

Gardening with Children

How to Get Started

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANT TO GROW

For new gardeners, choose something that is fairly fast-growing for the excitement factor. In summer, it is easy to choose plants that fit this criteria (sunflowers spring to mind) but for autumn/winter, I would suggest growing new plants from scraps. It is very exciting for children to eat what they grow (and a good lesson, too).

Suggestions: spring onions, celery, lettuce.

Adventurous suggestion: August is still not too late to sow fast-growing plants such as baby carrots and radishes.

Cheat's suggestion: buy baby plants from nurseries - this is a good time to pick up summer bargains.

REAL gardener's suggestion: sow poppies indoors and wait for a bumper crop in early spring.

Sign up for resources on gardening with children
and read the blog:
www.cheesepplantbooks.com

THE BARE MINIMUM YOU NEED: A container and soil!

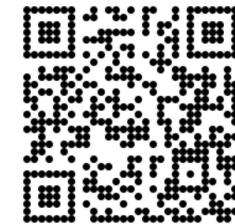
The most important thing about any container that you use to grow your plants is the drainage. Make holes on the underside and let your imagination loose (milk cartons, old barrels, tins). Fun activity with children is decorating the pots with paints and stickers. The illustrator of this book (Ammu Abhirami) paints and sells plant pots. Her website is www.thandarsgarden.com

What soil?

The book gives information on the basics, but any general-purpose compost would do. A small bag costs around £3.50, but you can just fill your pot with any old soil (for this purpose).

How much sun?

A general rule of thumb is no direct sunlight but as much as possible now that we are coming into autumn/winter.



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From Handbook for Budding Little Gardeners

GROW PLANTS FROM A SEED

Below are the steps you need to follow to begin. Stick to them closely to raise your new pet plant.

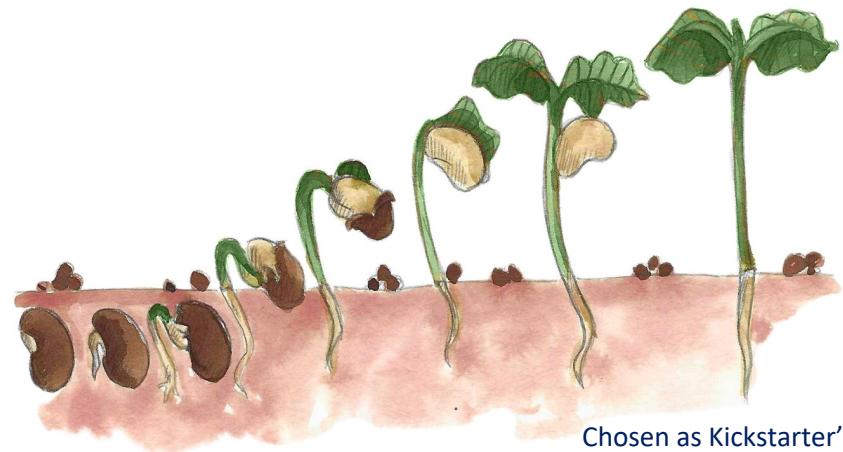
1 CHOOSE YOUR CONTAINER - You've done this part! It's picked out and decorated, so you're ready to start.

2 MOISTEN SOIL - During this step, give the soil a drink. It doesn't need much, but it helps the seed sink.

3 PLANT YOUR SEED - Before you do this part, you'll need to read. Ask for help from a grown-up if need be. Some plants like lots of space between themselves and their neighbor, so leave plenty of room or they'll have to move later. Your seed packet will tell you how far down the seed goes. It might be six inches or only as deep as a toe!

4 KEEP THE SEEDS HUMID - Now the magic starts to happen. Keep your plant somewhere humid, with warm air, and bam! In its toasty bed of soil, your seed will unfurl.

5 MOVE YOUR PLANT INTO THE SUN - Say hello to your sprout when you see it peek out. That cute shoot of green signals the time for moving. Choose a sunny windowsill or the right spot outside!



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