

Plant A Garden

Watching tiny seeds grow to become colorful flowers or tasty vegetables is an exciting experience for children, and while caring for plants, children learn where familiar foods actually come from — before they reach the supermarket! **Encourage children to get down and dirty in the vegetable garden.**

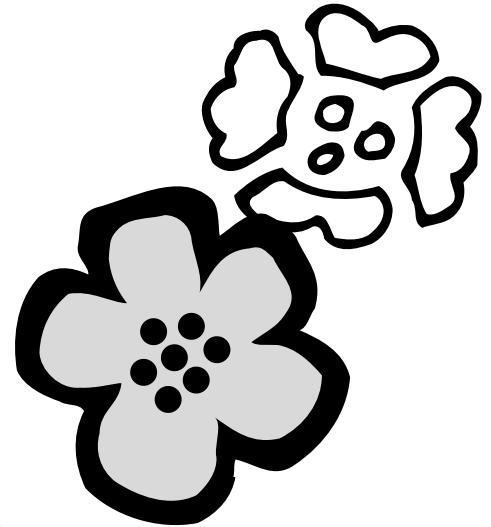
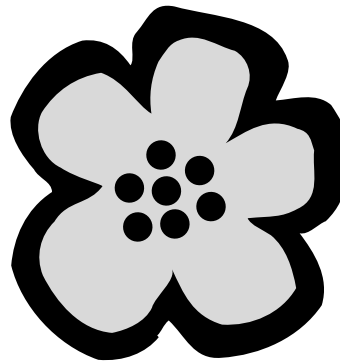
When in doubt, cook!

Children can relate better to how vegetables are used. The experience of cooking is more valuable than the finished product.

Think big and colorful.

Offer children the chance to grow large or colorful crops, even if they don't like to eat them.

Size doesn't matter. Allow children to grow a vegetable as big as they want, even if it means it gets too big to eat.



Try growing:

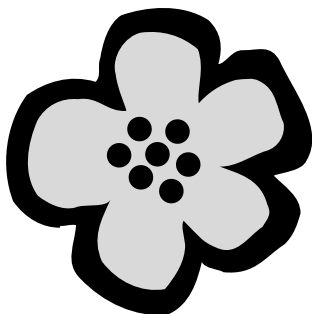
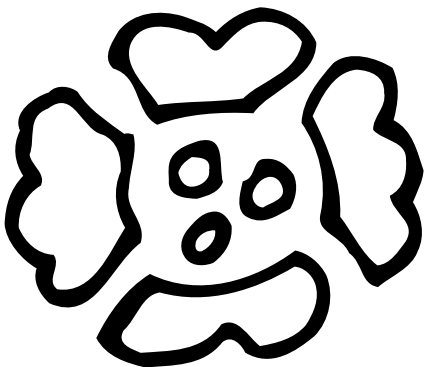
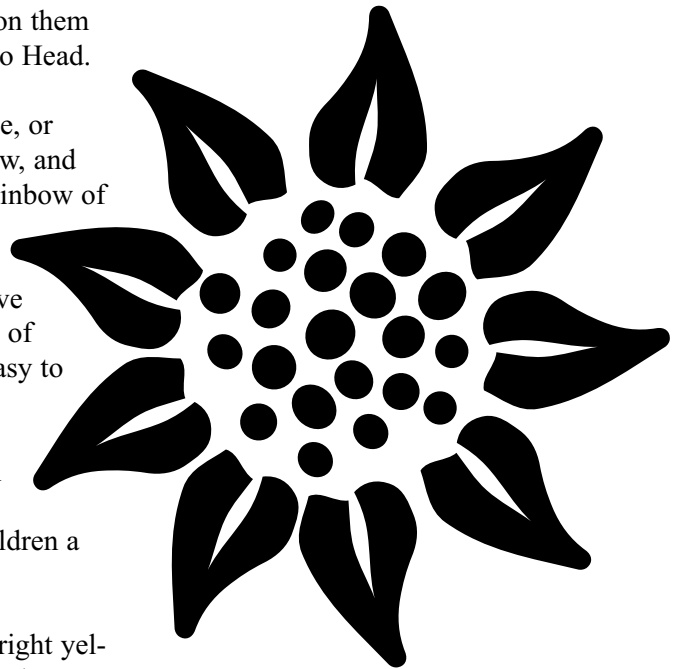
Eggplant – They're big, shiny, and purple. Most kids don't like to eat them, but parents can eat them. Kids also can paint faces on them or use them like Mr. Potato Head.

Ornamental corn – Maize, or Indian corn, is easy to grow, and children love the crop's rainbow of colors.

Sunflowers – Children love the size and color patterns of sunflowers and they are easy to care for and grow.

Gourds – Gourds grow in strange shapes and colors. This fast grower gives children a sense of accomplishment.

Summer squash – This bright yellow vegetable will produce large crops, which means children can check for new harvests each day.



An Action Song

A Planting Song

*(Sing to the tune of
"The Itsy-Bitsy Spider")*

I plant a little seed in the dark, dark
ground.

*(pretend to be a seed by crouching
on the floor and covering head
with arms)*

Out comes the yellow sun,
big and round.

*(remain crouching, extend arms
over head, and form large circle)*

Down comes the cool rain,
soft and slow.

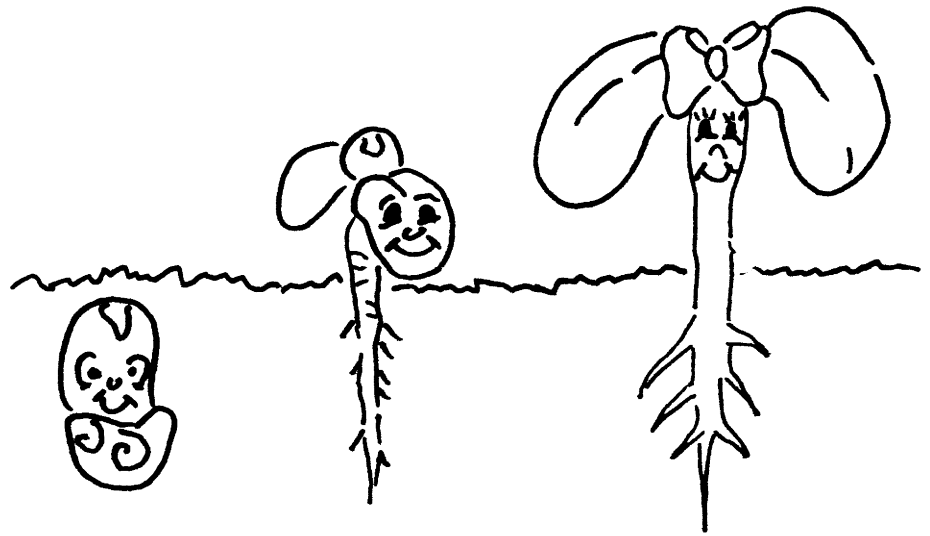
(flutter fingers)

Up comes the little flower,

(pretend to be growing plant)

Grow, grow, grow!

(stretch arms above body)



Activity — Plants Drink Water

What you will need:

Celery
Container
Food coloring
Water

What you will do:

Put the cut end of a piece of celery with leaves in a glass. Pour a solution of food coloring and water into the container. After several hours examine the celery. Has it taken in the colored water? If not, check again later. (The more coloring you add, the more rapid the results.) Cut open the wide part of the stalk. Can you see the little "tubes" through which the celery "drinks"? What color are they now?

Fingerplays

Five little peas in a pea pod
pressed.

(make fist)

One grew, two grew,
and so did the rest.

(raise respective fingers)

They grew and grew
and did not stop,

(stretch fingers wide)

Until one day the pod went POP!

(clap hands)

Beautiful spring flowers in the
breeze *(arms over head)*

Sway back and forth
and rustle their leaves.

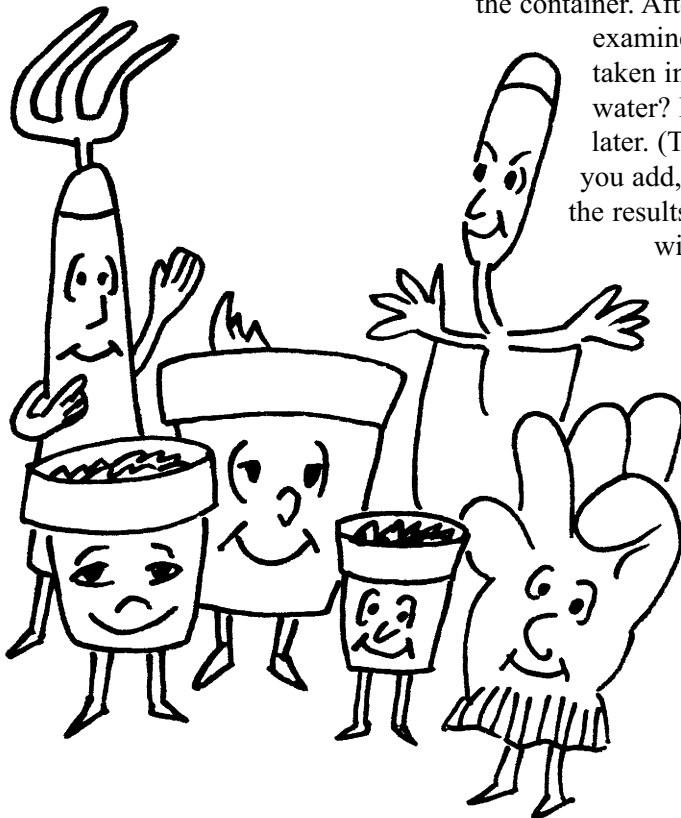
(sway)

Their pretty colors brighten
our day.

(smile)

Let's pick some and make
a bouquet!

*(pretend to pick flowers
and make a bouquet)*



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