

MINI 4-H

GARDEN



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Growing vegetables in a garden is one of the most interesting things you can do. A garden can be fun and it also provides you with food!

Does someone in your family or neighborhood have a garden? If they do, maybe you could plant your garden along with theirs. Before you plant your garden, be sure to ask for permission.

Growing a garden doesn't require very much - only seeds, soil and some garden equipment. Some of the equipment you will need include a shovel, garden rake, hoe, garden hose or watering can. If you don't have all of these, you can use household items - such as large spoons and forks. Be sure to ask for permission first!

Growing a garden does require time, work and patience. If you haven't planted seeds before, you'll find out how exciting it is to watch something grow. Plants are just like people - they need food and water to grow. So don't forget about your "little friends".

TO UNDERSTAND HOW A SEED GROWS, TRY THIS EXPERIMENT.

Soak a piece of desk blotter or paper towel in water, then wrap the wet blotter around the inside of a clear glass quart jar (check with an adult first). Carefully work a lima bean seed down between the blotter and the side of the jar. Put the lid on the jar and wait for the seed to sprout. It will take one-two weeks.

The roots of the plant will fan out for clear viewing as the seed splits and grows. When a leaf appears, loosen the lid to let the air inside. This will help prevent mold from growing. After the leaves and roots have appeared, the experiment is finished. Discard the paper and seed, then thoroughly clean your jar.

Wasn't it fun to watch your seed grow? Are you ready to try planting a garden?



PLANNING YOUR GARDEN

First, decide where to plant your garden. You'll need an area that gets lots of sun and has good drainage. This means that water doesn't remain very long. Think of a puddle - it would not be a good place to plant seeds because the water stays there. Too much water can drown a plant - so you need a place where the water drains off. Talk it over with your parents and decide on the best location for your garden.

Next, you'll need to buy seeds. Seeds can be found in garden, grocery, or department stores. You won't need to buy a lot of different seeds.

PLANTING YOUR GARDEN



When you are ready to plant your seeds, ask an adult or older 4-Her to help. You'll need to make sure the ground is ready. Remove all grass (shake the soil loose), rocks, and other trash. Now the soil needs to be turned over with a shovel. Don't try to do this when the soil is wet because it will become lumpy and hard. After you turn the soil over, use a rake or hoe to break up any lumps. If your parents use fertilizer, ask them to put some on your plot. Fertilizer is "food" for the soil. It helps the plants grow by providing nutrients, just like vitamins help you grow.

Now you are ready to plant! Ask your parents to help you mark your row - try to keep it as straight as possible. Use a hoe or the handle of your rake to make a shallow trench. Read the back of your seed packet to find out how deep to plant your seeds. If you plant them too deep, it will be harder for them to grow. Usually, 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep is a good "rule of thumb" to follow. With your hands, cover the seeds with soil. Press the soil lightly over the seed. Label your newly planted row - a wooden or plastic stake will do nicely. Write the name of the vegetable you planted and the date. Lightly water the soil - remember your plants need water to grow. Be patient - some plants will come up in 5 days, and others take two weeks.

CARING FOR YOUR GARDEN

After your plants come up, you may need to remove the extra ones. Pick out the plants that are small and look weak. Gently pull out these plants with your hand. If all the plants look about the same, pull out every third or fourth plant. If you planted carrots or onions, you might want to eat these, even though they are small. Ask an adult if they will help you fix your vegetables.

Remove all weeds as soon as possible. Weeds compete with your plants for food, moisture and light. Be careful to only pull the weeds. Gently pull the weeds with your hands, or carefully use a hoe or small hand shovel. It is important to get the weeds out by the roots. Breaking off the weeds at ground level does not get rid of them. If the roots are still there, the weeds will grow back.

There is usually enough rain during the summer for a good garden. However, if the soil becomes very dry, you will need to water it. Use a hose or watering can, and let the soil become thoroughly soaked.

There are some animals that are good for a garden. Who are your garden friends?

Snakes - they help us by catching and eating insects and mice.

Toads - they help us by eating a lot of different insects.

Bees - they pollinate plants.

Earthworms, spiders, ladybugs and even fireflies.

WHAT TO EXHIBIT

You are now ready to prepare an exhibit for the county fair. Select one or two of the vegetables grown in your garden. Examples include:

- one ear of corn
- handful of green beans
- head of cabbage
- 2 - 3 tomatoes
- 2 - 3 potatoes
- head of broccoli



Arrange your display on an 8" - 10" white Styrofoam or paper plate. Exhibit the plate with the record sheet

MINI 4-H GARDEN RECORD SHEET

NAME _____ AGE _____

Draw a picture of your garden.

List the vegetables you grew.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What do you enjoy growing the most? _____

What do you enjoy eating the most? _____
