

1st & 2nd Grades MINI 4-H Garden



Hi! Welcome to Mini 4-H and the Mini 4-H Gardening Project. You are going to have a great time this year as you learn all about planting and caring for gardens.

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. 1st Grade - Exhibit 3 varieties of vegetables, one of each variety on a paper plate. 2nd Grade - Exhibit 4 varieties of vegetables, one of each variety on a paper plate.

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 different types of vegetables for your exhibit at the fair. You will either grow the plants from seed or from a seedling 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 on a tray or saucer to catch any excess water that runs out of the bottom of your plant.

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.

* Information for this portion of the manual came from Montgomery County Mini 4-H Gardening developed by Sherry Legg-Young.

Your Gardening Exhibit

Attached to this manual is a list of vegetables and the standards for preparing them for your exhibit. Using the table attached, find the vegetables you would like to exhibit. This table will give you an idea on how big the vegetable should be and what it should look or feel like when they are ready to be exhibited. You will only exhibit 1 specimen of each vegetable, not the number listed as these numbers are requirements for members in regular 4-H, not Mini. The following is a list of do's and don't when exhibiting vegetables.

Do's

- Do harvest onions 2 to 3 weeks before exhibiting.
- Do keep 3-4 wrapper leaves on cabbage.
- Do prevent damage to the skin of your vegetables by harsh washing and brushing. Wash vegetables (carrots, beets, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, etc.) very carefully in lukewarm water and a soft cloth or sponge without rubbing. For caked-on dirt, allow vegetables to soak until dirt can be wiped off. After washing, rinse in cold water and place on paper toweling to dry. For other vegetables, gently wipe off dirt with a soft, moist cloth and allow to dry.

Don'ts

- Do Not cut windows in sweet corn, but determine maturity and freedom from worms by "feeling" the ends of sweet corn and by taking samples for home use the day prior to selecting sweet corn for exhibit.
- Do Not apply mineral oil or wax to vegetables.
- Do Not exhibit sunburned vegetables. Slight yellowing of the shoulders of red tomatoes and whitish streaks on green peppers often are due to slight sunburning.

*Information from this portion of the manual came from 4-H 970-W developed by 4-H Youth Department, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service



Check List for Your Gardening 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. Are your vegetables close to the recommended shape, size, and color?	_____	_____
2. Are your vegetables free of insect/disease damage?	_____	_____
3. Are your vegetables clean?	_____	_____
4. Were your vegetables harvested at the right time?	_____	_____

It is important that you get your exhibit to the fair on time. Check your 4-H Newsletter or ask your 4-H Club leader when your Mini Gardening project exhibit needs to be checked-in at the 4-H Fair. Write that information here and on your family calendar.



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