

1st Grade
**MINI 4-H
FLOWERS**



Hi! Welcome to Mini 4-H and the Mini 4-H Flowers Project. You are going to have a great time this year as you learn about flowers.

Before you begin this project, please read the helpful information listed on the next two pages.

Good luck on your project and, most of all, have fun!

INSTRUCTIONS

Before you start working on this project, please read these instructions with an adult or 4-H member who will be helping you.

1. Read the Exhibit Requirements, Note to Parents, Helpful Hints, and Project Goals.
2. You should begin working on your project when you get this manual.
3. Be proud of your project if you have done the best you can do.

EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS

1. Read this project book.
2. Exhibit one zinnia or one marigold in a small non-returnable bottle. Bring your flower to the 4-H Fair and turn it in as your flowers exhibit.

NOTE TO PARENTS

4-H is proud to be considered a "family affair." While it is expected that the 4-H member will actively complete his or her own project, please offer encouragement and guidance to your child throughout the project. Keep in mind that your child's exhibit is to be an exhibit of his or her best effort. Most importantly, take time to enjoy 4-H with your child.



HELPFUL HINTS

Each 4-H family should view a current copy of the Washington County 4-H Handbook . This book contains information on 4-H activities, rules and projects. Whenever you have 4-H related questions, please consult this information book.

Monthly 4-H Newsletters will be made available to families. Please read these Newsletters. They will contain information on upcoming 4-H activities, rule or project updates, and 4-H fair information.

Mini 4-H members are encouraged to attend 4-H Club meetings. At these meetings, you will learn more about 4-H, make new friends, and have fun.

PROJECT GOALS

Given the information in this manual and the help of an adult or older 4-H member you will complete an exhibit in the Mini Flowers Project.

You will be raising marigold or zinnia's for your exhibit at the fair. You will either grow the plants from seed or from a plant you purchase.

Growing Plants From Seeds

You will need a small container such as a milk or egg carton, or a small pot. Place holes in the bottom of your carton or pot. These will be drainage holes for extra water. Place soil in your container leaving 1/4" free at the top. Using a pencil, punch holes in the soil 1/4" deep and 1" apart. Sow (plant) two seeds (either marigold or zinnia) in each hole. Gently brush soil across the hole to cover the seeds. Water the seeds being very careful not to wash the seeds out of the soil. Place your carton or pot in a plastic freezer bag and seal it shut. Do not place in sunlight. When the plants begin to show above the soil, remove the plants from the bag. Now the plants can be placed in the sunlight.

Thinning

After your plants come up, you will need to pull up some of the plants so your flowers will not be so crowded. By hand, gently pull out any small, weak plants, leaving the stronger ones. Be sure to leave only one plant per hole.

Preparing

You will need to prepare the soil (dirt) for your garden by spading or tilling the soil 8-10 inches deep. You will need to ask an older person to help you do this. Before you begin, make sure the soil is dry enough by squeezing a handful. If it crumbles easily, it is ready for spading or tilling. If it sticks together, it is too wet. Soil that is worked when it is too wet can remain cloddy (in very big, hard clumps) for weeks.

After you spade the soil, use a rake to smooth the area and make it level. Remove sticks, rocks, and weeds from the surface. Break up large clods of dirt. You will then want to add fertilizer to your flower garden. If your flower garden measures 10 x 10 feet, use 6 cups of 12-12-12 fertilizer. If your garden is smaller, use less fertilizer. Spade or till the fertilizer into your soil.

Transplanting Seedlings or Plants you Purchased

Wait to plant your seedlings or purchased plants until May 10. This will help you avoid your plants being hurt by a late frost. Before you transplant your seedlings, gradually bring your plants outside to get them adjusted to the new environment. To remove the plants from their container, knock the container to loosen the soil from the sides. Do not pull on the stem to pull the plant free, but loosen soil around the edges of container and gently pull entire plant free. Replant the seedlings as deep as they were growing in their other container. A liquid fertilizer like 10-52-17 will help the plant grow. Pat down the soil around the roots of each plant after you transplant and water. Shade plants for a few days.

Caring

Once your plants are growing, you must continue to take good care of them. It is important for you to check on your garden often to make sure your plants are healthy. To keep them healthy, you will want to water and cultivate (loosen the dirt) them.

Watering

Usually, there will be enough rainfall for your plants. If it does not rain 1 to 1 1/2 inches per week, however, you will need to water your plants with a sprinkler or soaker hose. Water until the soil is wet 1 to 1 1/2 inches below the top. Water in the morning or early afternoon, if you can.

Cultivation & Mulching

At the beginning of the summer, you can cultivate (loosen) the soil around the plants to break any crust that forms. After the plants begin growing, however, you will not want to do this as you may injure the roots of the plants. If you want to keep weeds from growing, you can put a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around your plants. Good mulches include clean straw, wood shavings, cut grass, and shredded newspaper.

Selecting Flowers for Exhibit

Select flowers that have fresh (new) blooms that have all petals and look pretty. The flower should be clean with no disease or insect damage. The stem of the flower should be straight and strong enough to hold the bloom.

Condition Flowers

Cut the flowers 24 hours before you need them. Place them in a bucket of warm water and set the bucket in the coolest possible place (40 to 50 degrees).

Displaying Flowers

When preparing to go to the judging, bring an extra flower in case something would happen to your best one. Display your flower in a tall, skinny container which holds the stem upright and allows for some of the leaves to show above the top of the container. Possible containers are soft drink bottles, olive jars, catsup bottles, etc. Be sure there is water in the container. Remove any leaves that would be in the water. Recut stem at an angle before inserting in water.

* Information for this portion of the manual came from Montgomery County Mini 4-H Gardening developed by Sherry Legg-Young and 4-H 261 The World of Flowers developed by Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.



Check List for Your Flowers Exhibit

The judge will consider these things when they look at your exhibit. Can you answer "yes" to each question?

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. Is your flower free of insect/disease damage | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Do you have the correct number (1) of flowers? | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Do you have the correct type of flower (zinnia or marigold)? | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Is your flower in a small non-returnable bottle? | _____ | _____ |

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