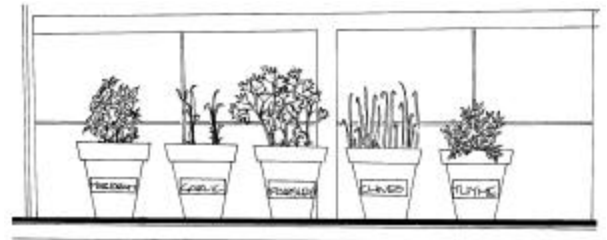


Help Sheets: Introduction to the Gardening Projects

Have you ever eaten a fresh tomato right off the vine? If you have, you know why people garden, even though they can buy fruits and vegetables at the store. If you haven't - well, you have a delicious experience ahead of you.

Growing plants is lots of fun! If you have an outdoor garden space, or if you can participate in a community or neighborhood garden, that's great! If not, you can make your own gardening space and grow vegetables (even fruits) in containers on a patio, a balcony, or in any sunny spot near your home. There are even some vegetables that will grow on a bright windowsill or under lights inside your home.

The 4-H Gardening Projects will help you learn how to grow and care for plants. You will learn the basics of growing plants. Look over the projects. You may do as few or as many projects as you like. Some of the projects can be done at the same time, and you can use one project to count partially for another (like



Growing Strawberries in the Growing Fruit Project as part of the Container Gardening Project). The following order is suggested, but not required:

1. Fun with Plants
2. Kitchen Garbage Gardening
3. Growing Seeds Indoors
4. Garden Ecology
5. Windowsill Gardening
6. Container Gardening
7. Growing Fruit
8. Herb Gardening
9. Garden Pests and Problems
10. Nutrients for Plant and People

There are HELP Sheets, like this one, with instructions for planting seeds, fertilizing, watering, and other garden practices. It is best to read over all the HELP! Sheets at least once before beginning your gardening project(s). Each Help Sheet has a list of 'New Words' at the end to help you understand any words that you may not have heard before.

A good order to read the HELP Sheets in is:

1. Introduction to the Gardening Projects
2. Things Plants Need
3. Watering
4. Fertilizing
5. Seeds
6. Transplanting

Always read the entire project carefully before you start. Be sure you understand what you need and what you'll be doing. Ask questions if you do not understand something. Many people know about plants: your 4-H leader, a Master Gardener, a teacher, or someone from your family. They will be happy to help you with your questions.

BEFORE YOUR BEGIN

Many of the things used in the gardening projects are free or very inexpensive. When you decide to do a project, start collecting what you will need. Ask your family and friends to save things for you. Go to grocery stores, your school cafeteria, or fast food places, and ask if they have anything on the list below that they can give you. Hardware stores, garden stores, department stores, flea markets, and yard sales are other places to try. Use your imagination. You might see something useful that is not on the list.

Be sure to wash out all food and drink containers as soon as you get them. If you collect extras, share with other members of your group. Then, if someone has something you could not find, he or she may share it with you.

THINGS TO REUSE AND RECYCLE

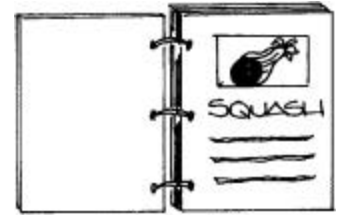
Aluminum pie plates & trays
Barrels
Clothes hangers
Egg cartons
Flower pots
Heavy cardboard
Jars with lids
Margarine tubs with lids
Milk cartons or jugs
Nursery flats
Old magazines
Old pots and pans
Paper cups

Plastic bags
Plastic buckets
Plastic soda bottles
Popsicle sticks
Rubber bands
Scrap paper
Sticks
Straws
Newspaper
Yogurt containers
Wooden boxes
Yarn, ribbon, cloth

NOTES ON RECORD-KEEPING

Each project has a list of specific questions to be answered. Here are some overall suggestions that may be helpful:

- Make a separate notebook for each project you do, using construction paper, yarn, and whatever other materials you have. Or use one big notebook for all of your gardening projects.
- Notebooks can be purchased, homemade, or reused. Be creative in how you decorate the notebook and present your records.
- Start each project on a new page. Include the name of the project and the date you began the project.
- Use the names of the plants you are growing, where the plants/seeds came from, the things you used, and how you did the project.
- It is best to write down information every time you work on the project. Do not wait until the project is finished to try to remember all of your results, questions, answers, and observations.
- Write down any comments or suggestions made by family, friends, 4-H leaders, or Master Gardeners. Include comments about what worked and what did not work in your project.
- Make drawings or take photographs to help you remember what you did and what the plants looked like at different stages.
- Most of all, have fun! Your notes can be shared with others, and then kept as a record of all of your hard work. Good gardening notes can also be used from year to year as a guide that tells what you liked and did not like, what worked and what did not work.



PROBLEMS?

Growing plants is not always easy. It's very important to keep an eye on your plants. Check them every day, if you can. If you notice a bug or if your plant seems to be having trouble, see the Garden Pests and Problems project. This might give you the information you need. If you need more help, try contacting your local extension office.



It helps to ask questions. Asking questions is one of the best ways to learn more about plants and gardening. If you don't know what to do or if your plants are not doing well, ask your 4-H leader, teacher, Master Gardener, or extension agent for help. Finding the answers to questions is half the fun of gardening!