECTIONS:

- Hide pieces of string (worms) in the sand/soil.
- Let your child explore using their hands, tweezers and shovel to squeeze, squish and dig out the "worms" from the soil.
- Count out loud as each "worm" is caught.

[Click here](#) for another digging activity.

### PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

#### GROW SEEDLINGS IN AN EGG CARTON

##### MATERIALS:

- Cardboard egg carton · Soil · Seeds · Spray bottle
- Scissors · Small shovel

##### DIRECTIONS:

- Cut the egg carton in half.
- Have your child add soil to individual egg cups in the carton.
- Let your child make a hole in the center of the dirt and place one seed in each hole. Cover with soil.
- Spray soil with water. Place on the tray and keep them in a warm, light-filled location until they begin to sprout.
- Remind your child to water the seeds everyday. The soil should stay very moist.
- Your child can observe the growing seedlings every day and notice any changes.
- You can take a photo of the seedlings on the same day every week, so your child can look back at the changes in growth.

[Click here](#) for another gardening activity.

[Click here](#) to read "The Tiny Seed" by Eric Carle.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**  
PLEASE, SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK, COMMENTS OR  
SUGGESTIONS TO [CHILDCAREMAIN@NCCE1.ORG](mailto:CHILDCAREMAIN@NCCE1.ORG)

### JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

#### KITCHEN MINI GARDEN

##### MATERIALS:

- Flower pots/plastic containers · Soil
- Sweet potato, a piece of ginger root; a garlic clove
- Tape and marker

##### DIRECTIONS:

- Fill each pot 2/3 with soil.
- Place potato, ginger and garlic in the pots and label each pot.
- Add more soil to the pots.
- Water your growing plants every day and notice how fast they grow, what types of stems and leaves they have, etc.
- Now you have learned that you can grow things not only from seeds but from other plant parts, too.
- Enjoy your mini garden!

[Click here](#) for more gardening activities.

[Click here](#) to read a story about an enormous turnip.

### SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

#### POLLINATOR JOURNAL

##### MATERIALS:

- A notebook · Pencils, pens
- A place to sit outside · Camera (optional)

##### DIRECTIONS:

- Write "Pollinator Journal" on the cover of your notebook.
- Take your journal, pens, pencils, and camera and visit a flower garden (yours, in the park, etc.).
- Observe the flowers and notice all different insects that visit the flowers (bees, flies, butterflies, ants, etc.).
- Take pictures or make sketches in your journal of the insects, paying attention to patterns, colours, etc.
- At home, research the names of the insects you observed, write down their names and what is their role in the garden.
- Go to the flower garden again, observe, and take notes of the insects' habits and actions: what flowers they prefer, times of the day they visit, the weather, etc.
- Keep your journal for the whole season, and note all different pollinators visiting different blooming plants.

[Click here](#) to take virtual tours through 9 beautiful botanical gardens.

#### A TIP FOR TODAY

Here are some fun facts about plants:

- The world's tallest growing tree is the coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) which can easily reach heights of 91 meters (300 feet).
- Bamboo is the fastest growing woody plant in the world; it can grow 91 cm (35 in) in a single day.
- The smallest flower in the world is the *Wolffia* flower which also produces the world's smallest fruit.
- The rose is considered the most beautiful flower in the world, which is why it is called the "queen of the garden".
- The first potatoes were implanted 7,000 years ago.
- The average strawberry has 200 seeds. It is the only fruit that bears its seeds on the outside.