



The Parent Helper
May 2011

Children and Gardening

Teaching your kids how to grow flowers will provide benefits both immediate and long lasting. Not only will they learn about plant biology, you'll create wonderful memories as well as spark their interest in a healthy activity that will give them enjoyment for years to come. The most important thing is to make the experience a positive one.

Grow Enthusiasm

The best way to encourage children to garden is to not make it a chore. Have them participate in all stages of garden preparation, planting, and maintenance, as much or as little as they like. Don't expect perfection. Be prepared to pick up weeding and watering duties now and then, when your child's interest falters.

Grow Independence

Select a portion of your property that will belong to your child alone. Allow them to make decisions about what to plant and where to plant it. Allow children to experiment and then bring home "gifts" of easier to grow plants to ensure some success. Encourage them to grow flowers from seeds, bulbs, and nursery plants to increase their knowledge and experience.

Some Good Choices

Nasturtiums and sunflowers can be grown from seed or purchased at a nursery. Nasturtiums are totally edible, and the addition of their colorful flowers to salads will be an exciting reward for your child's efforts. Some varieties of sunflowers reach heights of 10-12 feet and will hold a child's interest as they grow and grow. Coneflowers and Black-Eyed Susans are reliable bloomers that attract butterflies. Tulips and daffodils are good bets, as are earlier bloomers such as crocus. Have your child toss a handful across an expanse of lawn and plant them where they land.

Leaf Tie Dye

What You Need:

- Leaves (various colors preferred) and flowers
- Cloth (Light Color) or paper
- Pounding Instrument (Mallet or Hammer)

What You Do:

Lay cloth or paper down on a table. Put the leaves and flowers out on the cloth or paper. Put the cloth on top of the leaves and flowers. Then hit the cloth with the mallet until the leaves and flowers are ground up. This will put a neat pattern on the cloth. Watch children with mallets closely.

Flower Food

Put a white carnation in a cup of water colored with food coloring (darker color the better). Let your children see how flowers drink water (the flower will change color as it takes in the water).

Outdoor Garden

If you have the facilities make a real garden for your children in a small swimming pool (punch holes for drainage). Your children will love to work in it just like it's a real flower garden.

Baggie Garden

Wet a paper towel and place it in the bottom of a Ziploc baggie. Drop flower seeds into the Ziploc bag on top of the wet paper towel. Seal the baggie (leaving air in the bag) and put it in your window. Your children will love watching the flowers grow. Once the flowers are big enough, take out and plant in soil.

Clear Garden

Let your children see how flowers grow sprouts and then form root systems. Wet paper towels and put them in clear plastic cups. Finally sprinkle the flower seeds on the paper towel until the seeds are clearly visible. Set the cups in the sun and keep the towels moist, you will have growth in no time



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